

Dreikurs Sayings

1. Every untrue answer to a child's question endangers the child's confidence in you.
2. The spoiled, timid child who is greatly attached to his mother, may offer strong resistance to the society of other children.
3. Our children have become immune to adults domination in the process of a democratic evolution which provided them with a sense of equality.
4. Firmness refers to **your** behavior in a conflict situation: domination means forcing your decision on the child.
5. A mother who constantly reminds and does things for a child unnecessarily not only takes a child's responsibility away from him but also becomes dependent on him for her feeling of importance as a mother.
6. Learning takes place in play, without any concern for success and failure, pressure and resistance.
7. The greatest stimulation for the development of the child is exposing him to experiences which seem to be beyond his reach but are not.
8. Most people get exactly what they want—only they don't know that they want it.
9. One cannot use one's inner resources if one is convinced of having none.
10. Our homes and our schools are filled with acts of mutual warfare.
11. It is better to be wrong in figuring out the meaning of a situation than to overlook it.
12. Accusations do not promote cooperation.
13. We need to recognize the tremendous power which lies in all of us and which we cannot use as long as we feel victimized.
14. It is often worthwhile to support children in a faulty suggestion and let them experience the result.
15. We use our minds and our bodies, our thoughts and our emotions, every part of our beings, for the purposes that we have set for ourselves.
16. The concept of maturity is a means of self-glorification for an adult population that feels defeated by its children.
17. A call for "law and order" and all that the expression connotes, will only lead to more rebellion.
18. Man is no longer a servant; he is the master of himself.
19. Democratic evolution made man the agent responsible for himself, and for the sphere in which he operates.
20. Man is a free agent, but he does not feel free. Man must discover himself in order to find personal peace and to live at peace with others.
21. Today a husband and wife cannot live peacefully with each other if they do not treat each other as equals.
22. Parents can't get along with their children if they assume that their children can be subdued.
23. Paradise could be attained if man knew how to apply his knowledge for the benefit of all.
24. Unselfish love has become a lost art; faith in anything is an outdated notion; relaxation an idle dream.

25. Man has become his fellow man's worst enemy, and the closer we live to each other, the more we fight and fear each other.
26. To a large degree we determine our destiny and invite our fate.
27. Society is not imposed upon individuals; it is composed of them.
28. People are interdependent; each of us influences and is influenced.
29. Social adjustment is no longer identical with conformity.
30. If we are to have better children, parents must become better educators.
31. Knowing what not to do is a great help in determining what should be done.
32. The most important person in a child's life is his mother.
33. The struggle against the educator invariably develops into a struggle against all order and regulations.
34. There are no ills created by democracy that can't be cured by more democracy.
35. The assumption of a "natural" masculine superiority has always been a threat to women and men alike.
36. We are made to believe that we are created equal, but from then on we no longer are.
37. Communication in the contemporary American family has not broken down; it exists, but not always for beneficial purposes.
38. The child should be commended for what he **has done**, and not for what he is, be it good, nice, handsome, pretty, or cute.
39. The proper way of training children is identical with the proper way of treating fellow human beings.
40. Words are as often used to conceal the meaning of our action as to convey it.
41. People before long must agree on something—even if it is to disagree.
42. To re-establish language as a means of communication within the family would require the avoidance of talk whenever conflict arises.
43. A parent should emphasize the correct procedure instead of forbidding the incorrect.
44. Children decide amongst themselves which role they intend to play in the family and parents reinforce their decision.
45. The less competitive the parents are the less different the children.
46. There are many things parents can do, but first they must become aware of what not to do.
47. Pity has usually a more damaging effect than the disadvantage or tragedy which caused the pity.
48. To the question of how much a mother should give in to a child, the answer is that a little tyranny is always too much.
49. All parents make the same mistakes and all children share in mistaken values.
50. Our emotions always support our real intentions.
51. We may discourage a child by expecting nothing of him or by expecting too much.
52. The modern teacher is confronted with children who are too often already handicapped by their home training.
53. In our democratic era, our responsibility is to decide what we are going to do and not what the other should do.

