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# Quotes by Szasz, Thomas

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In the animal kingdom, the rule is, eat or be eaten; in the human kingdom, define or be defined.

- Szasz, Thomas

Doubt is to certainty as neurosis is to psychosis. The neurotic is in doubt and has fears about persons and things; the psychotic has convictions and makes claims about them. In short, the neurotic has problems, the psychotic has solutions.

- Szasz, Thomas

It is easier to do one's duty to others than to one's self. If you do your duty to others, you are considered reliable. If you do your duty to yourself, you are considered selfish.

- Szasz, Thomas

Every act of conscious learning requires the willingness to suffer an injury to one's self-esteem. That is why young children, before they are aware of their own self-importance, learn so easily; and why older persons, especially if vain or important, cannot learn at all.

- Szasz, Thomas

Two wrongs don't make a right, but they make a good excuse.

- Szasz, Thomas

The stupid neither forgive nor forget; the naive forgive and forget; the wise forgive but do not forget.

- Szasz, Thomas

The proverb warns; Don't bite the hand that feeds you. But maybe you should, if it prevents you from feeding yourself.

- Szasz, Thomas

Happiness is an imaginary condition, formerly often attributed by the living to the dead, now usually attributed by adults to children, and by children to adults.

- Szasz, Thomas

We achieve active mastery over illness and death by delegating all responsibility for their management to physicians, and by exiling the sick and the dying to hospitals. But hospitals serve the convenience of staff not patients: we cannot be properly ill in a hospital, nor die in one decently; we can do so only among those who love and value us. The result is the institutionalized dehumanization of the ill, characteristic of our age.

- Szasz, Thomas

Men are afraid to rock the boat in which they hope to drift safely through life's currents, when, actually, the boat is stuck on a sandbar. They would be better off to rock the boat and try to shake it loose, or, better still, jump in the water and swim for the shore.

- Szasz, Thomas

The many faces of intimacy: the Victorians could experience it through correspondence, but not through cohabitation; contemporary men and women can experience it through fornication, but not through friendship.

- Szasz, Thomas

Knowledge is gained by learning; trust by doubt; skill by practice; love by love.

- Szasz, Thomas

We often speak of love when we really should be speaking of the drive to dominate or to master, so as to confirm ourselves as active agents, in control of our own destinies and worthy of respect from others.

- Szasz, Thomas

If the dead talk to you, you are a spiritualist; if God talks to you, you are a schizophrenic.

- Szasz, Thomas

In the past, men created witches; now they create mental patients.

- Szasz, Thomas

No further evidence is needed to show that mental illness is not the name of a biological condition whose nature awaits to be elucidated, but is the name of a concept whose purpose is to obscure the obvious.

- Szasz, Thomas

Men often treat others worse than they treat themselves, but they rarely treat anyone better. It is the height of folly to expect consideration and decency from a person who mistreats himself.

- Szasz, Thomas

Psychiatric expert testimony: mendacity masquerading as medicine.

- Szasz, Thomas

Involuntary mental hospitalization is like slavery. Refining the standards for commitment is like prettifying the slave plantations. The problem is not how to improve commitment, but how to abolish it.

- Szasz, Thomas

Institutional psychiatry is a continuation of the Inquisition. All that has really changed is the vocabulary and the social style. The vocabulary conforms to the intellectual expectations of our age: it is a pseudo-medical jargon that parodies the concepts of science. The social style conforms to the political expectations of our age: it is a pseudo-liberal social movement that parodies the ideals of freedom and rationality.

- Szasz, Thomas

Psychoanalysis is an attempt to examine a person's self-justifications. Hence it can be undertaken only with the patient's cooperation and can succeed only when the patient has something to gain by abandoning or modifying his system of self-justification.

- Szasz, Thomas

Aided and abetted by corrupt analysts, patients who have nothing better to do with their lives often use the psychoanalytic situation to transform insignificant childhood hurts into private shrines at which they worship unceasingly the enormity of the offenses committed against them. This solution is immensely flattering to the patients -- as are all forms of unmerited self-aggrandizement; it is immensely profitable for the analysts -- as are all forms pandering to people's vanity; and it is often immensely unpleasant for nearly everyone else in the patient's life.

- Szasz, Thomas

There is no psychology; there is only biography and autobiography.

- Szasz, Thomas

If he who breaks the law is not punished, he who obeys it is cheated. This, and this alone, is why lawbreakers ought to be punished: to authenticate as good, and to encourage as useful, law-abiding behavior. The aim of criminal law cannot be correction or deterrence; it can only be the maintenance of the legal order.

- Szasz, Thomas

When a person can no longer laugh at himself, it is time for others to laugh at him.

- Szasz, Thomas

Some people say they haven't yet found themselves. But the self is not something one finds; it is something one creates.

- Szasz, Thomas

Addiction, obesity, starvation (anorexia nervosa) are political problems, not psychiatric: each condenses and expresses a contest between the individual and some other person or persons in his environment over the control of the individual's body.

- Szasz, Thomas

He who does not accept and respect those who want to reject life does not truly accept and respect life itself.

- Szasz, Thomas

The system isn't stupid, but the people in it are.

- Szasz, Thomas

Permissiveness is the principle of treating children as if they were adults; and the tactic of making sure they never reach that stage.

- Szasz, Thomas

The greatest analgesic, soporific, stimulant, tranquilizer, narcotic, and to some extent even antibiotic --in short, the closest thing to a genuine panacea --known to medical science is work.

- Szasz, Thomas

Adulthood is the ever-shrinking period between childhood and old age. It is the apparent aim of modern industrial societies to reduce this period to a minimum.

- Szasz, Thomas

A child becomes an adult when he realizes that he has a right not only to be right but also to be wrong.

- Szasz, Thomas

Narcissist: psychoanalytic term for the person who loves himself more than his analyst; considered to be the manifestation of a dire mental disease whose successful treatment depends on the patient learning to love the analyst more and himself less.

- Szasz, Thomas

People often say that this or that person has not yet found himself. But the self is not something that one finds. It is something one creates.

- Szasz, Thomas





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