

This book presents a theory of how we can learn skills in the art of living and create beautiful lives. Quotations from eminent authors illustrate the theory.

Select Quotations on the Art of Living

By Tom Lovett

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on the
Art of Living



Seeking Beauty, Truth, and Goodness

Tom Lovett

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Print ISBN: 978-1-958892-25-1

Ebook ISBN: 979-8-88531-696-5

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Published by BookLocker.com, Inc., Trenton, Georgia, U.S.A.

Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication Data

Lovett, Tom

SELECT QUOTATIONS on the ART OF LIVING by Tom Lovett

Library of Congress Control Number: 2024903335

BookLocker.com, Inc.

2024

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The Author

Tom Lovett is an independent researcher and a generalist. Many years ago, he became interested in three questions. Why do liberals and conservatives differ so consistently on such varied issues? Why do people fight so bitterly over political and religious issues? Don't our shared human interests outweigh our differences?

Lovett looked for answers in the natural sciences, in the social sciences, and in the humanities. Over time, he linked key knowledge from those sources into a theory of the art of living, a theory that honors our common interests. You can find it in his book *Creating Beautiful Lives* (2020). Quotations in this new book inspired him to complete that theory.

He has a BA degree in Political Science from Cornell College and an MBA degree from Northern Illinois University. His career in Wisconsin state government was in health care reform. He and wife, Anne, live in Madison, Wisconsin next to the University of Wisconsin Arboretum, a site of pioneering research in the science of restoration ecology. See www.tomlovet.net.

INTRODUCTION: CREATING BEAUTIFUL LIVES

In theory, we create beautiful lives by learning skills in the art of living. Most people naturally acquire some of these skills, but we can easily learn more. A great many eminent authors have written books on the art of living, and their books stimulate our everyday artistic creativity.

The quotations in this book illustrate the theory that artistry can become our way of life. These wise sayings come from a wide range of distinguished artists, scientists, religious leaders, mystics, educators, philosophers, and others. They are interesting all on their own, separate from the theory, but in this new context, they motivate us even more.

In the proposed theory, we modify our basic behavior with artistic skills. Like other animals, we create living space, obtain food, eat, court, have sex, parent, groom, play, build, form social bonds, fight, flee, and sleep. Doesn't everyone learn some skills while engaging in these behavior? Don't we sometimes learn artistic skills?

Science and religion can help us create beautiful lives. For example, they can lead us toward ancient ideals: beauty, truth, and good. Doesn't everyone experience those ideals on occasion? Can't science and religion be paths toward them in daily life?

In theory, the most important everyday art mediums are our own lives and our relationships with one another, with other species, and with nature. By modifying our behavior with artistic skill, we can release our highest human potential in beautiful, deep, moral relationships. Albert Einstein wrote, "The great moral teachers of humanity were, in a way, artistic geniuses in the art of living."

Part I's quotations demonstrate how...

- *Any area of life can become an art medium* (Chapter 1).
- *We can learn artistic skills in our basic behavior* (Chapter 2).
- *Many people link art, science, and religion* (Chapter 3).

- *Countless others urge us to seek beauty, truth, and goodness.* In theory, we seek them best through art, science, and religion (Chapter 4).
- *The ultimate mystical experience is profound unity.* We can experience that unity as we create beautiful lives (Chapter 5).

If we evaluate the proposed theory, and it works well enough, it will become scientific knowledge: a new social science. Part II's quotations show that...

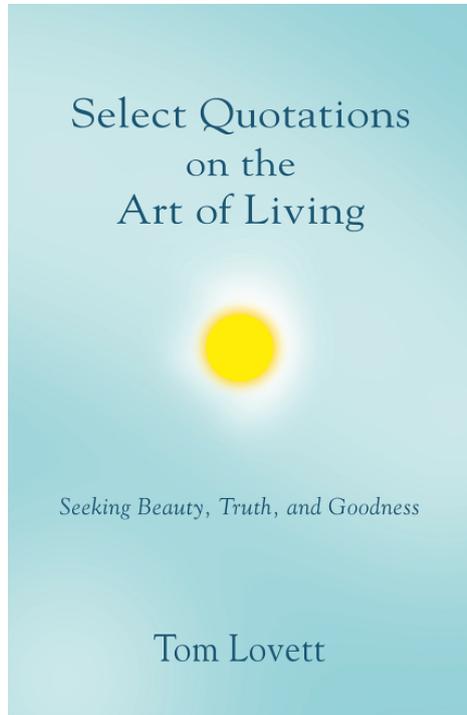
- *Many scientists criticize the current state of social science.* Social science could help us more as we seek to release our highest potential and solve our social and ecological crises (Chapter 6).
- *Many social scientists focus on beauty.* Increasing that focus might lead to more scientific social science, perhaps eventually to a science of the art of living (Chapter 7).

In the proposed theory, beautiful lives are not uniform. The simple underlying patterns that exist in beautiful lives can be expressed in unlimited ways in our individual and social lives and in diverse cultures. How those patterns manifest depends on the socio-cultural environments that influence us; on our time, energy, and interests; and on choices we make.

Beautiful lives are not perfect. Imperfections, incompleteness, and impermanence exist in all lives. Our physical, mental, and other challenges do not limit the beauty that is possible in our lives. In fact, how we deal with those challenges and with the circumstances we find ourselves in is essential to our ability to radiate beauty. The trials of life provide opportunities for us to respond in beautiful ways.

The proposed theory contains language that might help us communicate as we create beautiful lives. A common language would immensely benefit countless people around the world who seek peace, harmony, and unity.

Author's Note: Some quotations include *he, him, his, or mankind*. In the past, those words often meant both male and female. Today, authors commonly use *gender-neutral language*.



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