54. There is always a correlation - the less one knows what to do, the more one tells others what they should do.
55. Usually the father and the children don't have any need to take on too much responsibility because the mother is so good that she is taking care of everything.
56. We say the child is stupid, the child is bad, the child is lazy, when actually only his action is so.
57. The strive for superiority is a mistaken idea about having a place and status.
58. Neurosis is a statement of bankruptcy; it is an expression of defeat.
59. Over-concern with responsibility is evading the real responsibility.
60. Tension is the anxiety about one's place in life.
61. Security comes from a feeling of being able to deal effectively with anything life may have to offer.
62. Inferiority feeling is a stimulation for compensation; inferiority complex is the declaration of defeat.
63. Ambition is in direct relation to the depth of the inferiority feeling.
64. If you feel inferior you always can push someone else down.
65. Inferiority is a mistaken self-evaluation; it is nothing real.
66. We do not compensate, but over-compensate.
67. It is the effort to stop a disturbed function that keeps functions disturbed.
68. All human behavior is purposive.
69. Laziness doesn't explain behavior; it only describes it.
70. Discouragement is at the root of all misbehavior.
71. If we feel defeated by someone, we call him a name.
72. If we have a benefit in being sick, we stay sick.
73. Encouragement is increasing self-confidence and respect for oneself.
74. Dependency is tyranny.
76. A power-drunk person does not enjoy his victory when you admit your defeat.
77. A busybody is a person who goes through the motions of doing something without doing anything.
78. Permissiveness ignores the need for order.
79. Behavior is movement—inner action.
80. Frustration is a psychological response to things we are not willing to tolerate.
81. Suggestion is interaction. The one who has the better salesmanship has a better suggestion.
82. No habit is maintained if it loses its purpose.
83. "I'm mixed up," means "Don't pin me down."
84. Compulsive behavior is the expression of a power contest.
85. We make our experiences according to our goals in life.
86. Our emotions are the steam which we give ourselves in order to fortify ourselves in the direction in which we want to move.
87. Life exists only at this moment; fulfilling life means meeting any given situation adequately.
88. The feeling of futility is denouncement.

89. Neurosis is a form of movement. It is a way of escape in a given task.
90. All qualities are trained and are trained because the individual finds them effective.
91. All generalizations are abstractions. They are generally made for prejudices or for defensive purposes.
92. The threat of making a mistake undermines a child's ability.
93. The more afraid you are of making a mistake, the more likely you make one.
94. We are concerned with the lower and higher status in society through making mistakes—making fewer mistakes makes us higher, making more mistakes makes us lower.
95. We have to have the courage to be imperfect.
96. Merely not doing the wrong thing is not enough; but it helps.
97. We learn from our mistakes only if we are not afraid to make mistakes.
98. All opinions are correct from the point of view of the observer.
99. The observer, by his unconscious choice, determines what he will see.
100. Our conscience exists only when we consider violating its demands.
101. There are no absolutes. Everything is how we see it.
102. Guilt feelings are the expression of good intentions which we do not have.
103. We permit ourselves to be conscious of what we need to see clearly.
104. We don't want to know anything that would interfere with our goals.
105. It is never you who is doing something to the other, but you think it is always the other guy who makes you do it to him.
106. The life style is based on the need to have a guiding line through the complexities of life.
107. A bias always takes the "as if" and means "it is."
108. Instincts are assumptions or abstractions which do not exist.
109. "I have no ambition," means "I don't want to do it."
110. People hear what they expect to hear even if it is not said.
111. We determine our own responses without knowing it.
112. Our ability to function depends on our feeling of belonging.
113. The feeling of belonging is merely in our own mind.
114. We all have a place and do not need to find one.
115. Insecurity is caused by the doubt—in one's strength.
116. You can maintain symptoms only if you fight against them.
117. We must see the movement of the person, not "qualities."
118. Logic is a prostitute. You use it as it suits you. Logic is not related to truth.
119. We have no perception of reality because of our bias. The social group is reality.
120. We all have biased apperception. We have no direct access to facts.
121. Fear does not avoid danger, but invites it.
122. The realization that we are capable of our own decisions is not part of our cultural inheritance.
123. We cannot conceive reality as it is, only as we see it in our personal bias.
124. Emotionalism is self-indulgence — a rebellion against order.
125. Emotions are our tools with which we are able to follow our personal convictions. They are not our masters.

