

Those Aha! Moments

YCISL QUOTE COLLECTION

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Those Aha! Moments: YCISL Quote Collection
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Preface

The YCISL program that I launched a decade ago includes in its recipe selected quotes intended to raise meaning & purpose in our pursuit of creativity & acts of creative thought.

At first, the inspiring quotable remarks from Sir Ken Robinson's 2006 TED Talk "Do Schools Kill Creativity?" formed the YCISL's main premise.

Gradually, more sources of quotes were discovered & added. This quote collection is a keepsake to refresh our personal sense of meaning & purpose through creativity.



I finished this e-book while on vacation last week. The relaxing sights and sounds of Waikiki Beach, Haleiwa & Hanauma Bay uplifted my reflective mindfulness & senses. Just standing on the sandy beach with the shallow breaking waves touching then leaving my feet kept me in a positive meditative state so that I could sincerely express what I wanted to share with you through this collection of quotes. Please enjoy.

Read Me

Read Me

My YCISL presentations usually start with a slide that says “My slides are cookie crumbs, not cookies.”

Similarly, review the quotes included in this collection and seek a connection to your life & activities. Dig deeper if you feel curious. Just look up the original source...and make the connections & interpretations so that you can feel your creative energy renew & your mind re-center. Gain mastery and share with others.

*"Each day a chance to do
something memorable for
someone"*

Richard Nixon
37th U.S. President

I found this when I visited The Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum in Yorba Linda, CA in Summer 2021. It reinforces the sense of purpose behind the creativity we explore in YCISL. Look at this as a general mission statement.

*"...we don't grow into
creativity, we grow out of it
...or rather we get educated
out of it"*

Sir Ken Robinson

TED2006

This TED Talk (“Do Schools Kill Creativity?”) is the one that inspired me to create the YCISL program. The magic is in the artful delivery as well as the persuasive message. And we tie it to leadership, sustainability & innovation.

*"It's very, very simple to get
what you want. But it's not
easy."*

Mel Robbins
TEDxSF (2011)

The YCISL program includes the idea of new, growth & change. The “simple, but not easy” phrase reminds us to keep the path clear, and persevere through work, challenges & surprises. Our workshop example of something “simple, but not easy” was usually about my doctor advising me to lose weight for better health...but how? Any ideas?

*"This is a part of my design
thinking journey. Join me."*

Self-quote

This phrase was introduced in Summer 2021 marking the start of the Design Thinking Incubator series of the Innovators Toolkit Workshop. I wrote this to on-board participants and set the stage for close personal interaction. Are you figuratively also on a design thinking journey finding meaning & purpose in life, work & play?

"On my business card..."

Satoru Iwata (1959-2015)

GDC 2005

When I read a news article reporting that Satoru Iwata had passed away in 2015, I discovered a video of his 2005 GDC Keynote speech. His grab opening using the business card, mind & heart became a part of the YCISL *Your Personal Story* component, and helps tie in emotional intelligence to our creativity mindset.

*"...do the eight things -- and
trust me -- these are the big
eight things that lead to
success."*

Richard St. John

TED 2005

Richard St. John's short 3-minute TED Talk "8 Secrets of Success" has been shown in the closing of every single YCISL workshop since 2016. It reminds us of the power of positivity in leadership. Maybe even more fantastically relevant to YCISL's participant demographic was the storyline about "in the seat next to me was a high school student, a teenager."

"Around the desire to do things because they matter, because we like it, they're interesting, or part of something important."

Daniel Pink
TEDGlobal (2009)

One of the “secret ingredients” of the YCISL program is *intrinsic motivation*, a concept that I first learned from Daniel Pink’s book “Drive” & TED Talk. In YCISL, we think of using the elements of mastery, autonomy & purpose for sustainable self-motivation as well as the motivation of others such as team members & users.

*"I have two desks in my office
– one's analog and one's
digital."*

Austin Kleon

Steal Like An Artist (2012)

I read “Steal Like An Artist” in 2014 and shared the idea of analog & digital parts of a workflow in the YCISL workshop that summer. Several YCISL design exercises involved analog (big picture) work followed by digital (discrete components) work. This process results in better focus & fidelity.

*"Start where you are. Use
what you have. Do what you
can."*

Arthur Ashe
(1943–1993)

Solving real-world problems usually involves estimation, approximation & guesswork. One cannot allow uncertainty to stop activity. In fact, the fuzziness of starting conditions supports the innovative creativity sought in the YCISL program.

*"We literally have to
work harder to see the
upside of things."*

Alison Ledgerwood

TEDxUCDavis 2013

Our thinking & productivity are enhanced when we exercise positivity. Whether putting spin on news or doing something to maintain a happy mood, it takes an EQ-based skill to push the “frame” from negative to positive. It motivates us. It also motivates others. Focus on positivity. Think positive. Be positive.

*"That's why I call for the
Chief Detail Officer."*

Rory Sutherland
TEDSalon London 2010

Empathy is essential to creativity & design thinking. In YCISL, we use focus groups & the elevator pitch exercise to practice empathy & reveal showstoppers. Attention to empathy-based details is often the gateway to successful innovation.

