



Best Connections

07

My Journal

Welcome to your personal journal! There is a section for your general thoughts – on the app, there are sections for you to add comments that occur to you from each of the parts of Best Connections.

“In the book of life, the answers aren’t in the back” – **Charlie Brown**

**Do you find they come as you go along?
Journaling is a good way to note the questions
and the answers**

Ann Frank, CS Lewis, Virginia Wolf, Alistair Campbell, Samuel Pepys, Ronald Regan, Ralph Waldo Emerson and Oscar Wilde all have one thing in common – they were passionate about their regular journals.

“The good writer seems to be writing about himself, but has his eye always on that thread of the Universe which runs through himself and all things” – **Ralph Emerson**

**What threads do you see running?
How well do you feel connected to them?**

“This personal relationship to all things, which is condemned as subjective, limiting, I found to be the core of individuality, personality, and originality” – **Virginia Wolf**

For Virginia, her diary connected her to things around her – personal reflection affected her to the core. Worth doing!

“Whenever you find yourself on the side of the majority, it’s time to pause and reflect” – Mark Twain

Do you tend to go with the flow in thinking with the majority? Are there any views you privately question?

“A person who never made a mistake never tried anything new” – Albert Einstein

When was the last time you made a mistake? Do you like to try new things?

“I am who I am today because of the choices I made yesterday.” – Eleanor Roosevelt

Were any of yesterday’s choices unhelpful? How can that help you make better choices today?

“The man who views the world at 50 the same as he did at 20 has wasted 30 years of his life.” – Muhammed Ali

Are you aware of your views changing over time? For better or for worse?!

“No man ever steps in the same river twice, for it’s not the same river and he’s not the same man” – Heraclitus

What is your river like? How is it shaping you?

*"It's the Circle of Life
And it moves us all
Through despair and hope
Through faith and love
Till we find our place
On the path unwinding
In the Circle
The Circle of Life"* – **Elton John from the Lion King**

Does life look more positive or negative for you today? How is your path unwinding in the circle?

"Don't judge each day by the harvest you reap but by the seeds that you plant" – **Robert Louis Stevenson**

When you reflect at the end of this day, what seeds do you see you have sown? What harvest might they bring?

"Character is simply habit long continued" – **Plutarch (born 46 AD)**

**What sort of habits lead to a good character?
What would your best friend say to you about yours?**

"If you can't fly then run, if you can't run then walk, if you can't walk then crawl, but whatever you do you have to keep moving forward"
– **Martin Luther King Jr.**

**Are you moving forward?
What might prevent you?**

"As we struggle to make sense of things, life looks on in repose"
– **Author Unknown**

Do you ever make a list of the pros and cons of life situations? Try it 'as life looks on in repose'!

"To live remains an art which everyone must learn, and which no one can teach" – **Havelock Ellis, Physician and Writer (b. 1859)**

What have been some of the best lessons you've had? What did you learn?

"Living involves tearing up one rough draft after another"
– **Author Unknown**

Can you think of different directions your life could have gone at key points? How's the current direction?

"Life has meaning only if one barter it day by day for something other than itself" – **Antoine de Saint-Exupery, French aristocrat, writer, poet, and pioneering aviator (b. 1900)**

Is this true? What outcomes would you barter for?

"...the powerful play goes on, and you will contribute a verse"
– **Walt Whitman, American Poet and Journalist (b. 1819)**

Do you ever wonder what your legacy will be? Think about the 'verse' you are contributing today!

"The price of anything is the amount of life you exchange for it"
– **Henry David Thoreau, American Philosopher (b. 1817)**

*"In masks outrageous and austere
The years go by in single file;
But none has merited my fear,
And none has quite escaped my smile"*

– **Elinor Hoyt Wylie, American Poet and Novelist (b. 1885)**

Do you ever think about the actors past and present in your life? Spare them a thought and smile – contact them if possible!

"All the art of living lies in a fine mingling of letting go and holding on"

– **Havelock Ellis, Physician and Writer (b. 1859)**

When is it time to hold on and when is it time to let go? Ultimately, we have to let go!

"He who has nothing to die for has nothing to live for"

– **Moroccan Proverb**

**What sort of things might this apply to?
Are you living for those things?**

"The doors we open and close each day decide the lives we live"

– **Flora Whittemore, American Writer (b. 1890)**

Is it harder to close a door than to open it? How do you know when it's best not to open a door?

