



The Impossible Takes Longer: The 1,000 Wisest Things Ever Said by Nobel Prize Laureates

David Pratt

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Witty, incisive observations on such universally meaningful topics as courage and compassion by many of the greatest minds of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

Since 1901, the Nobel Prize has been the hallmark of genius, but Nobel laureates tend to be more than merely brilliant—their idealism, courage, and concern for humanity have also made them sources of inspiration and wisdom. Contrary to the notion that geniuses are absentminded eccentrics who lead solitary lives, many Nobel laureates have been social activists and political leaders, and some have been polymaths whose interests and talents were diverse, such as Philip Noel-Baker, winner of the 1959 Peace prize, who ran in three Olympic Games.

The quotations—drawn from biographies, published articles, and speeches—are grouped by such themes as achievement, truth and falsehood, war and conflict, technology, and more. "The difficult is what takes a little time; the impossible is what takes a little longer," said Fritjof Nansen, who personally repatriated more than 400,000 prisoners of war after World War I, and helped save millions of Russians from starvation. Albert Einstein prudently advised, "Not everything that counts can be counted, and not everything that can be counted counts," and Czeslaw Milosz warned, "In a room where people unanimously maintain a conspiracy of silence, one word of truth sounds like a pistol shot."

Most of the quotations have never been anthologized previously. There is a section of short biographical sketches of each of the roughly 250 laureates quoted in the book, a brief history of the Nobel Prize, and a complete list of every Nobel laureate through 2006. *The Impossible Takes Longer* is a remarkable assemblage of insightful, thought-provoking, sometimes humorous statements by some of the world's wisest men and women.

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