

Milam's Notes

by

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This document is approximately 4,785 words long.

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caveat lector

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Introduction

Milam's Notes was originally inspired by *Excerpts from the Notebooks of Lazarus Long*, written by Lazarus Long, a fictional character in a Robert A. Heinlein science fiction story. The story was *Time Enough for Love, The Lives of Lazarus Long*, © 1973. I don't remember exactly when I first began *Milam's Notes*, but it must have been sometime during the early 1970s. Anyway, when I began *Milam's Notes*, I intended for it to be the same sort of thing that Lazarus Long did in the story. In recent years, I haven't added much to the collection. Most of the thoughts that would otherwise have been added to the collection have, instead, gone into the [Frontiersman](#), where they appeared as *Stray Thoughts*. Excerpts from *Time Enough for Love* are available in [The Sovereign's Library](#) in the Main Directory, under *Heinlein: Some Comments and Observations by Robert A. Heinlein*.

When I first began *Milam's Notes*, I wrote the notes on 3 x 5 note cards. When I first transferred the collection from the original note cards onto 8 1/2 x 11 paper, using a typewriter, I organized them chronologically with the undated notes first. The chronological order made it simpler to update the collection by simply adding new pages at the end. Later, for some forgotten reason, I moved the undated notes to the end of the collection. Some time after that, again for a forgotten reason, I revised the collection into reverse chronological order. During the middle 1980s, I switched from a typewriter to a computer and reorganized the collection into topics. With a computer, I could easily insert changes wherever I wanted them and reprint the collection. Therefore, the chronological order wasn't necessary any longer.

Milam's Notes is still organized into topics but, within each topic, there isn't any particular order to the notes. I recall trying, for a while, to sort the notes rationally within the topics. However, most of the notes are independent of one another, so any rational ordering of them within the topics is elusive. Even putting a particular note into a particular topic can be somewhat arbitrary. More recently, I've put the notes into whatever order in the topics would cause them to fit the pages the best. That has changed from time to time as I've used later versions of the word processor, and later versions of the operating system. Such later versions have often resulted in changes in the way that things fit on the pages. The order in which the notes appear isn't relevant anyway. Read them in whatever order you want.

Occasionally, over the years, I've corrected the grammar, the punctuation, and the choice of words that I used in some of the notes. I'm still doing so and will probably continue to do so. However, for each such change, I try to make each revised note convey more correctly the idea that I'd originally intended when I first wrote it. Also, I've occasionally removed notes that no longer seemed appropriate, sometimes in the light of more recent thinking. That isn't necessarily a good idea, since I've often quoted from *Milam's Notes* in other documents. It would be nice if the quoted note was still there, later. Maybe I ought to stop removing notes, even if I no longer like them. Anyway, *Milam's Notes* isn't as I originally wrote it. Regarding such modifications of my own previous work, I distinguish myself from The Ministry of Truth in Orwell's *1984* by the fact that the original version of the collection remains available. Many of the intermediate versions are also available. I doubt seriously if

Milam's Notes

all of the intermediate versions remain in existence. In the normal confusion of life, I expect that I probably lost some versions and forgot to print other versions before I changed them.

Finally, I'm offering the original collection of *Milam's Notes*, hand-written on the original 3 x 5 cards, for sale as collector's memorabilia. I'm asking \$4000 but I'm willing to consider offers. I'll also include, for the same price, the original collection of hand-written 3 x 5 cards that eventually became [*Another Compendium of Wit and Wisdom*](#). Images of both collections are available. [Click here](#).

I intend, when I can get around to it, to transfer these offers from here to [*The Moonlight Flea Market*](#). Until then, I'll leave them here. Contact me to discuss payment options.