126. Fear is a misjudgment, doubting our ability that we can handle a situation.
127. We all do only what we decide.
128. We can train to become sensitive, not to our emotions, but to the situation and the motivation of others.
129. Neurosis is an alibi based on a subjective feeling of sickness.
130. Faith is the highest form of subjectivity.
131. Every concept of truth is an approximation — not an absolute.
132. We allow ourselves to become the victims of our surroundings.
133. We become free if we stop being concerned with our failures and successes.
134. Nobody does anything he does not want to do.
135. A child only behaves badly because he doubts his ability to get anywhere if he would behave himself.
136. Every child knows what he should do; but this does not mean that he will do it.
137. We underestimate grossly what our children can do.
138. A child is never irrational or illogical in his behavior. He is always well-although unconsciously-planned, according to his goals.
139. Stimulate children to find solutions. Don't tell them.
140. You push a child down by over-protection or by criticism.
141. The improvement of the child is in direct correlation to the improvement in the parent.
142. If you do something for a child that he can do for himself, you take away the child's responsibility towards life.
143. Any child who is over-dependent is over-demanding.
144. A dependent child is one who tyrannizes others, who puts everyone in his service.
145. There are no bad children, only discouraged children.
146. We all have an unrecognized prejudice against children.
147. It is normal for our children to be abnormal.
148. Our emotional response to a child's behavior is in line with the child's intentions.
149. It is a handicap for a boy to have a successful father and a girl to have a successful mother.
150. Proper relationship is kindness and firmness. Only if we are firm will the child respect us.
151. Talking is one of the most ineffective things to do.
152. One should never talk to a child unless one is sure that he wants to listen. That eliminates 90% of all parental "talk".
153. Mothers are intelligent about everything except about their motherhood.
154. The desire to be "good" mothers makes them the worst mothers. These "good" mothers are America's tragedy.
155. Rhythm (or regularity) is a premise of life. The earlier the child is confronted with rhythm, the better.
156. The behavior of a child shows his intentions.
157. By doing nothing in a power contest, you defeat the child's power.
158. In an autocratic society the deed and the doer are identical. One who does something bad, is bad.

159. In a democratic society we must distinguish between the deed and the doer. Regardless of how wrong a person is, he has his values and dignity.
160. All education mistakes are a violation of the principle of equality, through either fighting or giving in.
161. The process of democratization is the process of equalization.
162. The basic need for human equality led to the development of democracy.
163. We must recognize the fundamental dignity of every man.
164. The logic of social living demands the recognition of equality.
165. We have harmony only among equals.
166. All our problems are social problems, because man is a social being.
167. Social interest means a feeling of communion, of being a part of mankind.
168. Belonging sometimes takes the form of identification, when one is not sure of being worthwhile if one is different.
169. All generalities are abstractions; everybody is unique.
170. We must see the social function of truth; it is not an absolute value. Absolute truth requires an authority, who decides what is "True" and what is "False."
171. It is not his brain that makes man a social animal; it is the group in which he lives.
172. A proper relationship depends on the social climate in which the transaction takes place.
173. Kindness implies a genuine respect for another individual. It does not require submission.
174. Natural consequences permit an experience of reality, without the imposition of an authority.
175. Neurosis is a tremendous testimony to man's ingenuity. We are all culturally conditioned to be neurotic.
176. In psychotherapy we try to extricate the patient from the faulty values of society.
177. Love is not an emotion. It is a relationship.
178. A breakdown results at the point of the limitation of social interest.
179. All human qualities are expressions of social interaction.
180. All qualities which are inherited are inherited only as potentialities.
181. The individual is in constant interaction and always finds his counterparts with whom to agree, either to fight or cooperate.
182. Interaction takes place in the first moment of meeting, in the split second of seeing each other.
183. We are constantly influencing each other positively or negatively.
184. We know about each other more than we realize.
185. So many people mix humility with humiliation.
186. Competition is neither "natural" nor mandatory. It makes the realization of equality impossible. The less competitive a person is, the better he can stand competition. The competitive person can stand competition only if he wins.
187. In a competitive society man becomes man's enemy.
189. A neurotic conflict implies that what I want is not in line with what I should do.
190. There is hardly any rivalry possible without competition.

191. In a moment of conflict, words are meaningless; only actions count.
192. Competition means, "I give up where you succeed, and I move in the area where you fail."
193. Only when we stop fighting life, do we let our potentials unfold.
194. Only when we forget ourselves can we "find" ourselves. We are what we are doing.
195. When we "fight" ourselves, we are deceiving ourselves. We only do what we intend to do.
196. Making a mistake implies humiliation; it lowers one's social status, as being right increases it.
197. Making mistakes is unavoidable and the mistake is less important in most cases than what the individual does after he has made the mistake.
198. Many people devote much time and effort to preventing mistakes, thereby creating a side show which diminishes their efficiency in dealing with the real problem at hand.
199. Everybody likes approval but the free man, sure of his own value, does not depend on it.
200. It is as difficult to stop a child from doing mischief in order to get mother's attention as it is to stop her from falling for his provocation.
201. A child in a power contest is honor-bound to do what he is told NOT to do and to refuse to do what is asked.
202. Even if we accuse ourselves, often more than is justified, we try to demonstrate our high moral standards by criticizing ourselves.
203. Most contemporary parents vacillate between over-indulgence and suppression.
204. Any social relationship between unequals is unstable and inevitably leads to conflict and disharmony.
205. Submission to force is no longer essential for living; on the contrary, virtue lies in opposing it whenever it occurs.
206. The transition from an autocratic to a democratic society is characterized by competitiveness.
207. All mistaken attempts to resolve a conflict in a democracy are based on either too little respect for others or too little self-respect.
208. One thing is certain; in a true democracy no one can gain his ends through power and aggressive force.
209. It is a general misconception to assume that security can be provided by others.
210. We think our neighbors can influence our lives, for better or for worse; but we are also our neighbor's neighbors.
211. Social integration or the lack of it determines happiness or misery for each individual.
212. Democracy has progressed by discarding the yardsticks that formerly measured superiority and inferiority.
213. We are not obligated to be competitive just because those around us are.
214. Impatience to solve a conflict immediately may prevent preparing the ground for a sound solution.

