

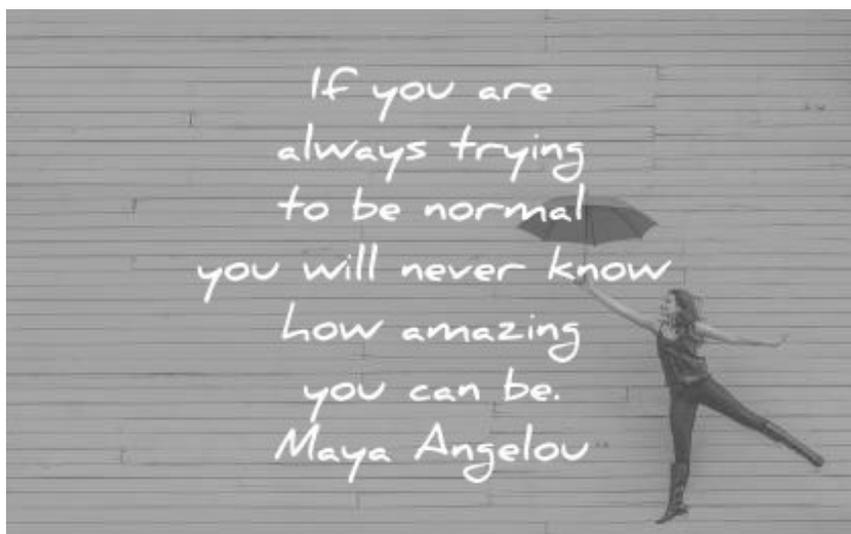
# 350 Badass Maya Angelou Quotes That Will Blow Your Mind

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[W wisdomquotes.com/maya-angelou-quotes/](http://wisdomquotes.com/maya-angelou-quotes/)



| I do my best because I'm counting on you counting on me. Maya Angelou



| If you are always trying to be normal you will never know how amazing you can be. Maya Angelou



| Nothing will work unless you do. Maya Angelou



| Do the best you can until you know better. Then when you know better, do better. Maya Angelou



Develop enough courage so that you can stand up for yourself and then stand up for somebody else. Maya Angelou



Only equals can become friends. Maya Angelou



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



You alone are enough. You have nothing to prove to anybody. Maya Angelou



| We may encounter many defeats but we must not be defeated. Maya Angelou



| The desire to reach for the stars is ambitious. The desire to reach hearts is wise. Maya Angelou



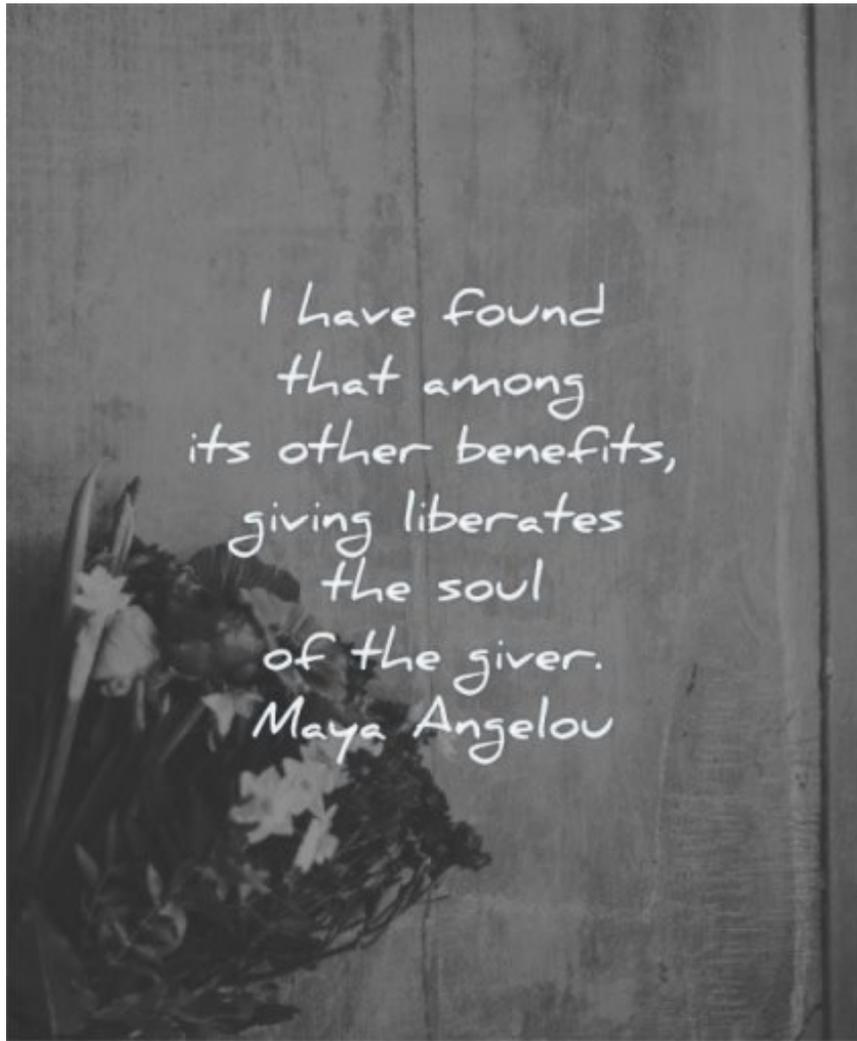
| This is what I am learning, at 82 years old: the main thing is to be in love with the search for truth. Maya Angelou



Life is pure adventure, and the sooner we realize that, the quicker we will be able to treat life as art. Maya Angelou



When we give cheerfully and accept gratefully, everyone is blessed. Maya Angelou



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



| If I am not good to myself, how can I expect anyone else to be good to me? Maya Angelou

See also: [strength quotes](#), [leadership quotes](#), [Martin Luther King Jr quotes](#)

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## The Best Maya Angelou Quotes

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[Go to table of contents](#)

| You can't really know where you are going until you know where you have been. [Click to tweet](#)

| I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.

| Life is not measured by the number of breaths we take, but by the moments that take our breath away.

The children to whom we read simple stories may or may not show gratitude, but each boon we give strengthens the pillars of the world.

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

When you know you are of worth — not asking it but knowing it — you walk into a room with a particular power.

