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Quotes by Dyson, Freeman

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Freeman Dyson is now retired, having been for most of his life a professor of physics at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton. He was born in England and worked as a civilian scientist for the Royal Air Force in World War 2. He graduated from Cambridge University in 1945 with a BA degree in mathematics. He went on to Cornell University as a graduate student in 1947 and worked with Hans Bethe and Richard Feynman. His most useful contribution to science was the unification of the three versions of quantum electrodynamics invented by Feynman, Schwinger and Tomonaga. Cornell University made him a professor without bothering about his lack of Ph.D. He subsequently worked on nuclear reactors, solid state physics, ferromagnetism, astrophysics and biology, looking for problems where elegant mathematics could be usefully applied. He has written a number of books about science for the general public. "Disturbing the universe" (1974) is a portrait-gallery of people he has known during his career as a scientist. "Weapons of Hope" (1984) is a study of ethical problems of war and peace. "Infinite in all directions" (1988) is a philosophical meditation based on Dyson's Gifford Lectures on Natural Theology given at the University of Aberdeen in Scotland. "Origins of Life" (1986, second edition 1999) is a study of one of the major unsolved problems of science. "The sun, the Genome and the Internet" (1999) discusses the question of whether modern technology could be used to narrow the gap between rich and poor rather than widen it. Dyson is a fellow of the American Physical Society, a member of the US

National Academy of Sciences, and a fellow of the Royal Society of London. In 2000 he was awarded the Templeton Prize for progress in Religion.

A good scientist is a person with original ideas. A good engineer is a person who makes a design that works with as few original ideas as possible. There are no prima donnas in engineering.

- Dyson, Freeman

It's better to get mugged than to live a life of fear.

- Dyson, Freeman

It is characteristic of all deep human problems that they are not to be approached without some humor and some bewilderment.

- Dyson, Freeman

The question that will decide our destiny is not whether we shall expand into space. It is: shall we be one species or a million? A million species will not exhaust the ecological niches that are awaiting the arrival of intelligence.

- Dyson, Freeman

A good cause can become bad if we fight for it with means that are indiscriminately murderous. A bad cause can become good if enough people fight for it in a spirit of comradeship and self-sacrifice. In the end it is how you fight, as much as why you fight, that makes your cause good or bad.

- Dyson, Freeman

If we had a reliable way to label our toys good and bad, it would be easy to regulate technology wisely. But we can rarely see far enough ahead to know which road leads to damnation. Whoever concerns himself with big technology, either to push it forward or to stop it, is gambling in human lives.

- Dyson, Freeman

There is a great satisfaction in building good tools for other people to use.

- Dyson, Freeman



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