Ordinary events take on an aura of mystery and romance in direct proportion to how long ago or how far away they occurred. This fact is exploited by soldiers, historians, travelers, politicians, heroes, priests, old people, and others.
—a traveler from the Euphrates Valley, circa 2225 BC¹

Milam's Irrefutable Redundant Temporal Tautology Concerning Time

There invariably arrives a time at which the unavoidable certainty of the indisputable fact of the absolute timeliness of the existing moment is of such unsurpassed and unquestionable magnitude that there cannot be a further instant's doubt of the universally apparent certainty that beyond the faintest hint of hesitation, the time has inarguably come.

—Wednesday, October 4, 1978, 9:50 PM, Pacific Standard Time

Advice

Ask not what you can do for your country but what you can do for yourself. If you can't satisfy 'em then confuse 'em.
 —Friday, September 27, 1985 —Friday, June 8, 1979

Never confess before you've heard the accusation. —Thursday, August 10, 1978

It's better to be safe and sorry than just sorry. —Monday, November 20, 1978

Business

I wrote these notes on business while I was employed at the General Electric Company's Nuclear Energy Division in San Jose, California.

The thing that makes this job so challenging is the fantastic scope for improvement. —Friday, December 1, 1978

The inverse relationship between reliability and complexity applies to organizations as well as to machinery. —Tuesday, December 19, 1978

Anything that's good for morale is good for business. —Friday, February 9, 1979

The amount of manpower eventually wasted by a meeting is directly proportional to the number of employees in attendance and exponentially proportional to the number of managers in attendance. —Tuesday, June 26, 1979

The more extraneous the duties the more elaborate the title. —Friday, June 22, 1979

Management is normally more concerned with prerogatives than with the product. —Thursday, February 15, 1979

Management is normally more concerned than informed. —Tuesday, July 21, 1981

To win the boss's favor, bring him only those problems to which you already know the answers. —Monday, June 25, 1979

The Mistake Optimization Hypothesis: There always exists in any finished calculation some combination of undetected errors that, when discovered and corrected, will provide the desired answer. —Friday, April 8, 1977

What this business needs is fewer empires. —Thursday, February 15, 1979

We don't need more nearly foolproof procedures. We need fewer fools. —Friday, September 19, 1980

There aren't any nits, only errors. —Tuesday, May 19, 1981

Precedent is no excuse for doing something wrong. —Tuesday, March 3, 1981

If we can do it better, then it isn't good enough yet. —Tuesday, December 9, 1980

It isn't my purpose in this job to meet a schedule but to fulfill a commitment. —Tuesday, January 16, 1979

1 It's a joke!

Milam's Notes

Choice

"America; love it or leave it" isn't a choice. It's a threat.

—Thursday, May 25, 1989

No allegedly harmful activity may be rightfully prohibited when the victim participates voluntarily. —undated

Being a martyr in a good cause is better than being a slave in a bad one.

—Monday, February 23, 1987

The main difference between the idealist and the realist is that while the idealist is trying to improve the world the realist is trying to improve the excuses.

—Friday, April 1, 1977

Voluntary participation equals endorsement.

—Thursday, June 9, 1988

If you really believe that there's nothing that you can do about a problem, then you're right.

—Monday, September 15, 1980

Christianity

This above all: to thine own self be false,
And it must follow, as the night the day,
Thou canst not then be true to any man.

—Friday, October 6, 1989

With thanks to William Shakespeare

A Christian is someone who is terribly afraid that someone, somewhere, might be committing a sin and enjoying it.

—Sunday, August 20, 1989

With thanks to H. L. Menckin

Any society whose members think that *fuck* is a dirty word is a fundamentally sick society. —Sunday, August 20, 1989

Prejudice is often presented as natural law. —Saturday, October 12, 1985

An exact translation of the Bible into English from the original would be a more profound miracle than the resurrection itself.

—Wednesday, August 23, 1989

Those who in righteous rage raise the hue and cry against pornography must keep carefully hidden from themselves the fact that obscenity, like beauty, often lies in the eye of the beholder.