When you know you are of worth, you don't have to raise your voice, you don't have to become rude, you don't have to become vulgar; you just are. And you are like the sky is, as the air is, the same way water is wet. It doesn't have to protest.

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.

My great blessing is my son, but I have daughters. I have white ones and Black ones and fat ones and thin ones and pretty ones and plain. I have gay ones and straight. I have daughters. I have Asian ones, I have Jewish ones, I have Muslim ones.

Ask for what you want and be prepared to get it! [Click to tweet](#)

You can't use up creativity. The more you use, the more you have.

I was told many years ago by my grandmother who raised me: If somebody puts you on a road and you don't feel comfortable on it and you look ahead and you don't like the destination and you look behind and you don't want to return to that place, step off the road.

My work is to be honest. My work is to try to think clearly, then have the courage to make sure that what I say is the truth.

I not only have the right to stand up for myself, but I have the responsibility. I can't ask somebody else to stand up for me if I won't stand up for myself. And once you stand up for yourself, you'd be surprised that people say, "Can I be of help?"

I love to see a young girl go out and grab the world by the lapels. Life's a bitch. You've got to go out and kick ass.

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.

Success is liking yourself, liking what you do, and liking how you do it.

Hate, it has caused a lot of problems in the world, but has not solved one yet.

See also: [success quotes](#)

## Part 2. Maya Angelou Quotes That Are...

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### The Most Famous Maya Angelou Quotes

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[Go to table of contents](#)

| If one has courage, nothing can dim the light which shines from within. [Click to tweet](#)

| Be a rainbow in someone else's cloud.

| When you get give. When you learn teach.

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

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

| Never make someone a priority when all you are to them is an option.

| 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.

| My mission in life is not merely to survive, but to thrive; and to do so with some passion, some compassion, some humor, and some style.

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

More [famous quotes](#)

### Short Maya Angelou Quotes

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[Go to table of contents](#)

One-liners, short Maya Angelou quotes, thoughts and captions for your bio, social status, self-talk, motto, mantra, signs, posters, wallpapers, backgrounds.

| Your belief and your work will speak for you.

| Life loves the liver of it.

| All great achievements require time.

| Determine to live life with flair and laughter.

| Effective action is always unjust.

| We need much less than we think we need.

| The honorary duty of a human being is to love.

| When you learn, teach, when you get, give.

| Everybody is worth everything.

| Achievement brings its own anticlimax.

| Surviving is important. Thriving is elegant.

| Whining is just unbecoming.

| I believe that every person is born with talent.

| The need for change bulldozed a road down the center of my mind.

| I know why the caged bird sings.

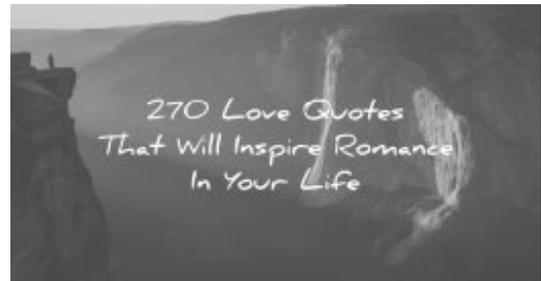
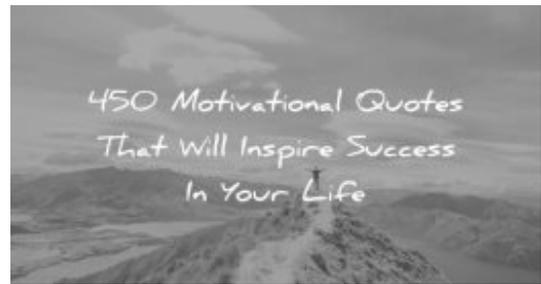
| The needs of society determine its ethics.

| If someone shows you who they really are, believe them.

### More short quotes

You may also like:





## Inspirational, Beautiful And Uplifting Maya Angelou Quotes

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[Go to table of contents](#)

| If one is lucky, a solitary fantasy can totally transform one million realities.

| All men are prepared to accomplish the incredible if their ideals are threatened.

| You only are free when you realize you belong no place – you belong every place – no place at all. The price is high. The reward is great.

| One isn't necessarily born with courage, but one is born with potential. Without courage, we cannot practice any other virtue with consistency. We can't be kind, true, merciful, generous, or honest.

| The thing to do, it seems to me, is to prepare yourself so you can be a rainbow in somebody else's cloud.

| I've learned that no matter what happens, or how bad it seems today, life does go on, and it will be better tomorrow.

To develop courage you have to start developing courage as you do any other muscle. You have to start with small things and build it up.

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

It's very important to know the neighbor next door and the people down the street and the people in another race.

You should be angry. You must not be bitter. Bitterness is like cancer. It eats upon the host. It doesn't do anything to the object of its displeasure. So use that anger. You write it. You paint it. You dance it. You march it. You vote it. You do everything about it. You talk it. Never stop talking it.

Someone was hurt before you, wronged before you, hungry before you, frightened before you, beaten before you, humiliated before you, raped before you... yet, someone survived... You can do anything you choose to do.

When I forgive other people, I let them go, I free them from my ignorance. And as soon as I do, I feel lighter, brighter and better.

Look what you've already come through! Don't deny it. You've already come through some things, which are very painful. If you've been alive until you're 35, you have gone through some pain. It cost you something. And you've come through it. So at least look at that. And have a sense to look at yourself and say, "Well, wait a minute. I'm stronger than I thought I was.

I'm really saddened by the attempts to separate and polarize. This is a time when we have hungry people, people out of work, and people out of spirit. This is a time where we need to uplift, not to separate.

On what she feels about the world today: I feel very hopeful, very expectant. I'm looking forward to it.

We need to not be in denial about what we've done, what we've come through. It will help us if we all do that.

The idea is to write it so that people hear it and it slides through the brain and goes straight to the heart.

My great hope is to laugh as much as I cry; to get my work done and try to love somebody and have the courage to accept the love in return.