"Watch your thoughts, for they become words.

Watch your words, for they become actions.

Watch your actions, for they become habits.

Watch your habits, for they become character.

Watch your character, for it becomes your destiny"

– **attributed to Frank Jackson , Cowboy and Outlaw, (b. 1856)**

Does it really start with a thought? What thoughts might be shaping your destiny?

"Most men make the voyage of life as if they carried sealed orders which they were not to open till they were fairly in mid-ocean"

– **James Russell Lowell, American Poet and Diplomat, (b. 1819)**

Have you opened your 'orders' or are you saving that till later?! How far out in the ocean do you think you are?!

"The miracle is not to fly in the air, or to walk on the water, but to walk on the earth" – **Chinese Proverb**

What amazes you more today, the 'earth' or you walking on it?! Is it good to have a sense of awe?

"Life is not fair, nor has it ever been, but the morning seems determined to dawn until it is" – **Robert Brault, contemporary blogger**

Should your life be 'fair'? Is there anything that seems unfair?

"The movement of life has to rest in its own music"
– **Rabindranath Tagore, Bengali Polymath (b. 1861)**

**What is the tempo of your life right now?
Is it in harmony?**

"Few of us write great novels; all of us live them"
– **Mignon McLaughlin, American Journalist and Author (b. 1913)**

**Have you ever thought of your life as a novel?
What lines will you give today as the central actor?!**

"If a man in the morning hear the right way, he may die in the evening without regret" – **Confucius, Chinese Philosopher (b. 551 BC)**

**How do you deal with regret?
What choices are facing you today?**

"I have always preferred the reflection of the life to life itself"
– **François Truffaut, French Film Director (b. 1932)**

**Are you a more a thinker or a do-er?
Do you reflect enough?**

"Life is a long lesson in humility"
– **James M. Barrie, Scottish Author and creator of Peter Pan, (b. 1860)**

**Why is humility so hard to learn?
Can you remember your last lesson?!**

"Life seems nothing more than a quick succession of busy nothings"
– From *Mansfield Park*, Jane Austen's third novel published in 1814

**Does life seem to be passing fast or slow?
What makes it seem fast or slow to you?**

"When we remember we are all mad, the mysteries disappear and life stands explained" – Mark Twain, American Author, (b. 1835)

**What explanation of life have you gone for?
Is everything either madness or mystery?**

"Though we live amid promiscuous pressures, spiritual clutter and forgetfulness, we probably still value the integrity of life"
– Baker Brownell, American Philosopher (b. 1887)

**Does this bear resemblance to life today?
How do you distinguish the junk from that
which has integrity?**

"Wars and elections are both too big and too small to matter in the long run. The daily work – that goes on, it adds up"
– Barbara Kingsolver, American Novelist (b. 1955)

**Are you interested what is shaping the world?
What's adding up for you today?**

*"Why do critics make such an outcry against tragicomedies?
Is not life one?"*
– Augustus William Hare (b. 1792) and Julius Charles Hare (b. 1795),
Guesses at Truth, by Two Brothers, 1827

**Do you see life more as tragedy or comedy?
Can it be both?**

"God writes a lot of comedy... the trouble is, he's stuck with so many bad actors who don't know how to play funny"

– Garrison Keillor, American Author (b. 1942)

How are you playing the role of your life? At least there are no lines to learn ... or are there!

"Comedy is acting out optimism"

– Robin Williams, American Actor (b. 1951)

Why is optimism more attractive than pessimism? Is optimism laughable?

"What do I think of Western civilization? I think it would be a very good idea" – Mahatma Gandhi, Indian Leader and Philosopher, (b. 1869)

Should we hope for more? What does 'civilization' look like to you?

"If God listened to the prayers of men, all men would quickly have perished: for they are forever praying for evil against one another"

– Epicurus, (b. 341 BC)

Remember the film 'Bruce Almighty' as he tried to deal with the prayers? What would be your prayer?!

"If you do not expect the unexpected you will not find it, for it is not to be reached by search or trail"

– Heraclitus, Greek Philosopher (b. 535 BC)

This takes some thinking about! Life is full of surprises!