—Thursday, July 5, 1973

If pornography corrupts the mind, then the censors must become corrupted and be unable to censor wisely. If pornography doesn't corrupt the mind, then we don't have any need for censors.

—Monday, June 24, 1974

According to Christians, if you think that nudity is obscene, then you have a clean mind. If you think that nudity is beautiful, then you have a dirty mind. Only a fool would believe such nonsense.

—Friday, September 13, 1974

Righteous rage is mostly jealousy.

—Friday, October 20, 1978

EconomySupply and Demand

It isn't possible to repeal the Law of Supply and Demand and, when it's violated, there's always a penalty to pay.

—Tuesday, November 1, 1994

Growth

An expanding economy is very dangerous. The faster it expands, the more dangerous it is.

—Saturday, December 10, 1994

Economics

An economy, like an ecology, is a natural system governed by natural laws. As with an ecology, outside interference in an economy can cause disaster. Like other natural systems, however, economies are very resilient. Every economic problem will eventually correct itself if government will only leave it alone.

—Sunday, December 4, 1994

Enlightenment

Before you question yourself, question your assumptions.

—Saturday, October 19, 1991

You cannot change the past but you can change yourself and, thereby, the future.

—Tuesday, June 13, 1989

Ability can be judged by accomplishments but character must be judged by goals.

—Friday, February 3, 1995

An ingredient of enlightenment is the ability to forget the experience but to remember the lesson.

—Thursday, January 11, 1990

Environment

The longer we wait to solve an environmental problem, the fewer choices we will have. If we wait long enough, then we probably won't have to make any choices at all. However, the resulting environment might be one in which we're not included.

—Thursday, August 1, 1974

Money

To be money, a thing must be durable, portable, divisible without loss, available in limited quantity, generally accepted as money, and must have intrinsic value as money. The better a thing satisfies those rules the better it will work as money.

—Saturday, August 10, 1991

Wealth

When the honest accumulation of wealth is prevented then the dishonest acquisition of wealth is promoted.

—Thursday, October 27, 1994

Interest Bearing Transactions

No transaction should be such as to, in and of itself, cause a change in the value of the medium of exchange used in the transaction.

—Thursday, September 8, 1994

Enlightenment isn't a destination. It's a journey.

—Wednesday, August 14, 1991

All paths lead to enlightenment.

—Friday, June 11, 2010

An ingredient of enlightenment is the ability to remember the past without a sense of loss.

—Monday, January 21, 1991

An ingredient of enlightenment is to achieve high self-esteem and humility, both at the same time.

—Thursday, October 27, 1994

Living things are fragile but life is tenacious.

—Monday, July 31, 1989

There's no such thing as *Mother Nature*. It's *Father Nature* and *Mother Earth*. Nature is the active principle. Earth is the receptive principle.

—Thursday, October 27, 1994

Milam's Notes

Freedom

You're not free to make the right choice unless you're also free to make the wrong one. —Sunday, March 5, 1989

The difference between freedom and permission is usually overlooked.

—Friday, October 20, 1978

People will sacrifice freedom for comfort.

—Tuesday, August 5, 1975

Women will sacrifice freedom for security. —Thursday, September 12, 1985

When permission is requested, freedom is surrendered. When permission is granted, freedom is denied.

