

Come, Stay Awhile: Top Ten Sayings of the Sage

C.H. Patterson

Sage of Asheville

A. Leslie Anderson

Missouri State University

In the words of the late Pat Patterson himself, “He will be missed, they say, when a well-known figure dies. But the world goes on—even the most important people die. We come, we stay awhile, we go” (Patterson, n.d.). Such a pragmatic and even-handed attitude characterizes the sayings of this respected teacher, author, and therapist. Patterson’s oft-repeated phrases cover topics from religion and spirituality to psychotherapy to human interactions and the meaning of life. He challenged thinking by shining light on obvious but unacknowledged truths that seem to lurk in popular thought, such as: “By definition, half the population is below average in ability or intelligence. Yet we persist in expecting all students to achieve at or above the average” (Patterson, n.d.). No subject seemed to miss his contemplative gaze. The reader may bounce between nodding agreement and disquietude, but rarely would one experience his words with indifference. Perhaps this response from others is what earned the venerable professor his title, “The Sage of Asheville.” So many of his insights are moving and leave lasting impressions, making it difficult to compile a top 10 list from among his pithy quotes, but I hope you enjoy this brief glimpse.

Top 10 Sayings of the Sage

10. If God had created the world, it would not be in the condition it is now.
9. It appears that the human race has not evolved to the place where people can live together peacefully and avoid the possibility of assured mass destruction. At the rate evolution progresses, it will never happen in time to save the race.
8. The meaning of life is not something that is there to be discovered; it must be created by each individual.
7. We are not rational beings; we are rationalizing beings.

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6. Religion is not the only or the major source of values and ethics. Values and ethics evolved out of the experience of living together: They are the rules for social existence.
5. By accepting everything the client says at face value, without trying to fathom some deep psychodynamic meaning, and by responding at face value, any deep psychodynamic meaning will either come out eventually or will be unnecessary for a therapeutic change resulting from the authentic relationship provided by the therapist.
4. Religion is the source of many good things—art, music, literature. But it is also the source of much that is bad—wars, persecution, discrimination, and denial of freedom and rights.
3. There are two kinds of therapists: the facilitators and the manipulators (who prefer the term “intervention”). The vast majority of current practitioners are manipulators.
2. What some label dogma others call truth. It is dogma when you don’t agree with it, truth when you do agree.
1. Love of God is abstract. Love of others is concrete.

Reference

Patterson, C. H. (n.d.). *Sayings of the Sage of Asheville*. Retrieved August 9, 2006, from <http://www.sageofasheville.com/sayings.html>.