

These 12 Simone Weil Quotes Are Genius!!!

The French philosopher Simone Weil (1909-1943) only lived to the age of 34. But in spite of her brief life she created a body of work that has garnered some impressive compliments. Albert Camus described her as “the only great spirit of our time.” T.S. Eliot wrote that she was “a woman of genius, of a kind of genius akin to that of the saints.” And according to the American poet Kenneth Rexroth, “Simone Weil was one of the most remarkable women of the twentieth, or indeed of any other century.”

In recognition of her birthday today, February 3, here are quotes that give a glimpse into her genius:

1) “There is nothing that comes closer to true humility than the intelligence. It is impossible to feel pride in one’s intelligence at the moment when one really and truly exercises it.”

2) “Religion in so far as it is a source of consolation is a hindrance to true faith; and in this sense atheism is a purification.”

3) “Capitalism has brought about the emancipation of collective humanity with respect to nature. But this collective humanity has itself taken on with respect to the individual the oppressive function formerly exercised by nature.”

4) "The thought of being under absolute compulsion, the plaything of another, is unendurable for a human being. Hence, if every way of escape from the constraint is taken from him, there is nothing left for him to do but to persuade himself that he does the things he is forced to do willingly."

5) "It is not religion but revolution which is the opium of the people."

6) "Imaginary evil is romantic and varied; real evil is gloomy, monotonous, barren, boring. Imaginary good is boring; real good is always new, marvelous, intoxicating."

7) "The real sin of idolatry is always committed on behalf of something similar to the State."

8) "Our patriotism comes straight from the Romans. This is why French children are encouraged to seek inspiration for it in Corneille. It is a pagan virtue, if these two words are compatible. The word pagan, when applied to Rome, early possesses the significance charged with horror which the early Christian controversialists gave it. The Romans really were an atheistic and idolatrous people; not idolatrous with regard to images made of stone or bronze, but idolatrous with regard to themselves. It is this idolatry of self which they have bequeathed to us in the form of patriotism."

9) "Liberty is the power of choice within the latitude left between the direct constraint of natural forces and the authority accepted as legitimate."

10) "If you say to someone who has ears to hear: 'What you are doing to me is not just,' you may touch and awaken at its source the spirit of attention and love. But it is not the same with words like, 'I have the right...' or 'you have no right to...' They evoke a latent war and awaken the spirit of contention."

11) "Human history is simply the history of the servitude which makes men – oppressed and oppressors alike – the plaything of the instruments of domination they themselves have manufactured."

12) "The struggle between the opponents and defenders of capitalism is a struggle between innovators who do not know what innovation to make and conservatives who do not know what to conserve."