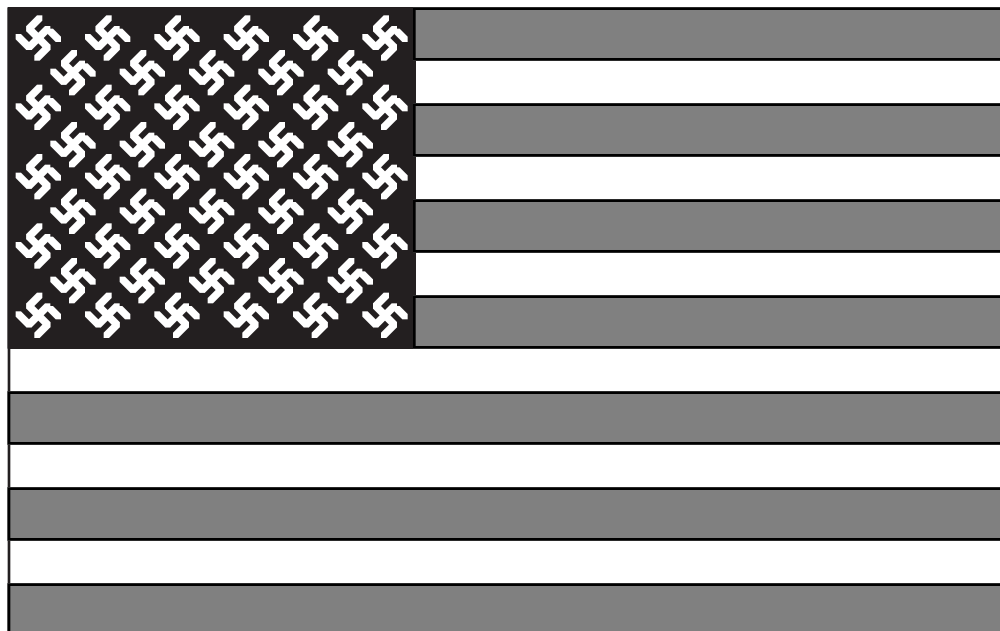
—Tuesday, October 24, 1978

The extent to which you're licensed is the extent to which you're controlled.

—Friday, April 10, 1987

Government

The New World Order is, "Obey!"
—Thursday, February 28, 1991



That government is next to best that governs least. That government is best that governs not at all.

—Tuesday, October 24, 1978

Don't feel sorry for the police. Their job is supposed to be difficult. Otherwise, you're living in a police state.

—Wednesday, August 28, 1974

Attempts by government to solve a problem always perpetuate the problem.

—Tuesday, March 22, 1977

If you started eliminating legislation purely at random, then you'd have about a 99% chance of improving things.

—Wednesday, December 13, 1978

The right of society to protect itself is a dangerous fiction promoted by those who seek power and excused by those who are unable or unwilling to protect themselves. People have rights. Society doesn't have rights.

—Wednesday, February 20, 1991

It hasn't yet been proven possible to eliminate a tax supported bureaucracy except, possibly, by creating several more tax supported bureaucracies to take its place.

—Saturday, October 12, 1985

Actions of government should be more carefully restricted than those of individuals.

—Friday, February 9, 1979

Attempts to restrict the possession of weapons ignore the fact that anything can be a weapon when armament is a state of mind. —Friday, August 15, 1975

For every time that you're defenseless there will be at least ten times that the police couldn't have helped anyway.

—Monday, July 9, 1979

The right to armed revolution is one of the people's most basic rights. It's the function for which the ballot substitutes and it's the final protection against creeping authority. It's sufficiently important that its attempted limitation by government is in itself a cause for armed revolt. —Tuesday, September 16, 1975

The typical response to any unpleasant circumstance is, "There ought to be a law!" However, the resulting legislation is more likely to complicate the problem than to solve it and might create new problems in addition to the old one. Legislation doesn't solve problems. Only people can do that.

—Wednesday, July 10, 1974

Vice squads, narcotics squads, and other such groups are more dangerous than the activities that they pretend to control. —Thursday, September 28, 1978

A rule of parasitism is that the host organism must not be burdened beyond its ability to support the parasite, or they both will die. This rule applies to government as a parasite on society.

—Friday, November 1, 1974

When a government becomes so large that individuals can influence it only in large groups, then that government is no longer concerned with individuals. Its authority might be benevolent, its forms and traditions might be libertarian, but it's no longer government by the people.

—Thursday, January 3, 1974

The only difference between taxation and extortion is the excuse for doing it.