My wish for you is that you continue. Continue to be who and how you are, to astonish a mean world with your acts of kindness.

| I want all my senses engaged. Let me absorb the world's variety and uniqueness.

| How important it is for us to recognize and celebrate our heroes and she-roes!

| If a human being dreams a great dream, dares to love somebody; if a human being dares to be Martin King, or Mahatma Gandhi, or Mother Theresa, or Malcolm X; if a human being dares to be bigger than the condition into which she or he was born – it means so can you. And so you can try to stretch, stretch, stretch yourself so you can internalize, 'Homo sum, humani nil a me alienum puto. I am a human being, nothing human can be alien to me.' That's one thing I'm learning.

See also: [positive quotes](#)

## Funny Maya Angelou Quotes

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[Go to table of contents](#)

| This is a wonderful day, I have never seen this one before. [Click to tweet](#)

| The best candy shop a child can be left alone in, is the library.

| I've learned that you can tell a lot about a person by the way (s)he handles these three things: a rainy day, lost luggage, and tangled Christmas tree lights.

| Nature has no mercy at all. Nature says, 'I'm going to snow. If you have on a bikini and no snowshoes, that's tough. I am going to snow anyway.'

| I don't trust anyone who doesn't laugh. [Click to tweet](#)

| I do not trust people who don't love themselves and yet tell me, 'I love you.' There is an African saying which is: Be careful when a naked person offers you a shirt.

| I never have written every day. When I'm writing a book, I write Monday through Friday. I always try to take Saturday and pretend to have some sanity.

| My life has been one great big joke, a dance that's walked a song that's spoke, I laugh so hard I almost choke when I think about myself.

| If you have only one smile in you, give it to the people you love. Don't be surly at home, then go out in the street and start grinning 'Good morning' at total strangers.

More [funny quotes](#)

## Deep Maya Angelou Quotes (That Will Make You Think)

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[Go to table of contents](#)

Take your time to read those. They are deep. (I personally re-read them a few times!)

| We are only as blind as we want to be.

| You can ask forgiveness of others, but in the end the real forgiveness is in one's own self.

| Nobody can enjoy unless we all enjoy, truly enjoy.

| When I decided to speak, I had a lot to say.

| Grace is like a lake of drinkable water right outside your door. But you stay inside and die of thirst.

| We are not just flesh and blood. And our hungers are not going to be set aside as just flesh and blood.

| If you want what you're saying heard, then take your time and say it so that the listener will actually hear it. You might save somebody's life. Your own, first.

| When was the last time anyone told you how important you are?

| Listen to yourself and in that quietude you might hear the voice of God.

| Everything in the universe has a rhythm, everything dances.

| A woman's heart should be so hidden in God that a man has to seek Him just to find her.

| Since time is the one immaterial object which we cannot influence, neither speed up nor slow down, add to nor diminish, it is an imponderably valuable gift.

More [deep quotes](#)

## **Wise Maya Angelou Quotes (Words Of Wisdom)**

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[Go to table of contents](#)

| I've learned that even when I have pains, I don't have to be one. [Click to tweet](#)

| My mother said I must always be intolerant of ignorance but understanding of illiteracy.

| Forgive yourself for not knowing what you didn't know before you learned it.

| Bitterness is like cancer. It eats upon the host. But anger is like fire. It burns it all clean.

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.

Seek patience and passion in equal amounts. Patience alone will not build the temple. Passion alone will destroy its walls. Maya Angelou [Click to tweet](#)

You listen with interest. That gives some sense of confidence to the speaker.

I've learned that making a "living" is not the same thing as making a "life".

I like to go back and read poems that I wrote fifty years ago, twenty years ago, and sometimes they surprise me – I didn't know I knew that then. Or maybe I didn't know it then, and I know more now.

I've learned that forgiving is one of the greatest gifts that I can give myself.

A leader sees greatness in other people. He nor she can be much of a leader if all she sees is herself.

Seek patience and passion in equal amounts. Patience alone will not build the temple. Passion alone will destroy its walls.

We delight in the beauty of the butterfly, but rarely admit the changes it has gone through to achieve that beauty.

More [wisdom quotes](#)

## Part 3. Maya Angelou Quotes ABOUT...

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### Maya Angelou Quotes About Life

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[Go to table of contents](#)

I've learned that life sometimes gives you a second chance. [Click to tweet](#)

We are here to love each other. That is why you are alive. That is what life is for.

There is a very fine line between loving life and being greedy for it.

You are the sum total of everything you've ever seen, heard, eaten, smelled, been told, forgot – it's all there. Everything influences each of us, and because of that I try to make sure that my experiences are positive.

Music was my refuge. I could crawl into the space between the notes and curl my back to loneliness.

Life loves to be taken by the lapel and told, 'I'm with you kid. Let's go'.

Human beings are more alike than unlike. Whether in Paris, Texas, or Paris, France, we all want to have good jobs where we are needed and respected and paid just a little more than we deserve. We want healthy children, safe streets, to be loved and have the unmitigated gall to accept love.

I'm considered wise, and sometimes I see myself as knowing. Most of the time, I see myself as wanting to know. And I see myself as a very interested person. I've never been bored in my life.

Most people don't grow up. Most people age. They find parking spaces, honor their credit cards, get married, have children, and call that maturity. What that is, is aging. (See also: maturity quotes)

We can be better, we can be wiser, we can be more kind. Yes we have to change. We have to grow up and stop acting like 10 years old. Yes there is much to do, much to see, much to go into.

Open your eyes to the beauty around you, open your mind to the wonders of life, open your heart to those who love you, and always be true to yourself.

I think a hero is any person really intent on making this a better place for all people.

I believe in living a poetic life, an art full life. Everything we do from the way we raise our children to the way we welcome our friends is part of a large canvas we are creating.

If we live long enough, we may even get over war. I imagine a time when somebody will mention the word war and everyone in the room will start to laugh. And what do you mean war?

I encourage courtesy. To accept nothing less than courtesy, and to give nothing less than courtesy.

There are those who say that poets should use her and his art to change the world. I'd agree with that, but I think everybody should do that. I think the chef and the baker and the candlestick maker – I think everybody should be hoping to make it a better world.

We spend precious hours fearing the inevitable. It would be wise to use that time adoring our families, cherishing our friends and living our lives.

To those who have given up on love: I say, "Trust life a little bit".

