

Quotes taken from the book "How to be free" by Tom Hodgkinson

The Western world has allowed freedom, merriment and responsibility to be taken from it, from ourselves, and substituted with greed, competition, lonely striving, greyness, debts, McDonalds and GlaxoSmithKline.

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*Death to the Supermarkets
Bake Bread
Play the Ukulele
Open the Village Hall
Action is Futile
Quit Moaning
Make Music
Stop Consuming
Start Producing
Back to the Land
Smash Usury
Embrace Beauty
Embrace Poverty
Hail the Chisel
Ignore the State
Reform is Futile
Anarchy in the UK
Hail the Spade
Hail the Horse
Hail the Quill
Love thy Neighbour
Be Creative
Free your Spirit
Dig the Earth
Make Compost
Life is Absurd
We are Free
Be Merry*

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Anxious people make good consumers and good workers.

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Anxiety will drive us back into our comfort blankets of credit-card shopping and bad food, so the system deliberately produces anxiety while simultaneously promising to take it away.

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Anxiety is the sacrifice of creativity in the service of security. It is the giving up of personal freedoms in return for the promise, never fulfilled, of comfort, cotton wool, air-conditioned shopping centres. Security is a myth; it simply doesn't exist. This does not stop us, however, from constantly chasing it.

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Real ale is compost for the soul.

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In gardening, the reduced-effort method of mulching the soil with rich organic matter rather than laboriously digging it every year is coming into vogue. This is the natural, low-work way. It allows nature to get on with it with minimum intervention from man. It is the same with your mind: mulch it with quality ingredients, books, food and beauty, and it will become fertile and produce useful and beautiful things. Mulching the mind also involves a lot less work than digging it up. Digging can actually be harmful, as it will bring weed seeds to the surface that otherwise would have lain dormant. These weed seeds will then germinate and produce a new load of unnecessary work.

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Replace TV with friends, and newspapers with books.

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Cycling brings an exhilarating sense of freedom and self-mastery as well as a very enjoyable sense of not spending money. You coast through the city, in it but not of it, living it and not controlled by it.

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Sometimes I think that life is becoming no more than staring at a screen. We stare at a screen all day at work. We stare at screens in the gym. Buses now have screens installed in them. There are screens on trains. Then we get home and stare at our computer screen before staring at the TV screen. For entertainment, we stare at cinema screens. Work, rest and play: all involve staring at screens. Screens make us into passive receivers. Smash the screen and find a pencil and a piece of paper instead. Goodbye, TV; hello, chalk!

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Belief in the abstract invention 'career' is a middle-class affliction.

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On overspecialization: "We are disabled. It will soon be difficult to put up a shelf without a degree in shelf-putting-up."

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Solar panels are anarchy in action

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If you want to join the elect, the colourful, the creative, it is very very easy. Create your own life. Cast of resentment. Reject the ideo of 'have-tos'. You don't have to do anything. You have free will. Exercise it.

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Be bohemian

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Competition kills variety

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Competition leads to the Starbucksification of the world.

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Think of the other meaning of 'consumption', a deadly disease of romantic poets, which consumed the body until it expired, have been sapped, drained, used up, emptied out. To be a consumer is to drain the world, to eat it, to stuff it into our faces, to wither it, to dry up its resources, to mine it of all its bounty; in short, to kill it. But being a creator or a producer, that is the very opposite.

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Today we are imprisoned by our desires, shackled by shopping. The will to shop is a corroding and enfeebling force. We desire a new pair of shoes, a new car, a new house, a new sofa, a new TV. We need money to buy these things, so we bind ourselves to an employer in order to get the money, or we get into debt by borrowing the money from one of the many institutional usurers in the marketplace. And this we call freedom.

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When you stop buying, you start living and you stop contributing to an exploitative system.

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Full of nerves, like little rabbits, they move from one protected zone to another. The countryside is now merely a provider of views to the cowering suburbanites.

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Education is like pruning; it wrecks the natural growth of the tree in favour of a form that is useful to commercial society.

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Now, sadly, the monarchy has lost any sort of power, and the old system of a parliament and a king has been replaced by government by the boring, a tediocracy.

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Machines separate us from our very selves. Tools, however, are quite a different thing. The spade, the chisel, the sickle, the pocket-knife, these are instruments of liberation.

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Melancholy is depression re-created. Instead of saying, 'I'm depressed,' just say, 'I'm feeling atrabilious [gloomy] today, so I think I'd better stay at home or go for a walk in the orchard.' Then re-create your misery as a creative art.

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Quitting your job, refusing to vote, not taking pharmaceutical drugs; these are not acts of apathy but of radical re-engagement with society and with your own self.

It is, in actual fact, lazy and apathetic to be employed, to vote, and to take Prozac, because in doing these things we are handing control over our lives to others and implicitly accepting that we are more or less useless unless we contort our very selves to conform to a pre-plan model of how we should act.

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*I recently discovered something shocking about women. It appears that when they moan, **they are not looking for solutions**. They simply want to moan and tom have their husband commiserate, sympathize and agree how awful things must be for them. The last thing they want is what husbands generally give, which is advice. They do not want to be told to 'go on a course' or 'get a job'. They just want to moan. To the more straightforward male, this seems insane. But there you are.*

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Yes, the world is crap and filled with the worst quality of produce imaginable. So ignore it and create a joyful world of high-quality produce.

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One great advantage of being a writer is that when bad things happen, I just think: 'Oh, well, that's good material.'

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In any case, the doctor's art is the same as it has always been, which is to amuse the patient while the body heals itself.

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Well, in my case, in a sense, I retired at thirty-five in order to write a book and, God willing, I shall never have to work again. I think this should be our responsibility: rather than waiting for the glory days of retirement, let us take our pleasures now. Let us not delegate our future to an outside agency, whether that is government or pension-fund manager. Let us not hand over our money to someone else to manage. Far from providing security, to do so is a highly dangerous operation.

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There's a great book to be written called "Rudeness and the Rise of Capitalism". The two are practically synonymous.

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To realize that everything is meaningless is tremendously liberating, since it then leaves us completely free to create our own lives and ignore the plans that others have for us.

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Over One-Straw Revolution: "... which I would urge each and every one of you to read. It is the wisest book I have ever read."

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Masanobu Fukuoka: "Human beings with their tampering do something wrong, leave the damage unrepaired, and when the adverse results accumulate, work with all their might to correct them. When the corrective actions appear to be successful, they come to view these measures as successful accomplishments. People do this over and over again. It is as if a fool were to stomp on and break the tiles of his roof. Then when it starts to rain and the ceiling begins to rot away, he hastily climbs up to mend the damage, rejoicing in the end that he has accomplished a miraculous solution."

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The industrial process can be seen as a process of uglification, as everything becomes objectively uglier when it submits itself to the rule of mass manufacture, cheap labour and profit.

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Machines create ugliness, human hands create beauty.

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And things that you make, however ugly, are always more beautiful than the mass-produced option, simply because they radiate care even if they are wonky and erratic and funny looking.

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Plastic is cold, sterile, humourless, poisonous, ugly, wasteful, unrottable, unburnable; it is a stinking nothing made of oil and money. Plastic drips greed [...]

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Ruskin: "The art of becoming rich... is the art of establishing the maximum inequality in our own favour."

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Make compost, not war - Graham Burnett

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Industrialization is the process of taking life, splitting it up into little bits and turning them into profit-based industries.

*Freedom can start today, right now.
You can change your life in one second.
Freedom is a state of mind.*