*“In a growth mindset,
people believe that their
most basic abilities can be
developed through
dedication and hard
work...”*

Carol Dweck, Professor of
Psychology (Stanford
University) and Author of
“Mindset”

In the YCISL program, we compare & contrast the fixed mindset with the growth mindset. Both are useful sets of rules, but the growth mindset takes more effort because it requires flexibility for digesting context & updating behaviors. Also, the growth mindset has the greater potential for motivation & improvement.

"A great smile uses the orbicularis oculi muscle, too. This muscle surrounds your eyes, and it makes you squint..."

Guy Kawasaki, Former Chief Evangelist (Apple) and Author of "Enchantment"

In YCISL, we highly value positivity to drive creativity in our innovative design thinking. A useful visual indication of genuine positivity is in our smile...or to be more precise, in the muscles we use to make our smile. Use this litmus test to make sure a positive mindset is present as a precursor to the start of any individual or team activity requiring focused creativity.

*"Order your
ShamWOOHOO! and
you'll be saying
'WOOHOO!'
everytime!"*

Ryan Higa in "The ShamWOOHOO!"
video

The “ShamWOOHOO!” video is viewed as the lead-in for the YCISL elevator pitch exercise. The ecstatic way in which “*ShamWOOHOO!*” is yelled serves as our example of a grab in an elevator pitch. Something different. Something vividly memorable. Something with positive energy.

*"I thought it would be
interesting to look at the
different ways water gets
wasted."*

Praveena Sridhar

in "Photo essay on water loss due
to leaks in Mulbagal, Karnataka"

(2009)

The big reflection activity in on-campus YCISL workshops is the Photo Essay exercise where students exhibit reflective presentations of photos taken during their Stanford visit. I was inspired to create this exercise from seeing Praveena's photo essay on water wastage. The lesson is in paying attention to things around you & keeping thoughtful notes.

*"It's gratefulness that
makes you happy."*

Br. David Steindl-Rast,
TEDGlobal 2013

As part of our YCISL workshop lesson on emotional intelligence, guest speaker Dr. Stephen Murphy-Shigematsu would play the video “A Good Day” by Br. David Steindl-Rast & move into the practice of mindfulness & gratitude. This positive self-awareness would be checked by our “Who am I?” exercise which involved meditative centering. We recommend performing a daily gratefulness reflection.

*"...it doesn't mean that you
have a C branded in your
DNA somehow."*

Salman Khan,
TED Talks Live 2015

I attended "Education Nation 2.0: Redefining Education Before It Redefines Us" at Stanford in 2011 where Salman Khan, one of the panelists, pointed out that students lacked a sense of fulfillment. That point was further clarified in his 2015 TEDx Talk "Let's Teach for Mastery—Not Test Scores" where education is designed to create gaps & uncertainty as much as communicate knowledge. Gaps need to be skillfully addressed.

*"We stop ourselves from
doing things. We self-edit
as we're having ideas."*

Tim Brown

Serious Play 2008

Our YCISL sticky note brainstorming exercise seeks quantitative production of ideas, and we ask that students recognize and restrain self-doubt & self-editing. We then sort everyone's ideas from *normal* to *crazy* on a board. Recovering our creativity depends on strong brainstorming skills where we capture each & every idea that floats into our imagination.

*"Learning between
grown-ups and kids should
be reciprocal."*

Adora Svitak

TED2010

I enjoy hosting the YCISL workshops because of the likelihood of teacher-student reciprocal learning. I depend on this exchange to grow & improve the program. Many YCISL exercises were derived from comments & suggestions given by students & mentors. I remember the short activity where students would enthusiastically teach me how to prepare *tamago kake gohan*.

*"We need to reverse the
formula for happiness and
success."*

Shawn Achor

TEDxBloomington 2011

The choice of pursuing happiness or success underpins each of our personal philosophies. In the YCISL context of creativity, happiness boosts our creative energy & gives us a cultural mindset that yields higher quality innovation & leadership. Focusing on happiness & subsequently reaping success is one of the most fundamental YCISL life lessons.

*"The new me is all about
making things kind of neat
and fun."*

Don Norman

TED2003

This quote was included in the opening remarks of the January 2022 YCISL ITW Workshop. I had just read the book “Emotional Design” & watched the video of the TED2003 talk “3 ways good design makes you happy” – both by Don Norman. The meaning about being “new...neat and fun” was intended to characterize the YCISL workshop experience as much as the UX Design mindset needed for creative experiential innovation.

*"Looking is the beginning
of seeing."*

Corita Kent
(1918-1986)

I added ideas from Corita Kent to the YCISL workshop in early 2022. Decades earlier, she had inspired students in design & creativity. Her straightforward ideas that challenged students to look, observe, learn and try in a design setting seem ingenious to me. Try her *finder* method to frame your product design & story.

*If you
reached this
point...*

If you reached this point...

I hope this collection helped remind you of some of the great ideas shared during your YCISL workshop. And I hope you were similarly inspired by some of the quotes that were new to you.

Which is your favorite?

Let me know if any of these quotes help you gain new levels of awareness, perspective, respect, empathy & action.

Those Aha! Moments

Look inside for quotes that have provided depth & breadth to the creativity training coached in the YCISL program. If you feel in need of creativity re-centering or a push, browse among these quotes for the creative energy to power your mind, skills & sense of purpose.