# Maya Angelou Quotes About Love, Self-Love, Relationships, Marriage

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[Go to table of contents](#)

| Forgiveness is a gift you give yourself.

| You can't forgive without loving. And I don't mean sentimentality. I don't mean mush. I mean having enough courage to stand up and say, 'I forgive. I'm finished with it.'

| I am grateful to have been loved and to be loved now and to be able to love.

| My great hope is to laugh as much as I cry; to get my work done and try to love somebody and have the courage to accept the love in return.

| Suddenly we see that love costs all we are, and will ever be. Yet it is only love which sets us free.

| What I really would like said about me is that I dared to love. By love, I mean that condition in the human spirit so profound it encourages us to develop courage and build bridges, and then to trust those bridges and cross the bridges in attempts to reach other human beings.

| First best is falling in love. Second best is being in love. Least best is falling out of love. But any of it is better than never having been in love.

| You can never be great at anything unless you love it. Not be in love with it, but love the thing, admire the thing. And it seems that if you love the thing, and you don't just want to possess it, it will find you. But if you're in love with the thing, it may run like hell away from you.

| When we find someone who is brave, fun, intelligent, and loving, we have to thank the universe.

| It's very hard for adults to maintain respect and romance so that a love affair can be sustained over years.

| Forgiveness. It's one of the greatest gifts you can give yourself, to forgive. Forgive everybody. You are relieved of carrying that burden of resentment. You really are lighter. You feel lighter. You just drop that. (See also: [How to Forgive Someone Who Has Hurt You](#), [melyssagriffin.com](#))

| When people see the laughing face, even if they're jealous of it, their burden is lightened. But do it first for yourself. Laugh and dare to try to love somebody, starting with yourself.

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

Self-pity in its early stages is as snug as a feather mattress. Only when it hardens does it become uncomfortable.

Love is like a virus. It can happen to anybody at any time.

I believe that people want the scent of love, more than anything else. And I don't mean sentimentality, I don't mean mush. I mean that idea, that human beings are more alike than we are different.

It's hard because people think they have something to lose and the truth is they have everything to gain in trying to love somebody.

Whatever you want to do, if you want to be great at it, you have to love it and be able to make sacrifices for it.

By love I don't mean indulgence. I do not mean sentimentality. And in this instance, I don't even mean romance. I mean that condition that allowed humans to dream of God. That condition that allowed the "dumb" to write spirituals and Russian songs and Irish lilt. That is love, and it's so much larger than anything I can conceive.

Have enough courage to trust love one more time and always one more time.

If you happen to fall in love with someone in another race, it's more difficult, because you have to translate yourself.

I'm convinced that the negative has power. It lives. And if you allow it to perch in your house, in your mind, in your life, it can take you over. So when the rude or cruel thing is said – the lambasting, the gay bashing, the hate – I say, "Take it all out of my house!" Those negative words climb into the woodwork and into the furniture, and the next thing you know they'll be on my skin.

If you want to liberate someone, love them. Not be in love with them – that's dangerous.

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

See also: [self-respect quotes](#), [love yourself quotes](#)

## **Maya Angelou Quotes About Courage, Success**

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[Go to table of contents](#)

Whining lets the brute know there's a victim for him in the neighborhood. [Click to tweet](#)

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

I have enough of life in me to make somebody jealous enough to want to knock me down. I have so much courage in me that I have the effrontery, the incredible gall to stand up. That's it. That's how you get to know who you are.

Those who have something to say accept the fact that that's lonely. One already knows that there will be adversaries.

At fifteen life had taught me undeniably that surrender, in its place, was as honorable as resistance, especially if one had no choice.

The only way you can be a mark is if you want something for nothing. If you're greedy, you're set up.

You may not control all the events that happen to you, but you can decide not to be reduced by them. (See also: [14 Ways to Be Fearless](http://lifehack.org), lifehack.org)

If I'm here, I'll be trying to be a better human being, a better writer, a better friend and a better beloved.

Courage, I don't think anybody is born with courage. I think you may be born with a flair to braggadocio, you know. That's not courage.

We may encounter many defeats, but we must not be defeated. It may even be necessary to encounter the defeat, so that we can know who we are.

In the latter years of your life, your happiness and your self-esteem will be determined by the mountains you surmounted, the valleys you climbed out of, and the life and/or career that you forged for yourself.

The quality of strength lined with tenderness is an unbeatable combination, as are intelligence and necessity when unblunted by formal education.

If somebody is really trying to take your head off with a baseball bat – I don't know how long you're supposed to stand there and turn the other cheek, so he or she can get a better angle at taking your head off.

If I am going to do the most difficult and frightening thing – dying – is it possible that I could do some difficult and impossible things that are good?

I think that each of us is so much alike, and yet at the same time we are so different, and I have a feeling that if you encountered difficulty, and I with my age encountered the same difficulty, I would respond one way, and you would respond another. Neither would be right or wrong. It's just that each of us is courageous, and that's what I encourage, courage, and the courage to see, and the courage to say to oneself what one has seen. Don't be in denial.

You have to deal with what you encounter. But you must not be reduced. And so a way not to be reduced is don't whine! Don't let the incidents which take place in life bring you low.

I did get knocked down flat in front of the whole world, and I rose. I didn't run away – I rose right where I'd been knocked down. And then that's how you get to know yourself.

In order to win, we pay with energy and effort and discipline. If we lose, we pay in disappointment, discontent, and lack of fulfillment.

I am not competing with anyone other than myself. I want to be excellent at whatever I do.

See also: [introvert quotes](#), [confidence quotes](#)

## Maya Angelou Quotes About Happiness, Gratitude, Joy

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[Go to table of contents](#)

I have respect for the past, but I'm a person of the moment. [Click to tweet](#)

Be present in all things and thankful for all things.

I try to see every day as a celebration.

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

I'm here, and I do my best to be completely centered at the place I'm at, then I go forward to the next place.

Let [gratitude](#) be the pillow upon which you kneel to say your nightly prayer. And let faith be the bridge you build to overcome evil and welcome good.

Stormy or sunny days, glorious or lonely nights, I maintain an attitude of gratitude.

She comprehended the perversity of life, that in the struggle lies the joy.

If you must look back, do so forgivingly. If you will look forward, do so prayerfully. But the wisest course would be to be present in the present gratefully.