215. The pressure of reality can often bring solutions where anxiety and force merely lead to increased hostility.
216. No problem is too difficult once it is recognized as a common task.
217. To think in terms of what the other person should do leads to a dead end.
218. Our concern with our own course of action removes the pressure from the other person and gives him an opportunity to think what he could do to improve the situation.
219. One does not win the friendship and regard of a child by humiliating him or giving in to his whims.
220. We constantly encourage or discourage those around us and thereby contribute materially to their greater or lesser ability to function well.
221. We must realize that as we respond to others, we influence them too.
222. We all **could** do better than we are; but this does not mean that unless we become better we are not worthy.
223. Faith is the basis of encouragement; To believe in others, not merely in their possibilities, but in them **as they are**.
224. We must get used to the idea that in a democratic atmosphere freedom and order are inseparable.
225. Whereas our ability to know almost everything about ourselves is theoretically unlimited, we do not want to know or need to know everything.
226. Our memory is always at our disposal; it does only what we want it to do.
227. It is customary to assume a sharp division between intellect and emotion; actually both are interrelated and integrated.
228. Feeling inferior to others has nothing to do with being inferior.
229. Perhaps our experience in our attempts to correct our shortcomings would be different if we had learned how to treat ourselves.
230. Just as parents need to distinguish between control and influence with their children, so the same distinction holds true in dealing with ourselves.
231. One may question the possibility of living in peace with oneself and others in a world which knows no peace.
232. By not being preoccupied with the resentment of the condition in which we find ourselves, we can spot the area where change and improvement is possible.
233. Guilt feelings divert our attention from what we should do to what we have done.
234. Conflicts solved by "subjugation" breed new conflicts.
235. Victors lose respect for the vanquished, and the vanquished lose respect for themselves.

The Realization of Equality in the Home

Rudolf Dreikurs, M.D.

While the term "equality" is constantly used today, there seems to be little understanding of its full implications. Not only is this all important problem of equality very little understood, but also it is frequently misunderstood. It is obvious that most people find it difficult to understand just exactly what equality means.

When the term "equality" is used today people think of certain groups, such as the Negroes, who wish to achieve full citizenship. As far as individuals are concerned, one speaks mostly about equal opportunity. When Jefferson wrote "all men are created equal" in the Declaration of Independence, most people didn't know what it meant or how to accept it.

Actually, the problem of equality is much deeper than most people realize. It is more than a political idea. It is the essential problem of our time. It seems that the denial of equality is one of the chief reasons for lack of harmony, for maladjustment, for friction, and for war. Within the next few decades, this problem will have to be understood and the lessons which we can learn from this understanding must be applied if mankind is to survive.

What is equality? How can there possibly be such a thing as equality for all humans? Most people think that equality can only be regarded in general terms, failing to see how people can live together as equals. They are all different. In the minds of these people equality means **similarity**; however, similarity doesn't exist. Every individual is different; different assets, liabilities, intellectual capacities, talents, opportunities. How can they be equal to each other?

The term equality, in its development, has two meanings. In other languages there are two different words for the two meanings which the English word **equality** and the French term **egalite** imply. As commonly used, the word refers to equal rights. Each person has an equal right to have his needs fulfilled, to obtain an education, and to maintain health. In America today a forceful movement to recognize the needs of all people and their equal rights regardless of race, color or sex is evident. However, the crucial and most significant aspect of equality is not equal rights, but equal **value**. The term equality implies that each individual has equal value; however, it is easy to see why many cannot perceive this idea. Equal worth among all people is an astounding notion to many; however, this is the premise with which we are confronted. Equal worth is intrinsically linked with the concept of democracy. Only in the development of democracy could such a notion of equal value emerge.

Many people believe that democracy is merely a political system whereby people through official elections determine their own government. This is certainly a basic aspect of democracy; however, democracy is much more. Democracy gives the individual the equal right to vote and be elected, to be heard in the assembly, and to have his opinion counted. However, in order to do so he has to be recognized as a valued member of society, as a citizen. The term