

What would you consider your motto?



Several pithy sayings have come and gone, but none really became a motto. A motto needs to be short, a one-liner, and anybody who knows me well can see that isn't my strong point. A man of few words is not how most people would characterize me. There are a few impactful quotes that I love.

When I was a facilitator there were two quotes I often used in workshops. Olive Wendell Holmes wrote: "I wouldn't give a fig for the simplicity this side of complexity but I'd give my right arm for simplicity on the other side of complexity." When we try to simplify things; processes, concepts, or anything else worth understanding, we are tempted to dumb it down. If something is worth understanding (and not all things are worth the time), try to understand it thoroughly without taking shortcuts. Then, when you truly understand it you will be able to simplify it and communicate it. Having worked for years with scientists I came

Jesse Hulse

to believe that if someone couldn't explain a concept without using mathematics, they didn't really understand it. You may not be able to give the details without math, but if you can't communicate the essence in words, you may not know it as well as you thought.

The second was from Theodore Roosevelt: "Far better it is to dare mighty things, to win glorious triumphs, even though checkered by failure, than to take rank with those poor spirits who neither enjoy much nor suffer much, because they live in the gray twilight that knows not victory nor defeat." He put so beautifully the idea that there is no dishonor in failing, but never striving or taking chances dooms us to mediocrity.

Now, as an old man, there are two Bible quotes I carry in my pocket notebook. When I fill up a notebook and start a new one, I write out the two passages on the front page before I write anything else.

I have worked with kids since I was one, and as I grow older it becomes even more important to me. Currently, I work with Junior High and High School students, and I plan to do that until they throw me out or until I die. Psalm 71:17-18: "O God, from my youth you have taught me, and I still proclaim your wondrous deeds. So even to old age and gray hairs, O God, do not forsake me, until I proclaim your might to another generation."

Jesse Hulse

Most of us struggle with pride. Well, some seem to have accepted the belief that they actually are that important, but the rest of us struggle. I love to teach. I love to tell stories. I have always acted as though everyone was entitled to my opinion. So, Proverbs 17:27-28 is something I bring to mind often; “Whoever restrains his words has knowledge, and he who has a cool spirit is a man of understanding. Even a fool who keeps silent is considered wise; when he closes his lips, he is deemed intelligent.”

Finally, there’s the answer Jesus gave when asked what was the greatest commandment. “And he answered, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself,” (Luke 10:27). If I were limited to a single motto I suppose it would be from that, “Love God - Love People.”