Joy is a freedom. It helps a person to find his or her own liberation. The person who is joyous takes responsibility for the time he/she takes up and the space that he/she occupies. You share it! Some of you have it ... you share it! That is what joy is! When you continue to give it away you will still have so much more of it.

Happiness is a chance to talk to a friend, to hear good music, to have a good glass of wine. Happiness is a chance to be myself and to find people with whom I agree or who I don't agree but I can learn something.

The ship of my life may or may not be sailing on calm and amiable seas. The challenging days of my existence may or may not be bright and promising. Stormy or sunny days, glorious or lonely nights, I maintain an attitude of gratitude. If I insist on being pessimistic, there is always tomorrow. Today I am blessed.

It's the fire in my eyes, and the flash of my teeth, the swing in my waist, and the joy in my feet.

When you wish someone joy, you wish them peace, love, prosperity, happiness... all the good things.

Every day I awaken I am grateful. My intent is to be totally present in that day. And laugh as much as possible.

Be present in all things and thankful for all things.

## Maya Angelou Quotes About Friendship

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[Go to table of contents](#)

A friend may be waiting behind a stranger's face.

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

Only equals can become friends.

Each one of us has lived through some devastation, some loneliness, some weather superstorm or spiritual superstorm, when we look at each other we must say, I understand. I understand how you feel because I have been there myself. We must support each other and empathize with each other because each of us is more alike than we are unlike.

When someone shows you who they are, believe them the first time. People know themselves much better than you do. That's why it's important to stop expecting them to be something other than who they are.

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.

A man or woman who sees other people as whole and prepared and accords them respect and the same rights has arranged his or her own allies.

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.

I think the more we know the better we are. I mean not just facts. The more we know about each other, the closer we are to learn something about our selves.

I think we ought to give ourselves more time. We should be more patient with ourselves and with each other.

More [friendship quotes](#)

## Maya Angelou Quotes About Family

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[Go to table of contents](#)

I've learned that regardless of your relationship with your parents, you'll miss them when they're gone from your life.

The love of the family, the love of one person can heal. It heals the scars left by a larger society. A massive, powerful society.

Home is a refuge not only from the world, but a refuge from my worries, my troubles, my concerns.

I do not believe that the accident of birth makes people sisters and brothers. It makes them siblings. Gives them mutuality of parentage. Sisterhood and brotherhood are conditions people have to work at. It's a serious matter. You compromise, you give, you take, you stand firm, and you're relentless...And it is an investment. Sisterhood means if you happen to be in Burma and I happen to be in San Diego and I'm married to someone who is very jealous and you're married to somebody who is very possessive, if you call me in the middle of the night, I have to come.

The sisters and brothers that you meet give you the materials which your character uses to build itself. It is said that some people are born great, others achieve it, some have it thrust upon them. In truth, the ways in which your character is built have to do with all three of those. Those around you, those you choose, and those who choose you.

I sustain myself with the love of family.

| If I have a monument in this world, it is my son.

| My pride had been starved by a family who assumed unlimited authority in its own affairs.

| A mother's love liberates.

See also: [family quotes](#)

## Maya Angelou Quotes About Mothers, Womanhood, Feminism

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[Go to table of contents](#)

| I became the kind of parent my mother was to me.

| Most plain girls are virtuous because of the scarcity of opportunity to be otherwise.

| I have a feeling that I make a very good friend, and I'm a good mother, and a good sister, and a good citizen. I am involved in life itself – all of it. And I have a lot of energy and a lot of nerve.

| The sadness of the women's movement is that they don't allow the necessity of love. See, I don't personally trust any revolution where love is not allowed.

| A woman in harmony with her spirit is like a river flowing. She goes where she will without pretense and arrives at her destination prepared to be herself and only herself.

| Courage allows the successful woman to fail – and to learn powerful lessons from the failure – so that in the end, she didn't fail at all.

| Stepping onto a brand-new path is difficult, but not more difficult than remaining in a situation, which is not nurturing to the whole woman.

| A wise woman wishes to be no one's enemy; a wise woman refuses to be anyone's victim.

| I am a woman phenomenally, phenomenal woman that is your grandmother, that is your mother, that is your sister, that is you and that is me.

| My mother had said me, "All right, you've been raised, so don't let anybody else raise you. You know the difference between right and wrong. Do right. And remember – you can always come home." And she continued to liberate me until she died.

| On her mother: On the night she died, I went to the hospital. I told my mom, "Let me tell you about yourself. You deserved a great daughter, and you got one. And you liberated me to be one. So if it's time for you to go, you may have done everything God brought you here to do.

When teachers or people in authority put me down or in one way or another tried to make me feel less than equal to what they thought I should be – my mother was on my side. It was amazing.

My mother raised me, and then freed me.

My mother is so full of joy and life. I am her child. And that is better than being the child of anyone else in the world.

## Maya Angelou Quotes About Education, Children, Learning, Teaching

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[Go to table of contents](#)

I've learned that I still have a lot to learn. [Click to tweet](#)

I do hope that young men and women will start to think for themselves and start to take responsibility for their own thoughts.

We need to remember to teach our children that solitude can be a much-to-be-desired condition. Not only is it acceptable to be alone; at times it is positively to be wished for. ....In the silence we listen to ourselves. Then we ask questions of ourselves. We describe ourselves to ourselves, and in the quietude we may even hear the voice of God.

I think we have systematically and critically harmed ourselves and many young people by advising them not to try things.

My mother said I must always be intolerant of ignorance but understanding of illiteracy. That some people, unable to go to school, were more educated and more intelligent than college professors.

Any book that helps a child to form a habit of reading, to make reading one of his deep and continuing needs, is good for him.

Each child belongs to all of us and they will bring us a tomorrow in direct relation to the responsibility we have shown to them.

If I'm going to a new country, I try to learn something about the language and the culture, so I don't just go bumbling over things.

Children's talent to endure stems from their ignorance of alternatives.

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.

People feel guilty. And guilt is stymieing. Guilt immobilizes. Guilt closes the air ducts and the veins, and makes people ignorant.

If a person – any human being – is told often enough, “You are nothing. You are nothing. You account for nothing. You count for nothing. You are less than a human being. I have no visibility of you”, the person finally begins to believe it.

There is nothing so pitiful as a young cynic because he has gone from knowing nothing to believing nothing.

