

## An Ecology of Mind Quotes

0:00

“We are beginning to play with ideas of ecology, and although we immediately trivialize these into commerce or politics, there is at least an impulse still in the human breast to unify and thereby sanctify the total natural world, of which we are.”

7:00

“The major problems in the world are the result of the difference between how nature works and the way people think.”

10:45

“Without context, words and actions have no meaning at all. This is true of all communication... that which tells the sea anemone how to grow and the amoeba what he should do next.”

15:00

The pathology of the situation was in the system, not in the individual. Searching for the cause in the individual is the result of the way we were trained to think about cause and effect.

22:30

“Your eyes have to adjust to the alignment he maintained, in which the context of the natural world is pulled outward so that its inhabitants including creatures, oceans, forests, and urban infrastructures, are like musicians in a jazz group, improvising together.”

22:45

“What do you mean ecology of mind? Approximately what I mean is that the various sorts of stuff that goes on in one’s head and in one’s behavior and dealing with other people, and walking up and down mountains, and getting sick and getting well, and all that. Well, all that stuff interlocks and, in fact, constitutes a network, and you’ve got the sort of complicated, living, partly co-operating, partly struggling tangle that you’d find on the side of any of those mountains with trees and various plants and animals that live there, in fact, an ecology”

24:00

“Ideas are adjusting to each other, to stimuli from the outside, to infinite other messages”

24:20

“The notion that an animal should be thought of as a tangle of ideas which have to live in him, more or less. An evolutionary principle which is the evolution of ideas, not the evolution of animals. Where the units of evolution are essentially ideas, where anatomy, with bilateral-symmetry, is a body of ideas. The horse and the tundra are interlocked.”

26:00

“He hoped to leave a big framework into which the specialists could place their findings, to be examined in the mass tangle of interrelationships, that each tree, each person, each system in our world embodies. Context was the key.”

29:00

“The division of things tends to be a device of convenience. And that’s all.”

36:00

“Even the language we speak pushes our minds into particular ways of identifying and defining our world. Adjusting our world in order to see what might be holding systems together is a radical step toward threading the world back together from the inside.”

43:00

“No man can step into the same river twice’ Because it’s flowing. And, by the same token, maybe you can’t kiss the same person twice, or pick up the same baby twice.”

43:30

“A man walking is never in balance, but always correcting for imbalance.”

45:50

“Our ability to remain stable is ironically a measure of our flexibility. Not allowing change is the perfect formula for becoming obsolete.”

47:00

“Here we are, floating, in a world which consists of nothing but change. Because if there isn’t any change there isn’t any knowledge that there isn’t. Only by the creation of change can I perceive something. And in this world we float, we talk, and we talk as if there were a static element in the world.”

48:00

“We live on a ball, swirling with systems within systems, that are interacting all the time. Any attempt to lock down elements of that process is an abstraction and causes imbalance like the tightrope walker if he were to tie down a limb.”

48:50

“The pathology of wrong thinking in which we all live can only in the end be corrected by an enormous discovery of those relationships which make up the beauty of nature.”

50:55

“The story is of the man who asked his computer ‘Do you compute and think like a human being?’ And the computer worked on the question and finally printed the answer, and the piece of paper had on it, printed ‘That reminds me of a story.’”

54:25

“The perception of separation, of me from you, of us from the redwoods, of the redwoods from the African deserts, is an illusion. I wonder, what is the opposite of the pattern which connects? Aren’t the lines we draw, the splitting and dividing, imaginary anyway?”

T.S. Eliot - “A condition of complete simplicity, costing not less than everything, and all shall be well, and all manner of things shall be well.”

55:30

“To believe there is such a division, and belief in such a division affects our conduct in all sorts of ways, it affects our entire ethical system, it affects our notion of what is healthy, what is sick, what is a crime, and all that stuff, it all hinges around what I believe to be a ‘nonsense dichotomy.’ One which, the sooner we get all the way away from, so that we don’t have it lurking around in our vocabulary or anywhere else, the sooner we will be happy, or a little happier.”

56:16

“Blake said ‘If a fool should persist in his folly, he would become wise.’ Are we there yet? What’s on the other side of the garden door is total obsolescence, and freedom, and maybe another sort of democracy. It’s Christian, it’s Buddhist, Muslim, Pagan, it’s Jewish, and radical and conservative. It’s totally punk rock. It’s authentic, and it questions authority, questions it until it bleeds with the authenticity of the unseparated.”

58:20

“It’s like climbing a mountain, Nora. You’ve got trails going up it, where people have gone before, and if you want to get up higher than they went, you go up their trails and then you push on a little bit, further than they were ever able to get.”