

Van Gogh's Pain and Beauty

We know Vincent Van Gogh painted beautifully. We know he cut off his own ear. But what else do we really know about the brilliant Dutch Painter?

A glimpse of the letters he wrote to his younger brother, Theo, reveal much: his drive; his pain; his insecurity; his soul that yearned for God.

A look at 10 things he wrote that will shed light on the brilliant, haunted artist:

1) **"It constantly remains a source of disappointment to me that my drawings are not yet what I want them to be. The difficulties are indeed numerous and great, and cannot be overcome at once."**

-Letter to Theo, March 1883

2) **"What am I in the eyes of most people – a nonentity, an eccentric, or an unpleasant person – somebody who has no position in society and will never have; in short, the lowest of the low."**

-Letter to Theo, July 1882

3) **"I think that everything that is really good and beautiful, the inner, moral, spiritual and sublime beauty in men and their works, comes from God, and everything that is bad and evil in the works of men and in men is not from God, and God does not approve of it."**

-Letter to Theo, July 1880

4) **"The thing has already taken form in my mind before I start it. The first attempts are absolutely unbearable."**

– quote from? *The Path of Least Resistance : Principles for*

Creating What You Want to Create (1984)

5) **"In spite of everything I shall rise again: I will take up my pencil, which I have forsaken in my great discouragement, and I will go on with my drawing."**

-Letter to Theo, September 1880

6) **"I dream my painting, and then I paint my dream."**

-quote from *Marry Your Muse: Making a Lasting Commitment to Your Creativity* (1997)

7) **"I cannot help thinking that the best way of knowing God is to love many things. Love this friend, this person, this thing, whatever you like, and you will be on the right road to understanding Him better, that is what I keep telling myself."**

-Letter to Theo, July 1880

8) **"When I have a terrible need of – shall I say the word – religion. Then I go out and paint the stars."**

- *An Examined Faith: Social Context and Religious Commitment* (1991)

9) **"I tell you, if one wants to be active, one must not be afraid of going wrong, one must not be afraid of making mistakes now and then. Many people think that they will become good just by doing no harm – but that's a lie, and you yourself used to call it that. That way lies stagnation, mediocrity."**

-Letter to Theo, October 1884

10) **"Some good must come by clinging to the right. Conscience is a man's compass, and though the needle sometimes deviates, though one often perceives irregularities in directing one's course by it, still one must try to follow its direction."**

– *Dear Theo: the Autobiography of Vincent Van Gogh* (1995)

[Jon Miltimore](#) is the Senior Editor of [Intellectual Takeout](#).

He is the former Senior Editor of *The History Channel Magazine* and a former Managing Editor at Scout Media.

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