If the door has been opened and I’ve been invited, or if I’m not invited and I somehow know I’m supposed to go in there, I put myself together and go in, praying all the while. I try to learn something before I go in. I try to show some respect of the place I’m going into.

If you’re in love with your children, you’re in their lives all the time. Leave them alone. Let them grow and make some mistakes. (See also: [Why we should let our children fail](#))

On her mother: She’d talk to me as if I had some sense.

More [education quotes](#)

## Maya Angelou Quotes About Religion

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[Go to table of contents](#)

God puts rainbows in the clouds so that each of us – in the dreariest and most dreaded moments – can see a possibility of hope.

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.

Stand up straight and realize who you are, that you tower over your circumstances. You are a child of God. Stand up straight.

I believe that each of us comes from the Creator trailing wisps of glory. So at this wonderful, young age of 65, I don’t know yet what the Lord has for me to do. I try to live up to the energy and to the calling, but I wouldn’t dare say I have even scratched the surface yet.

The most difficult thing in the world, it seems to me, is to realize that I am a child of God; to keep that in my mind all the time.

I’m working at trying to be a Christian, and that’s serious business. It’s like trying to be a good Jew, a good Muslim, a good Buddhist, a good Shintoist, a good Zoroastrian, a good friend, a good lover, a good mother, a good buddy – it’s serious business.

See also: [Buddha quotes](#), [spiritual quotes](#)

## Maya Angelou Quotes About 'Doing Right', Justice, Respect, Truth

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[Go to table of contents](#)

While the rest of the world has been improving technology, Ghana has been improving the quality of man's humanity to man.

There's a world of difference between truth and facts. Facts can obscure the truth.

The truth is very important. No matter how negative it is, it is imperative that you learn the truth, not necessarily the facts. I mean, that, that can come, but facts can stand in front of the truth and almost obscure the truth. It is imperative that students learn the truth of our history.

My equipment tends to be that of a social humanitarian and a poet, which I suppose is the same thing, and I tend to watch how people are.

In the 16th century, Niccolò Machiavelli – in an attempt to get back in the good graces of the powerful – wrote a slim volume called *The Prince*. In that book he showed the powers that be how to control the people. That book is a statement: separate and rule, divide and conquer. That's five hundred years ago and it still works, because we allow ourselves to be lead around with holes through our noses.

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.

I believe we are still so innocent. The species are still so innocent that a person who is apt to be murdered believes that the murderer, just before he puts the final wrench on his throat, will have enough compassion to give him one sweet cup of water.

I wish that we could look into each other's faces, in each other's eyes, and see our own selves. I hope that the children have not been so scarred by their upbringing that they only think fear when they see someone else who looks separate from them.

I pray for humility because that comes from inside out. And what humility does for one, is it reminds us that there are people before me. I have already been paid for. And what I need to do is prepare myself so that I can pay for someone else who has yet to come, but who may be here and needs me.

I believe what I have to say is important, and I believe the people coming to hear me are important, and so the occasion of itself alone has an importance, which forces me to stare down my nerves.

I like to speak on matters which matter to human beings, and almost everything matters to human beings. (See also: [responsibility quotes](#))

The root cause of all the problems we have in the world today is ignorance of course. But most, polarization.

It is better to control oneself, if one can, and not hit back. But on certain occasions, it is imperative to defend oneself. I don't think it's fair to ask anybody not to defend herself or himself.

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

Let's tell the [truth](#) to people. When people ask, 'How are you?' have the nerve sometimes to answer truthfully.

The truth is, right may not be expedient. It may not be profitable, but it will satisfy your soul.

My heart is so heavy when I see the reality of the Indian reservation and as an American, I know I am, too, responsible.

People trying to separate people rather than bring us together... please. You don't just see it in America. It's all over the world.

See also: [respect quotes](#), [character quotes](#)

## Maya Angelou Quotes About History, Black History, Racism

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[Go to table of contents](#)

I am overwhelmed by the grace and persistence of my people.

Don't hesitate to learn the most painful aspects of our history, understand it.

It is imperative that young white men and women study the [black American history](#). It is imperative that blacks and whites study the Asian American history.

There's something beautiful about the fact that Obama was not just elected, but elected decisively across racial, and socio-economic and cultural groups and that we all celebrated in his win.

The country didn't get that way in a week; we've had years and years of getting behind in our economy. So President Obama stepped into a hellhole and people wanted him to change it as soon as he came in. But he's got his adversaries to deal with in the House and Senate, so it's not easy.

All of my history as an African-American woman, as a Jewish woman, as a Muslim woman. I'm bringing everything I ever knew, and all the stories I've read – everything good, strong, kind and powerful. I bring it all with me into every situation, and I will not allow my life to be minimized by anybody's racism or sexism or ageism.

History, despite its wrenching pain, cannot be unlived, but if faced with courage, need not be lived again.

I would encourage us all, African Americans, Asians, Latinos, Whites, Native Americans to study history. I long for the time when all the human history is taught as one history. I am stronger because you are stronger. I am weaker if you are weak. So we are more alike than we are unlike.

I have great respect for the past.

The problem I have with haters is that they see my glory, but they don't know my story.

There's racism and sexism and ageism and all sorts of idiocies. But bad news is not news. We've had bad news as a species for a long time. We've had slavery and human sacrifice and the holocaust and brutalities of such measure.

My people couldn't have survived slavery without having hope that it would get better.

I'm a descendant of someone bought and sold, and brought in 1619 in what was to become the United States.

As far as I knew white women were never lonely, except in books. White men adored them, Black men desired them and Black women worked for them.

We are growing up. We are growing up! Out of the idiocies – the ignorances of racism and sexism and ageism and all those ignorances.

For Africa to me... is more than a glamorous fact. It is a historical truth. No man can know where he is going unless he knows exactly where he has been and exactly how he arrived at his present place.

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.

The fact that the adult American Negro female emerges a formidable character is often met with amazement, distaste and even belligerence. It is seldom accepted as an inevitable outcome of the struggle won by survivors, and deserves respect if not ent.

We cannot change the past, but we can change our attitude toward it. Uproot guilt and plant forgiveness. Tear out arrogance and seed humility. Exchange love for hate – thereby, making the present comfortable and the future promising.

