

NOTES FROM: *Education and the Significance of Life*, by Jiddu Krishnamurti

SUMMARY: I always describe Krishnamurti as like someone standing between Friedrich Nietzsche and Jesus. Uncompromising in his stance against ideology, conformity, and antagonism between human beings, he always refused to set himself up as a teacher. While he was alive, he used to insist that no one should blindly follow what he said as though he were some sort of authority.

You'll notice, in fact, that most of the time Krishnamurti just keeps asking questions. If you break down the transcripts of some of his public talks, it's rare that he'll make a concrete statement. He wants you to think for yourself. He wants you to question what you've come to believe is self-evident. He wants you to question the dominant culture of acquisitiveness, envy, ambition, and groupthink.

In this collection, the focus is on education, of course, and he says that there is no "method" that one can follow to become "educated," if there's ever an end to education at all. Intelligence is not separate from love. True education is a movement of the mind away from fixed structures and prepackaged beliefs. It is the approach toward the essential, away from the superficial. Not in the past or in the future, but grounded in the present.

"Eternity is not in the future; eternity is now."

"Intelligence is not separate from love."

"Though there *is* a higher and wider significance to life, of what value is our education if we never discover it?"

"Intelligence is the capacity to perceive the essential, the *what is*; and to awaken this capacity, in oneself and in others, is education."

"As we are having a series of devastating wars, one right after another, there is obviously something radically wrong with the way we bring up our children."

"When we are working together for an ideal, for the future, we shape individuals according to our conception of that future; we are not concerned with human beings at all, but with our idea of what they should be."

"Who are we to decide what man should be? By what right do we seek to mold him according to a particular pattern, learnt from some book or determined by our own ambitions, hopes, and fears?"

"Education in the true sense is helping the individual to be mature and free, to flower greatly in love and goodness."

“The right kind of education consists in understanding the child as he is without imposing upon him an ideal of what we think he should be.”

“The child is the result of both the past and the present and is therefore already conditioned. If we transmit our background to the child, we perpetuate both his and our own conditioning. There is radical transformation only when we understand our own conditioning and are free of it. To discuss what should be the right kind of education while we ourselves are conditioned is utterly futile.”

“The means determine the end.”

“Most of us do not love our children; we are ambitious for them – which means that we are ambitious for ourselves.”

“The concern of the educator is to help the student to understand the complexities of his whole being. To require him to suppress one part of his nature for the benefit of some other part is to create in him an endless conflict which results in social antagonisms.”

“The right kind of education will encourage thoughtfulness and consideration for others without enticements or threats of any kind. If we no longer seek immediate results, we shall begin to see how important it is that both the educator and the child should be free from the fear of punishment and the hope of reward, and from every other form of compulsion; but compulsion will continue as long as authority is part of relationship.”

“Property and ideas have become more important to us than human life, so there is constant antagonism and violence between ourselves and others.”

“War is the spectacular and bloody projection of our everyday living. We precipitate war out of our daily lives; and without a transformation in ourselves, there are bound to be national and racial antagonisms, the childish quarreling over ideologies, the multiplication of soldiers, the saluting of flags, and all the many brutalities that go to create organized murder.”

“If we really loved our children, we would want to save and protect them, we would not let them be sacrificed in wars.”

It’s extraordinary to think that we train people for a decade to become doctors but that training for becoming a parent isn’t even mandatory.

“Can parents claim to love their children when, by educating them wrongly, they foster envy, enmity and ambition? Is it love that stimulates the national and racial antagonisms which lead to war, destruction and utter misery, that sets man against man in the name of religions and ideologies?”

“If parents love their children, they will not be nationalistic, they will not identify themselves with any country; for the worship of the State brings on war, which kills or maims their sons. If parents love their children, they will discover what is the right relationship to property; for the possessive instinct has given property an enormous and false significance which is destroying the world. If parents love their children, they will not belong to any organized religion; for dogma and belief divide people into conflicting groups, creating antagonism between man and man. If parents love their children, they will do away with envy and strife, and will set about altering fundamentally the structure of present-day society.”

“The help we need does not lie outside ourselves.”

The teacher and the student are helping each other to educate themselves.

“If we are in earnest about being the right kinds of teachers, we shall be thoroughly dissatisfied, not with a particular system of education, but with all systems, because we see that no educational method can free the individual. A method or a system may condition him to a different set of values, but it cannot make him free.”