—Monday, September 22, 1975

It's usually easier to deal with obnoxious behavior in someone than it is to tolerate the legislation that would be required to prevent the behavior.

—Monday, October 31, 1977

An inherent flaw in the practice of representative forms of government is that the people must be content with the election of representatives while having essentially no control over the enactment of legislation. —undated

A slave mentality exists when security is more important than freedom. Governments encourage this condition.

—Friday, August 27, 1976

A man who doesn't fear his government is naive. A man with faith in its inherent benevolence is a fool.

—Friday, May 28, 1976

If the government taps your phone, then look at the bright side. At least your opinion will be heard.

—Thursday, June 7, 1979

Government, like cancer, grows more quickly as the terminal condition approaches. —Friday, October 25, 1974

The usual cures for cancer can also be tried on government.

—Tuesday, October 24, 1978

Government is a good example of man's inhumanity to man. Religion is another.

—Saturday, January 6, 1979

Any tax supported bureaucracy can generate enough work to sustain itself.

—Thursday, October 3, 1985

Government is never justified in forcing an answer from a person who doesn't want to give it.

—Thursday, September 12, 1985

You know that you're living in a police state when you realize that you're more likely to be arrested than you are to be mugged. —Saturday, July 27, 1996

Milam's Notes

Learning

The objective of a teacher should always be that, one day, his student will surpass him. —Tuesday, February 14, 1995

You shall know the truth and the truth shall make you afraid.

—Thursday, October 1, 1992

A bad example can be as instructive as a good one. —Sunday, February 17, 1991

A good example can be as instructive as a bad one. —Tuesday, February 19, 1991

It's easy to learn a lesson. The trick is to remember it.

—Tuesday, February 24, 1981

There isn't any guarantee that study leads to enlightenment.

—Friday, June 23, 1989

Some things cannot be taught, but only learned. —Tuesday, February 7, 1989

Stress is the mother of achievement.

—Monday, October 3, 1994

Experience would be a better teacher if people would be better students.

—Friday, February 6, 1981

People cannot develop self reliance in a welfare state.

—Saturday, October 12, 1985

A person must learn to understand four things about himself: what he likes; what he doesn't like; what he wants; and what he doesn't want. Until he understands those four things, his choices will tend to be random and his life will tend to be directionless.

—Thursday, December 11, 1997

One trick to being perceived as a craftsman is to make it look like you intended for the thing to come out that way.

—Friday, June 11, 2010

Miscellany

A cop car going the other direction is a beautiful sight. —Monday, June 14, 2010

Preventive medicine is acceptable. Preventive legislation is intolerable.

—Thursday, July 27, 1995

If one would succeed, then one must be willing to risk failure.

—Wednesday, December 25, 1991

The most important difference between fictional characters and historical characters is the intentions of the authors who created them. —undated

Simplicity is a lost art.

—Monday, November 20, 1978

Most of what we've achieved in the name of progress isn't sustainable in the long term. —Thursday, February 14, 1991

Movements are made by people, not by leaders. —Saturday, May 27, 1989

All things occur in cycles. There are even cycles of cycles.

—Thursday, January 18, 1979

There's a last time for everything.

—Saturday, August 25, 1979

The demand for privacy doesn't necessarily imply a desire to hide something.

—Wednesday, October 9, 1974

It's a strange language when "giving in" and "putting out" can mean the same thing. —Tuesday, August 28, 1979

In the frenzy to stamp out discrimination, many people overlook the fact that prejudice is something to which everyone should have an equal right.

—Monday, July 15, 1974

Generalization is the art of saying the greatest possible number of things in the smallest possible number of words.

—Friday, February 25, 1977

The difference between a connoisseur and a snob is perilously small.

—Sunday, December 31, 1978

Most reformers forget to ask themselves, "Are my proposed reforms inherently terminal?"—Tuesday, December 26, 1978

The difference between being curious and being nosy is perilously small.

