

Maya Angelou

There is no greater agony than bearing an untold story inside you.

While I know myself as a creation of God, I am also obligated to realize and remember that everyone else and everything else are also God's creation.

I can be changed by what happens to me. but I refuse to be reduced by it.

Love life, engage in it, give it all you've got. love it with a passion, because life truly does give back, many times over, what you put into it.

Nothing will work unless you do.

If you don't like something, change it. If you can't change it, change your attitude.

You can only become truly accomplished at something you love. Don't make money your goal. Instead, pursue the things you love doing, and then do them so well that people can't take their eyes off you.

This is my life. It is my one time to be me. I want to experience every good thing.

If you find it in your heart to care for somebody else, you will have succeeded.

You may encounter many defeats, but you must not be defeated. In fact, it may be necessary to encounter the defeats, so you can know who you are, what you can rise from, how you can still come out of it.

When we cast our bread upon the waters, we can presume that someone downstream whose face we will never know will benefit from our action, as we who are downstream from another will profit from that grantor's gift.

I don't know if I continue, even today, always liking myself. But what I learned to do many years ago was to forgive myself. It is very important for every human being to forgive herself or himself because if you live, you will make mistakes- it is inevitable. But once you do and you see the mistake, then you forgive yourself and say, 'well, if I'd known better I'd have done better,' that's all. So you say to people who you think you may have injured, 'I'm sorry,' and then you say to yourself, 'I'm sorry.' If we all hold on to the mistake, we can't see our own glory in the mirror because we have the mistake between our faces and the mirror; we can't see what we're capable of being. You can ask forgiveness of others, but in the end the real forgiveness is in one's own self. I think that young men and women are so caught by the way they see themselves. Now mind you. When a larger society sees them as unattractive, as threats, as too black or too white or too poor or too fat or too thin or too sexual or too asexual, that's rough. But you can overcome that. The real difficulty is to overcome how you think about yourself. If we don't have that we never grow, we never learn, and sure as hell we should never teach.

I long, as does every human being, to be at home wherever I find myself.

Everything has rhythm. Everything dances.

Words mean more than what is set down on paper. It takes the human voice to infuse them with shades of deeper meaning.

I have found that among its other benefits, giving liberates the soul of the giver.

Love recognizes no barriers. It jumps hurdles, leaps fences, penetrates walls to arrive at its destination full of hope.

The ache for home lives in all of us, the safe place where we can go as we are and not be questioned.

Prejudice is a burden that confuses the past, threatens the future and renders the present inaccessible.

See, you don't have to think about doing the right thing if you are for the right thing then you'll do it without thinking.

I've learned that you shouldn't go through life with a catcher's mitt on both hands; you need to be able to throw something back.

Each of us has that right, that possibility, to invent ourselves daily. If a person does not invent herself, she will be invented. So, to be bodacious enough to invent ourselves is wise.

I believe the most important single thing, beyond discipline and creativity is daring to dare.

Each of us has the right and the responsibility to asses the road which lie ahead and those over which we have traveled, and if the feature road looms ominous or unpromising, and the road back uninviting-inviting, then we need to gather our resolve and carrying only the necessary baggage, step off that road into another direction. If the new choice is also unpalatable, without embarrassment, we must be ready to change that one as well.

Life is a gift, and I try to respond with grace and courtesy.

Courage is the most important of all the virtues, because without courage you can't practice any other virtue consistently. You can practice any virtue erratically, but nothing consistently without courage.

I find it interesting that the meanest life, the poorest existence, is attributed to God's will, but as human beings become more affluent, as their living standard and style begin to ascend the material scale, God descends the scale of responsibility.

A bird doesn't sing because it has an answer, it sings because it has a song.

The most called-upon prerequisite of a friend is an accessible ear.

We all should know that diversity makes for a rich tapestry, and we must understand that all the threads of the tapestry are equal in value no matter what their color.

I've learned that every day you should reach out and touch someone. People love a warm hug, or just a friendly pat on the back.

We allow our ignorance to prevail upon us and make us think we can survive alone, alone in patches, alone in groups, alone in races, even alone in genders.

One must know not just how to accept a gift, but with what grace to share it.

I've learned that whenever I decide something with an open heart, I usually make the right decision.

Perhaps travel cannot prevent bigotry, but by demonstrating that all peoples cry, laugh, eat, worry, and die, it can introduce the idea that if we try and understand each other, we may even become friends.

If we lose love and self respect for each other, this is how we finally die.

A bizarre sensation pervades a relationship of pretense. No truth seems true. A simple morning's greeting and response appear loaded with innuendo and fraught with implications. Each nicety becomes more sterile and each withdrawal more permanent.

I try to live what I consider a "poetic existence." That means I take responsibility for the air I breathe and the space I take up. I try to be immediate, to be totally present for all my work.