It is time for parents to teach young people early on that in diversity there is beauty and there is strength.

More [history quotes](#)

## Part 4. Maya Angelou Poems

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[Go to table of contents](#)

Alone, all alone. Nobody, but nobody. Can make it out here alone.

I couldn't tell fact from fiction, or if the dream was true. My only sure prediction in this world was you. I'd touch your features inchily. Beard love and dared the cost. The santed spiel reeled me unreal and I found my senses lost.

We need joy as we need air. We need love as we need water. We need each other as we need the earth we share.

When my bones are stiff and aching, and my feet won't climb the stair, I will only ask one favor: don't bring me no rocking chair. When you see me walking, stumbling, don't study and get it wrong. 'Cause tired don't mean lazy and every goodbye ain't gone. I'm the same person I was back then, a little less hair, a little less chin, a lot less lungs and much less wind. But ain't I lucky I can still breathe in.

Just do right. Right may not be expedient, it may not be profitable, but it will satisfy your soul. It brings you the kind of protection that bodyguards can't give you. So try to live your life in a way that you will not regret years of useless virtue and inertia and timidity. Take up the battle. Take it up. It's yours. This is your life. This is your world.

Out of the huts of history's shame, I rise. Up from a past that's rooted in pain, I rise. I'm a black ocean, leaping and wide. Welling and swelling I bear in the tide. Leaving behind nights of terror and fear, I rise. Into a daybreak that's wondrously clear, I rise. Bringing the gifts that my ancestors gave, I am the dream and the hope of the slave. I rise, I rise, I rise.

The variety of our skin tones can confuse, bemuse, delight, brown and pink and beige and purple, tan and blue and white... I note the obvious differences between each sort and type, but we are more alike, my friends, than we are unlike.

I am a Woman. Phenomenally. Phenomenal Woman, that's me.

## Part 5. Quotes From Maya Angelou Books

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[Go to table of contents](#)

### I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings

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| Hoping for the best, prepared for the worst, and unsurprised by anything in between.

| Life is going to give you just what you put in it. Put your whole heart in everything you do, and pray, then you can wait.

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

[Amazon link](#) for the book

### Mom & Me & Mom

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| My mother's gifts of courage to me were both large and small. The latter are woven so subtly into the fabric of my psyche that I can hardly distinguish where she stops and I begin.

| I will look after you and I will look after anybody you say needs to be looked after, any way you say. I am here. I brought my whole self to you. I am your mother.

| I want you to learn that you cannot have anything without working for it.

| Don't do anything that you think is wrong. Just do what you think is right, and then be ready to back it up even with your life.

[Amazon link](#) for the book

### The Complete Collected Poems of Maya Angelou

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| We are more alike, my friends, than we are unlike.

| The caged bird sings with a fearful trill of things unknown but longed for still and his tune is heard on the distant hill for the caged bird sings of freedom.

| A bird that stalks down his narrow cage can seldom see through his bars of rage his wings are clipped and his feet are tied so he opens his throat to sing.

| A caged bird stands on the grave of dreams his shadow shouts on a nightmare scream his wings are clipped and his feet are tied so he opens his throat to sing.

[Amazon link](#) for the book

## And Still I Rise: A Book of Poems

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You may shoot me with your words, you may cut me with your eyes, you may kill me with your hatefulness, but still, like air, I'll rise!

Had I known that the heart breaks slowly, dismantling itself into unrecognizable plots of misery... had I known yet I would have loved you, your brash and insolent beauty, your heavy comedic face and knowledge of sweet delights, but from a distance I would have left you whole and wholly for the delectation of those who wanted more and cared less.

You may write me down in history with your bitter, twisted lies. You may trod me in the very dirt, but still like dust, I'll rise.

[Amazon link](#) for the book

## The Heart of a Woman

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You can't get too high for somebody to bring you down.

I had to trust life, since I was young enough to believe that life loved the person who dared to live it.

"Can I do it? I'd rather not try and fail". That's stupid talk Maya. Every try will not succeed. But if you're going to live, live at all, your business is trying... You fail, you get up and try again."

[Amazon link](#) for the book

## Phenomenal Woman: Four Poems Celebrating Women

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Pretty women wonder where my secret lies. I'm not cute or built to suit a fashion model's size. But when I start to tell them, they think I'm telling lies. I say, it's in the reach of my arms the span of my hips, the stride of my step, the curl of my lips. I'm a woman. Phenomenally. Phenomenal woman, that's me.

Men themselves have wondered what they see in me. They try so much but they can't touch my inner mystery. When I try to show them they say they still can't see. I say, it's in the arch of my back, the sun of my smile, the ride of my breasts, the grace of my style. I'm a woman. Phenomenally. Phenomenal woman, that's me.

Now you understand just why my head's not bowed. I don't shout or jump about or have to talk real loud. When you see me passing it ought to make you proud. I say, it's in the click of my heels, the bend of my hair, the palm of my hand, the need of my care, 'cause I'm a woman. Phenomenally. Phenomenal woman, that's me.

I know that I'm not the easiest person to live with. The challenge I put on myself is so great that the person I live with feels himself challenged. I bring a lot to bear, and I don't know how not to.

[Amazon link](#) for the link

## Letters to My Daughter

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I believe that one can never leave home. I believe that one carries the shadows, the dreams, the fears and the dragons of home under one's skin, at the extreme corners of one's eyes and possibly in the gristle of the earlobe.

Make every effort to change things you do not like. If you cannot make a change, change the way you have been thinking. You might find a new solution.

All great artists draw from the same resource: the human heart, which tells us all that we are more alike than we are unlike.

One person, with good purpose, can, constitute the majority.

