

-Common sense (or intuition) is not a simple thing...it is an immense society of hard-earned practical ideas.

-We're least aware of what our minds do best.

-Perhaps it's because there are no persons in our heads to make us do the things we want that we construct the myth that we're inside ourselves.

-And that's exactly what we get with inborn souls that cannot grow: a destiny the same as death, an ending in a permanence incapable of any change and hence devoid of intellect.

-There are countless different types of networks that contain loops. But all networks that contain no loops are basically the same: each has the form of a simple chain.

-Thinking affects our thoughts.

-Whenever some idea seems to explain too much...perhaps no problem was solved at all. This may be what happens in some of those experiences that leave a person with a sense of revelation.

-The smaller two languages are, the harder it will be to translate between them.

-What makes the genius appear to stand apart...unusually effective ways to learn; better ways to learn to learn.

-The experiences we find easiest to recollect are often just the kinds we find hardest to describe.

-The surer you are that you like what you do, the more completely your other ambitions are being suppressed.

-Papert's principle: Some of the most crucial steps in mental growth are based not simply on acquiring new skills, but on acquiring new administrative ways to use what one already knows.

-Psychological definitions are usually too loose and structural definitions are usually too tight; our best ideas are often those that bridge between the two worlds.

-One evidence for separateness (of the agents in a baby's mind) is how suddenly infants switch from smiles of contentment to shrieks of hunger-rage.

-We censure those who fail to learn to control their emotions but merely pity those whose problem-solving capabilities are poor.

-There is no way for a child to construct a coherent system of values except by basing it upon some already existing model; attachment teaches us ends and thus impose on us our parents' dreams.

-Our most abstract investigations can be seen as having origins in finding means to ordinary ends.

-Once a scheme persists for long enough, it gets to be extremely hard to change because of how the rest of the society depends upon its present form.

-The polyname for the world "apple" will arouse certain states of agencies that represent an object's color, shape, and size, and these will automatically affect (higher-level agencies such as) the look-for agency—simply because that agency must have been formed in the first place to depend upon the state of our object-description agencies. (Oh well...sounds awfully like Dennett reducing everything to qualia...)

-I suspect that, as they're represented in the mind, there's little difference between a physical object and an idea.

-Whatever we may want to say, we probably won't say exactly that.

-We can make fewer errors by confining ourselves to cautious, logical reasoning, but we'll also discover fewer new ideas.

-We turn to using quantities when we can't compare the qualities of things...[but] currencies and magnitudes help us make comparisons only by concealing the differences among what they purport to represent.

-Every thought is to some degree a metaphor.

*It's the way in which all tales have been told from Homer and Sophocles down through Kipling, Hemingway, Bradbury, Sturgeon, McCaffrey, Zelazny, whoever. Once upon a time, you say, there lived so-and-so in such a place, and while he was minding his own business the following absolutely astonishing happened to him. And so you begin; and they gather close about you, for they cannot choose but to hear.* -Robert Silverberg