"If God created us in his own image, we have more than reciprocated"

–Voltaire (François-Marie Arouet), French Philosopher (b. 1694)

Does this help explain why there are so many religions? What image do you have of God?

"Now, God be praised, that to believing souls gives light in darkness, comfort in despair."

– Henry VI by William Shakespeare, English Playwright (b. 1564)

Are you facing any tough things? Would you prefer more light or more comfort at present?

"To God everything is beautiful, good, and just; humans, however, think some things are unjust and others just"

– Heraclitus, Greek Philosopher (b. 535 BC)

Is this true? Do you have a strong sense of justice?

"Men shut their doors against a setting sun"

– William Shakespeare, English Playwright (b. 1564)

Sometimes you know it's time to shut the door. Do you have any doors that it's time to close?

"God sometimes does try to the uttermost those whom he wishes to bless" – Mahatma Gandhi, Indian Leader and Philosopher, (b. 1869)

What trials are you facing today? Can you see any good that might come out of them?

"Let freedom reign. The sun never set on so glorious a human achievement" – Nelson Mandela, South African Politician and Thinker, (b. 1918)

**How do you define freedom?
How precious to you is your freedom today?**

"In a time of universal deceit - telling the truth is a revolutionary act"
– George Orwell ((b. 1903)

Do you see the world as full of deceit or full of truth? Why is it easier to lie or to live truthfully?

"A picture is worth a thousand words"

– **Napoleon Bonaparte (b. 1769)**

**What picture will you paint today?
How might it inspire others?**

"We do not need to proselytise either by our speech or by our writing. We can only do so really with our lives. Let our lives be open books for all to study" – **Mahatma Gandhi, Indian Leader and Philosopher, (b. 1869)**

**Ghandi's life had an immense impact.
What impact is your life having on others?**

"Spread love everywhere you go. Let no one ever come to you without leaving happier" – **Mother Teresa, Missionary to India (b. 1910)**

**Try 'adding something' to everyone you meet
today. Watch the difference in others and see
how it makes you feel!**

"There is nothing like returning to a place that remains unchanged to find the ways in which you yourself have altered" – **Nelson Mandela**

**This could be true if you went back to a familiar
place many years later- where would you go?
It is also true at the end of your day!**

"I know, to banish anger altogether from one's breast is a difficult task. It cannot be achieved through pure personal effort. It can be done only by God's grace" – **Mahatma Gandhi**

**Why is anger so difficult to handle in others or
yourself? Do you have any anger issues?**

"A little bit of mercy makes the world less cold and more just"
– **Pope Francis (b. 1936)**

**Do you need a bit of slack from someone? Is there
anyone who needs a bit of mercy from you?**

"Sometimes, I feel like one who is on the side-lines, who has missed life itself" – **Nelson Mandela**

**Are there opportunities you have missed?
What can you do to get off the side-lines?**

"By all means let's be open-minded, but not so open-minded that our brains drop out" – **Richard Dawkins, Scientist and Philosopher, (b. 1941)**

**How open-minded are you? Do you like to
think deeply or prefer not to?**

"Our life is made by the death of others"
– **Leonardo da Vinci, Italian Polymath and genius, (b. 1452)**

**Think of those who have greatly contributed to
your life. Are more of them dead or alive?!**

"A man who dares to waste one hour of time has not discovered the value of life" – **Charles Darwin, (b. 1809)**

**What is the difference between relaxation
and wasting time? Do you relax too little
or too much?**

"Life is a journey. When we stop, things don't go right"
– **Pope Francis, (b. 1936)**

**How far have you come? Are you moving on
well to your destination?**

"Every day is a gift from God, no matter how old we are"
– **Billy Graham, American Preacher, (b. 1918)**

**You won't get this day again! How are you
going to use it?**

“The future starts today, not tomorrow” – Pope John Paul II (b. 1920)

How’s your future looking? What practical steps can you take to make it the best it can possibly be?

“Life can only be understood backwards; but it must be lived forwards”
– Soren Kierkegaard (b. 1813)

**Does life make sense looking back?
What are you looking forward to?**

If you’ve found this useful, why not download the app and use it to keep your personal journal, like a log book of your life’s journey? Some use one every day and some do it from time to time, even once a year. It’s interesting to look back on your life’s journey and to note how it shapes you as you press onwards.