

Nicolas Tesla

—Quotations

If you want to find the secrets of the universe, think in terms of energy, frequency and vibration.

I hold that space cannot be curved, for the simple reason that it can have no properties. It might as well be said that God has properties. He has not, but only attributes and these are of our own making. Of properties we can only speak when dealing with matter filling the space. To say that in the presence of large bodies space becomes curved is equivalent to stating that something can act upon nothing. I, for one, refuse to subscribe to such a view.

New York Herald Tribune (11 September 1932)

The scientists of today think deeply instead of clearly. One must be sane to think clearly, but one can think deeply and be quite insane.

Modern Mechanics and Inventions. July, 1934

Today’s scientists have substituted mathematics for experiments, and they wander off through equation after equation, and eventually build a structure which has no relation to reality.

“Radio Power Will Revolutionize the World” in Modern Mechanics and Inventions (July 1934)

The scientific man does not aim at an immediate result. He does not expect that his advanced ideas will be readily taken up. His work is like that of the planter — for the future. His duty is to lay the foundation for those who are to come, and point the way. He lives and labors and hopes.

“Radio Power Will Revolutionize the World” in Modern Mechanics and Inventions (July 1934)

The scientists from Franklin to Morse were clear thinkers and did not produce erroneous theories. The scientists of today think deeply instead of clearly. One must be sane to think clearly, but one can think deeply and be quite insane.

“Radio Power Will Revolutionize the World” in Modern Mechanics and Inventions (July 1934)

A thousand secrets of nature which I might have stumbled upon accidentally, I would have given for that one which I had wrested from her against all odds and at the peril of my existence...

Nature may reach the same result in many ways. Like a wave in the physical world, in the infinite ocean of the medium which pervades all, so in the world of organisms, in life, an impulse started proceeds onward, at times, may be, with the speed of light, at times, again, so slowly that for ages and ages it seems to stay, passing through processes of a complexity inconceivable to men, but in all its forms, in all its stages, its energy ever and ever integrally present. A single ray of light from a distant star falling upon the eye of a tyrant in bygone times may have altered the course of his life, may have changed the destiny of nations, may have transformed the surface of the globe, so intricate, so inconceivably complex are the processes in Nature. In no way can we get such an overwhelming idea of the grandeur of Nature than when we consider, that in accordance with the law of the conservation of energy, throughout the Infinite, the forces are in a perfect balance, and hence the energy of a single thought may determine the motion of a universe.

“On Light And Other High Frequency Phenomena” A lecture delivered before the Franklin Institute, Philadelphia (24 February 1893), and before the National Electric Light Association, St. Louis (1 March 1893), published in The Electrical review (9 June 1893), p. Page 683; also in The Inventions, Researches And Writings of Nikola Tesla (1894)

When the great truth accidentally revealed and experimentally confirmed is fully recognized, that this planet, with all its appalling immensity, is to electric currents virtually no more than a small metal ball and that by this fact many possibilities, each baffling imagination and of incalculable consequence, are rendered absolutely sure of accomplishment; when the first plant is inaugurated and it is shown that a telegraphic message, almost as secret and non-interferable as a thought, can be transmitted to any terrestrial distance, the sound of the human voice, with all its intonations and inflections, faithfully and instantly reproduced at any other point of the globe, the energy of a waterfall made available for supplying light, heat or motive power, anywhere — on sea, or land, or high in the air — humanity will be like an ant heap stirred up with a stick ! See the excitement coming !

“The Transmission of Electric Energy Without Wires” in Electrical World and Engineer (5 March 1904)

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New York Herald Tribune (11 September 1932)

From childhood I was compelled to concentrate attention upon myself. This caused me much suffering, but to my present view, it was a blessing in disguise for it has taught me to appreciate the inestimable value of introspection in the preservation of life, as well as a means of achievement. The pressure of occupation and the incessant stream of impressions pouring into our consciousness through all the gateways of knowledge make modern existence hazardous in many ways. Most persons are so absorbed in the contemplation of the outside world that they are wholly oblivious to what is passing on within themselves. The premature death of millions is primarily traceable to this cause. Even among those who exercise care, it is a common mistake to avoid imaginary, and ignore the real dangers. And what is true of an individual also applies, more or less, to a people as a whole.

My Inventions (1919) — Chapter 2 : Extraordinary Experiences

My brain is only a receiver. In the universe there is a core from which we obtain knowledge, strength, inspiration. I have not penetrated into the secrets of this core, but I know that it exists.

Einstein’s relativity work is a magnificent mathematical garb which fascinates, dazzles and makes people blind to the underlying errors. The theory is like a beggar clothed in purple whom ignorant people take for a king... its exponents are brilliant men but they are metaphysicists rather than scientists.

New York Times (11 July 1935), p. 23, c.8

A thousand secrets of nature which I might have stumbled upon accidentally, I would have given for that one which I had wrested from her against all odds and at the peril of my existence...

— On the Invention of the Induction Motor

Money does not represent such a value as men have placed upon it. All my money has been invested into experiments with which I have made new discoveries enabling mankind to have a little easier life.

As quoted in “A Visit to Nikola Tesla” by Dragislav L. Petković in Politika (April 1927); also in Tesla, Master of Lightning (1999) by Margaret Cheney, Robert Uth, and Jim Glenn, p. 82

Fights between individuals, as well as governments and nations, invariably result from misunderstandings in the broadest interpretation of this term. Misunderstandings are always caused by the inability of appreciating one another's point of view. This again is due to the ignorance of those concerned, not so much in their own, as in their mutual fields. The peril of a clash is aggravated by a more or less predominant sense of combativeness, posed by every human being. To resist this inherent fighting tendency the best way is to dispel ignorance of the doings of others by a systematic spread of general knowledge. With this object in view, it is most important to aid exchange of thought and intercourse.

A Means for Furthering Peace (1905)

Our senses enable us to perceive only a minute portion of the outside world. Our hearing extends to a small distance. Our sight is impeded by intervening bodies and shadows. To know each other we must reach beyond the sphere of our sense perceptions. We must transmit our intelligence, travel, transport the materials and transfer the energies necessary for our existence. Following this thought we now realize, forcibly enough to dispense with argument, that of all other conquests of man, without exception, that which is most desirable, which would be most helpful in the establishment of universal peaceful relations is — the complete ANNIHILATION OF DISTANCE.

A Means for Furthering Peace (1905)

The moment one constructs a device to carry into practice a crude idea, he finds himself unavoidably engrossed with the details of the apparatus. As he goes on improving and reconstructing, his force of concentration diminishes and he loses sight of the great underlying principle... I do not rush into actual work. When I get an idea, I start at once building it up in my imagination. I change the construction, make improvements and operate the device in my mind. It is absolutely immaterial to me whether I run my turbine in thought or test it in my shop. I even note if it is out of balance.

A Means for Furthering Peace (1905)