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## I on Poverty: Provocations

Each week, friends, allies, colleagues and respected leaders and thinkers from around the world offer their thoughts, ideas, aspirations and plans for a better world.

Some are new voices, some clarion calls from the past. Some seriously poignant, others satirically pointed.

All provoke me in good and thoughtful ways. Many find their way into my public speeches. Send me your favorite proverbs, provocations and punditry.

Here are a few favorites:

"If people themselves don't change, we will never solve the problem. That's why I work with youth. When you want to give shape to the tree, you must begin very early." – Rafiki Callixte, Executive Director, Les Enfants de Dieu, Rwanda, and [Firelight Foundation](#) partner.

"Anyone who has ever struggled with poverty knows how extremely expensive it is to be poor." - [James Baldwin](#), 20th Century American novelist.

"I'm idealist. I don't know where I'm going, but I'm on my way." - [Carl Sandburg](#), 20th Century American poet.

"We must not only give what we have; we must also give what we are."- [Cardinal Joseph Mercier](#), 20th Century Belgian Catholic Bishop.

For the poor life is "fragile, cheap, dangerous and unpredictable." -- Michael Holman, author, [Last Orders at Harrods: An African Tale](#), and former African editor, Financial Times.

"The moral advantage of being the architect of many losing causes is highly over-rated." - [Arthur M. Schlesinger](#), 20th Century American historian.

"How big you are doesn't measure how good you are at driving social change." - Sally Osberg, President, [Skoll Foundation](#).

"I used to think I was poor. Then they told me I wasn't poor, I was needy. They told me it was self-defeating to think of myself as needy. I was deprived. Then they told me underprivileged was overused. I was disadvantaged. I still don't have a dime. But I have a great vocabulary." – [Jules Feiffer](#), American satirist.

"A political leader shows people the way, moving in front of the people and showing them a path. A human rights advocate, instead, walks behind the people, and, if anyone is left behind, takes their hand to help them." -- [Shirin Ebadi](#), Nobel Peace Prize Laureate and Iran's first female judge.

"After all is said and done, more is said than done." -- Anonymous

"A man never stands so tall as when he leans over to help a child." -- [Abraham Lincoln](#), 16<sup>th</sup> American President.

"Be ashamed to die until you have won some victory for humanity." -- [Horace Mann](#), 19<sup>th</sup> Century American educator.

"Poverty is much too complex to be cured by one intervention. We don't ask if basic education *alone* ends poverty. We don't ask if vaccinations *alone* are ending poverty." - Sam Daley-Harris, Founder, [MicroCredit Summit Campaign](#).

"A wise man should have money in his head, not in his heart." – [John Swift](#), 18<sup>th</sup> Century Irish essayist, novelist and poet.

"Be a maker of peace, a steward of mercy, a voice of reason, be the hands and feet of justice." – [Chaplain Jewelnew Davis](#), Columbia University.

"Sticks in a bundle are unbreakable." – African proverb, quoted by [Freedom from Hunger](#).

"To be good is noble, but to show others how to be good is nobler and no trouble." -- [Mark Twain](#), 19<sup>th</sup> Century American novelist and essayist.

"Is it progress if a cannibal eats with a knife and fork?" -- [Stanislaw Lec](#), 20<sup>th</sup> Century Polish essayist.

"The moral advantage of being the architect of many losing causes is highly over-rated." -- [Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr.](#), 20<sup>th</sup> Century American historian and presidential advisor.

"The trouble with the profit system has always been that it was highly unprofitable to most people." – [E.B. White](#), American author of *Charlotte's Web* & *Elements of Style*.

“Anger is a useful motivator for short-term social change; Love is a more useful motivator for long-term social change.” Jacob Harold, Program Officer, Philanthropy, [Hewlett Foundation](#).

“Experience teaches you to recognize a mistake when you’ve made it again.” -- Anonymous

“Remind people that profit is the difference between revenue and expense. This makes you look smart.” -- [Scott Adams](#), Dilbert cartoon creator and American satirist.

“Illegal aliens have always been a problem in the United States. Ask any Indian.” – [Robert Orben](#), American comedian.

“Never mistake motion for action.” – [Ernest Hemingway](#), 20<sup>th</sup> Century American novelist and Nobel Prize in Literature Winner.

“There are 350 varieties of shark, not counting loan and pool.” – [L.M. Boyd](#), 21<sup>st</sup> Century American columnist

“We are here on earth to do good to others. What the others are here for, I don’t know.” – [W.H. Auden](#), 20<sup>th</sup> Century American poet and author.

“Always look for Number One and be careful not to step in Number Two.” – [Rodney Dangerfield](#), American comedy.

“The difference between genius and stupidity is that genius has its limits.” -- Anonymous

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“One can buy anything with money except morality.” -- [Jean Jacques Rousseau](#), 18<sup>th</sup> Century French philosopher.

“Just because socialism has lost does not mean that capitalism has won.” -- [Robert Heilbroner](#), American economic historian.

“If a free society cannot help the many who are poor, it cannot save the few who are rich.” -- [John F. Kennedy](#), 16<sup>th</sup> American President.

“The means by which we live have outdistanced the ends for which we live. We have guided missiles and misguided men.” – [Martin Luther King, Jr.](#), 20<sup>th</sup> Century American civil rights leader, Nobel Peace Prize Winner and pastor.

“When I feed the poor, they call me a saint. When I ask why the poor have no food, I am called a Communist.” – [Dom Helder Camara](#), 20<sup>th</sup> Century Brazilian Archbishop.

“The real measure of your wealth is how much you'd be worth if you lost all your money.” – Anonymous

“There is no luggage rack on a hearse, and since you cannot bring your...money into the afterlife, Americans choose to give a significant amount of it away...” -- Clotaire Rapaille, [The Culture Code](#).

“Perpetual optimism is a force multiplier.” -- [Colin Powell](#), former American Secretary of State.

“One can pay back the loan of gold, but one dies forever in debt to those who are kind.” -- Malayan proverb.

“He that is of the opinion money will do everything may well be suspected of doing everything for money.” -- [Benjamin Franklin](#), 18<sup>th</sup> Century American social entrepreneur and co-founder of the United States of America.

“All successful business stands on the foundation of morality.” -- [Henry Ward Beecher](#), 19<sup>th</sup> Century American minister who strongly opposed slavery.

“Economics is extremely useful as a form of employment for economists.” -- [John Kenneth Galbraith](#), Professor of Economics, Harvard University, author and presidential adviser.