—Wednesday, September 28, 2005

- Simple minds work alike. Each great mind is unique. —Friday, July 1, 1988
- Doctors and prostitutes have more in common than doctors would like to admit. —Friday, March 2, 1979
- Complexity is a sign of incompetence. —Monday, October 6, 1980
- I know why handicapped people need special consideration but I can't think of any reason at all why they, as a group, deserve it. —Wednesday, February 21, 1979
- Handicapped people should pay more to ride the bus, not less, because they're more expensive to carry. —Tuesday, September 28, 1982
- Some people will take a short cut no matter how much longer it takes. —Friday, December 7, 1979
- Man's capacity for self-deception is boundless. —Sunday, May 3, 1981
- More people will be converted by conviction than by logic. —Tuesday, March 6, 1979
- When a lawyer wins a case he loses a customer. —Tuesday, October 13, 1992
- When a doctor cures a patient he loses a customer. —Tuesday, October 13, 1992
- No marriage has "worked out" until you die in it. —Friday, November 10, 1989
- If a man feels that it's necessary to affirm his promise with an oath, then he doesn't really mean the promise. —Saturday, February 14, 1987
- Most new ideas have been around for a long time. —Friday, November 10, 1989
- Complexity is many things happening in series. Diversity is many things happening in parallel. —Thursday, April 9, 1992
- A philosopher may be considered to be a great philosopher if people continue to misunderstand him long after his death. —Sunday, October 1, 1989
- Custom is the law of the people. Legislation is the command of the government. —Wednesday, July 21, 1993
- What's good for the mind is good for the body. —Tuesday, February 13, 1979
- The character of a small institution is determined by the character of the leader. The character of a large institution determines the character of the leader. —Saturday, June 17, 1995
- There's no reward like success. —Saturday, May 24, 1986
- It's unfortunate that we have to spend so much of our future trying to recover from so much of our past. —Wednesday, September 28, 2005

Ownership

- All ownership ultimately relies on force. In a fascist police state, ownership is a liability. —Saturday, November 12, 1994 —Saturday, April 17, 2010
- The only reliable test for ownership is possession or control. —Saturday, November 12, 1994

Milam's Notes

Politics

Politics is when you do something for the wrong reason.

—Thursday, November 9, 1978

A vote is like a form of currency. It has value only if it's redeemable in lead.

—Tuesday, March 24, 1987

Most people don't get interested in politics until the Gestapo kicks down their door. —Wednesday, February 20, 1991

I'm interested in politics for the same reason that prisoners are interested in bars. —Wednesday, February 20, 1991

Compromise is a valid engineering concept. In politics, compromise means lose tomorrow instead of losing today.

—Saturday, December 28, 1991

No nation should be so large that the right of departure is worthless.

—Saturday, June 17, 1995

Support the right to.

—Tuesday, January 2, 1979

Decentralize authority. Any means is justified. —undated

If a group is small enough that the character of the group can be controlled by the character of the members, then the group is small enough to be a democracy.

If a group is large enough that the character of the members is dictated by the character of the group, then the group is too large to be a democracy.

—Thursday, January 30, 1997

Responsibility

The process of going on a diet usually accomplishes nothing more than to transfer the responsibility for weight loss from the overweight person to the diet.

—Monday, February 23, 1987

I'm not responsible for the sins of my brother. How much less, then, do I care about the sins of strangers?

—Monday, May 26, 1986

When you become your brother's keeper, then your brother becomes kept.

—Monday, February 27, 1989

In a society where the corporal punishment of children is prohibited, the capital punishment of adults will be inevitable.

—Sunday, March 5, 1995

😊 Self Esteem 😊



Nothing so enables you to recognize low self esteem in others as to finally solve it in yourself. —Monday, February 19, 1990

I already have a sufficiently large number of faults without counting false modesty among them.