[Amazon link](#) for the book

## Part 6. More Inspiring Authors Like Maya Angelou

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### Guy Johnson (Maya Angelou's son)

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[Go to table of contents](#)

I grew up in her light. Sometimes I wasn't worthy of it, but it has always been an experience that expanded me. Guy Johnson

She thinks that the divine hand is in all things. She has faith that's like a rock – you can stand on it. She speaks to our humanity and she reminds us that we are both brother and sister to the rest of the human race. Guy Johnson

Keep on speaking, Ma. We need the lessons, the beautiful poems, books, movies, dances, celebrations and love. Guy Johnson

On her mother's mission: It had to do with teaching people that we have to give respect to each other and respect this planet... that we are more alike than we are unlike... and that racism is a foolish and divisive construct. Guy Johnson

I think the only reason she stuck around this long is that she felt she was on a divine mission. Guy Johnson

| She was a warrior for calm, understanding, peace, and love. Guy Johnson

## **Oprah Winfrey**

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[Go to table of contents](#)

| Doing the best at this moment puts you in the best place for the next moment. Oprah Winfrey

| The biggest adventure you can take is to live the life of your dreams. Oprah Winfrey

| Where there is no struggle, there is no strength. Oprah Winfrey [Click to tweet](#)

## **Alice Walker**

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[Go to table of contents](#)

| Expect nothing. Live frugally on surprise. Alice Walker

| In nature, nothing is perfect and everything is perfect. Trees can be contorted, bent in weird ways, and they're still beautiful. Alice Walker

| In search of my mother's garden, I found my own. Alice Walker

## **Emily Dickinson**

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[Go to table of contents](#)

| Tell the truth, but tell it slant. Emily Dickinson

| Saying nothing sometimes says the most. Emily Dickinson

| Hope is the thing with feathers that perches in the soul and sings the tune without the words and never stops at all. Emily Dickinson

## **Toni Morrison**

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[Go to table of contents](#)

| Love is or it ain't. Thin love ain't love at all. Toni Morrison

| [Freeing yourself](#) was one thing, claiming ownership of that freed self was another. Toni Morrison

| You wanna fly, you got to give up the shit that weighs you down. Toni Morrison

## **James Baldwin**

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## [Go to table of contents](#)

| People are trapped in history and history is trapped in them. James Baldwin

| Love does not begin and end the way we seem to think it does. Love is a battle, love is a war; love is a growing up. James Baldwin

| American history is longer, larger, more various, more beautiful, and more terrible than anything anyone has ever said about it. James Baldwin

## **Nelson Mandela**

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### [Go to table of contents](#)

| The greatest glory in living lies not in never falling, but in rising every time we fall. Nelson Mandela

| When a man is denied the right to live the life he believes in, he has no choice but to become an outlaw. Nelson Mandela

| Resentment is like drinking poison and then hoping it will kill your enemies. Nelson Mandela

## **Martin Luther King Jr.**

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### [Go to table of contents](#)

| Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. Martin Luther King Jr

| Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that. Martin Luther King Jr

| I have decided to stick to love...Hate is too great a burden to bear. Martin Luther King Jr

| Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter. Martin Luther King Jr

| Only in the darkness can you see the stars. Martin Luther King Jr

| **By Maya Angelou:** Martin Luther King was a human being with a brilliant mind, a powerful heart, and insight, and courage and also with a sense of humor. So he was accessible. Martin Luther King Jr.

## **Malcolm X**

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### [Go to table of contents](#)

If you're not ready to die for it, put the word 'freedom' out of your vocabulary. Malcolm X  
[Click to tweet](#)

Education is the passport to the future, for tomorrow belongs to those who prepare for it today. Malcolm X

I'm for truth, no matter who tells it. I'm for justice, no matter who it is for or against. I'm a human being, first and foremost, and as such I'm for whoever and whatever benefits humanity as a whole. Malcolm X

There is no better than adversity. Every defeat, every heartbreak, every loss, contains its own seed, its own lesson on how to improve your performance the next time. Malcolm X

If someone puts their hands on you make sure they never put their hands on anybody else again. Malcolm X

**By Maya Angelou:** Malcolm stood at the microphone. 'Every person under the sound of my voice is a soldier. You are either fighting for your freedom or betraying the fight for freedom or enlisted in the army to deny somebody else's freedom.' Malcolm X

## Rosa Parks

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### [Go to table of contents](#)

Arrest me for sitting on a bus? You may do that. Rosa Parks

I would like to be known as a person who is concerned about freedom and equality and justice and prosperity for all people. Rosa Parks

I have learned over the years that when one's mind is made up, [this diminishes fear](#); knowing what must be done does away with fear. Rosa Parks

The only tired I was, was tired of giving in. Rosa Parks

You must never be fearful about what you are doing when it is right. Rosa Parks

## Michelle Obama

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### [Go to table of contents](#)

There are still many causes worth sacrificing for, so much history yet to be made. Michelle Obama

People who are truly strong lift others up. People who are truly powerful bring others together. Michelle Obama

My most important title is still “mom-in-chief.” My daughters are still the heart of my heart and the center of my world. Michelle Obama

You can’t make decisions based on fear and the possibility of what might happen. Michelle Obama

## Barack Obama

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### [Go to table of contents](#)

You know, my faith is one that admits some doubt. Barack Obama

Change will not come if we wait for some other person, or if we wait for some other time. We are the ones we’ve been waiting for. We are the change that we seek. Barack Obama

The best way to not feel hopeless is to get up and do something. Don’t wait for good things to happen to you. If you go out and make some good things happen, you will fill the world with hope, you will fill yourself with hope. Barack Obama

If you’re walking down the right path and you’re willing to keep walking, eventually you’ll make progress. Barack Obama

## Part 7. Conclusion

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### [Go to table of contents](#)

If I could give you one thought, it would be to lift someone up. Lift a stranger up – lift her up. I would ask you, mother and father, brother and sister, lovers, mother and daughter, father and son, lift someone. The very idea of lifting someone up will lift you, as well. Maya Angelou [Click to tweet](#)

Call to action: Watch [“NOBODY Has a Right to Treat You BADLY!” – Maya Angelou](#) (YouTube video from Evan Carmichael)

## Table Of Contents

---

### Part 1

[Top 15 Images](#)

[Best Maya Angelou Quotes](#)

### Part 2

[Maya Angelou Quotes That ARE](#)

[Famous](#)

[Short](#)

[Inspirational](#)

Funny

Deep

Wise

**Part 3**

Maya Angelou Quotes ABOUT

Life

Love

Courage

Happiness

Friendship

Family

Mothers

Education

Religion

Doing right

History

**Part 4**

Maya Angelou Poems

**Part 5**

Quotes From Books

**Part 6**

Similar Authors

**Part 7**

Conclusion