—Saturday, June 12, 2010

The Punny Side of Sex

- | | |
|--|--|
| When in Rome, screw as the Romans do. —Friday, February 9, 1979 | Any tart in a storm. —Saturday, December 13, 1980 |
| Eat ssssWheaties!!! Breakfast of champions! —Tuesday, April 10, 1979 | You can't make a strumpet without spreading legs. —Tuesday, November 25, 1980 |
| Don't look a gift whore in the mouth. —Friday, March 2, 1979 | Absence makes the heart go wander. —Thursday, May 29, 1986 |
| Don't count your chickies before they're snatched. —Sunday, July 19, 1981 | Abstinence makes the heart grow fonder. —Friday, January 12, 1979 |
| When opportunititty knockers, grasp it. —Thursday, July 9, 1981 | He who lusts last lusts best. —Saturday, October 19, 1985 |
| Better laid than never. —Friday, December 22, 1978 | All work and no lay will make Jack a dull boy. —Tuesday, March 31, 1981 |
| Variety is the spice of wife. —Friday, September 1, 1989 | Where there's a will, there's a lay. —Wednesday, July 23, 1986 |
| Half a lay is better than no broad at all. —Tuesday, August 29, 1978 | l'amour l'merrier. —Thursday, March 23, 1989 |
| Man does not live by broad alone. —Thursday, December 11, 1980 | What a difference a lay makes! —Monday, June 14, 2010 |

Strategy and Tactics

Defense

- The best defense is good camouflage.
—Wednesday, August 12, 1992
- Defense, to be successful, must begin long before an attack is experienced.
—Saturday, May 20, 1989

Attack

1. Don't attack them where they're strong.
2. Attack them where they're weak.
3. Don't attack them with your weak weapons.
4. Attack them with your strong weapons.
—Sunday, March 21, 1993

Retreat

- It sometimes happens that the most pressing need is to keep an orderly retreat.
—Wednesday, March 28, 1979
- When you can't win, lose effectively.
—Thursday, October 1, 1992

Structure

- Divided we stand. United we fall.
—Saturday, June 17, 1989

Milam's Notes

Stupidity

No attempt should be made to protect stupid people from the consequences of their own stupidity. Any such attempt is a waste of time that could be better spent, removes the incentive for improvement in those few who are capable of it, and needlessly prolongs the existence of the rest.

—Monday, January 27, 1975

The fact that a man is ignorant, or even stupid, doesn't give someone else the right to make his decisions for him.

—Tuesday, September 27, 1977

Women

When a man criticizes women, he's condemned for being sexist. When a woman criticizes men, she's praised for being liberated.

—Monday, October 14, 1991

What a man learns from his past relationships is called baggage. What a woman learns from her past relationships is called experience.

—Thursday, August 11, 1994

If a woman complains that she wishes that a man would love her just for what she is, then it probably means that she's a bitch.

—Thursday, June 6, 1991

Humility is desirable in a man but essential in a woman.

—Friday, August 26, 1994

The difference between reminding and nagging is usually a matter of gender.

—Friday, June 11, 2010

If a man is going to love a woman then he must do it not just because of her virtues but also in spite of her faults.

—Friday, June 11, 2010

Love is the wine of the soul. Passion is the whiskey.

—Sunday, April 11, 2010

Many women are like rosebushes, best viewed from a safe distance and otherwise avoided.

—Thursday, March 30, 1995

A woman can store many more problems in a closet than she can carry in an overnight bag.

—Saturday, February 17, 1990

Women are concerned with security, not with freedom. When a woman says that she believes in freedom, what she means is freedom from insecurity.

—Saturday, September 28, 1985

When women rule society, the result is always the same: a maternally biased welfare state in which men become the slaves of children.

—Sunday, March 5, 1995

Beautiful women are a dime a dozen. A woman who knows how and when to keep her mouth shut is a treasure beyond price.

—Friday, June 11, 2010

Over the years, I've learned a lot about how to handle a woman. The best way to do it is from a safe distance.

—Saturday, June 12, 2010