

**'I don't want to make money.
I just want to be wonderful'**
Marilyn Monroe



**Wit and wisdom from some of the world's
most extraordinary women**

**'Having money is rather like being blonde.
It's more fun but not vital'**
Mary Quant

CAROLE MCKENZIE

For my girls, Asia and Ruby

WISE WOMEN

Wit and Wisdom from Some of the
World's Most Extraordinary Women

Carole McKenzie



EDINBURGH AND LONDON

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INTRODUCTION

'You can have it all, but you can't do it all.'
Michelle Pfeiffer, American actress

The last few decades have posed many new challenges and choices for women. Women are under the microscope as never before.

Even after making the decision whether or not to have careers, children and relationships, experiences can be very different. For example, in an interview with journalist Lucy Kellaway in the *Financial Times*, businesswoman Nicola Horlick describes leaving the house for work, her children shouting, 'One more kiss, Mummy!' Lucy Kellaway informs her that in her own house, the cry of 'one more kiss' has rung out less often than 'Fuck off, I hate you.'

Numerous TV programmes on how to look younger and be a better parent, cook or partner offer advice to women on how to improve their lives. Many women take this advice and have a little help, though often are reluctant to admit it. Singer Madonna confesses: 'I'm not against plastic surgery, I'm just against discussing it.' Whereas, perhaps more realistically for many women, TV presenter Fern Britton tells it how it is and admits in *Woman*

magazine: 'At this age you get those bits down your thighs that have gone a little bit Odeon curtains. And I have to roll my bosoms up like a Swiss roll.'

As if modern women don't have enough challenges to overcome, they are also expected to embrace new technology. Some face this willingly, like Joan Collins, who tweeted Home Secretary Theresa May: 'Arrived LHR after great trip on British Airways, but 1000s waiting at Passport control - listen up Ms May - need more officers.'

Some are confused: 'I cannot even use a bicycle pump.' (The response from actress Dame Judi Dench, when asked if she used email.)

Actress Denise Welch is equally puzzled: 'You get a message saying, "So-and-so has written on your wall", but I don't really know where my wall is, so I don't follow it up.'

Janet Street-Porter is also adamant in her condemnation of blogging: 'Life is too fucking short to log on and read some other sad cow's story about getting up, washing her hair and dealing with a grouchy boss in the office ... DELETE.'

One of the keynotes of society today is the appetite for celebrity and instant fame. Programmes such as the soaps, *Big Brother* and talent shows like *Britain's Got Talent* catapult participants into the spotlight, often with surprising results. Singer Susan Boyle, winner of *BGT*, admits: 'I no longer felt like Susan Boyle, the wee wifey with a wiggle; I felt like Susan Boyle the performer.'

Women play many different roles in their daily lives, and whatever their particular choices and

circumstances, most would agree that there is no stereotype. Most strive to do well in whatever they undertake and to do it in their own way.

Singer Beyoncé is no exception: 'At this point, I really know who I am and don't feel like I have to put myself in a box. I'm not afraid of taking risks - no one can define me.'

Finally, if you can do it all - good luck.



In any collection of quotations there is a need for accuracy - quotes are frequently attributed to people who never said them, or who said them in quite a different form or context from the one in which they are represented. We take them up, edit and often embellish them to fit our need.

The quotations in this book are derived from a variety of sources, including books, magazines and interviews. The quotes are assumed to be accurate, and all were obtained from previously published or broadcast sources. The quotes are, of course, the opinion of those who first spoke or wrote them.

The astute observations, intuition and humour of women has left a legacy of memorable lines from early centuries up to the present day. All are worthy because they express the thoughts, feelings, dreams and fears of women, irrespective of their social background or time in history.

For ease of reference, the quotations that follow are arranged in alphabetical subject order, with full

details of the source given in the first instance in each section.

ABILITY

Ability is sexless.

Christabel Pankhurst
(1880-1958), British
suffragette and daughter
of Emmeline Pankhurst

I'm not going to limit myself just because people won't accept the fact that I can do something else.

Dolly Parton, American
country music singer-
songwriter

When nothing is sure, everything is possible.

Dame Margaret
Drabble, British novelist
and critic

If you do things well, do them better. Be daring, be first, be different, be just.

Dame Anita Roddick
(1942-2007), founder and
managing director of
Body Shop International

As the newest Lady Turnpot descended into the kitchen wrapped only in her celery-green dressing gown, her creamy bosom rising and falling like a temperamental soufflé, her tart mouth pursed in distaste, the sous-chef whispered to the scullery boy, 'I don't know what to make of her.'

Laurel Fortuner,
American writer, 1992
winner of the Bulwer-
Lytton Prize (an annual
contest to write the worst
opening paragraph of an
imaginary novel)

Women are capable of great music but seldom blow
their own trumpet.

Carole McKenzie,
Scottish editor of *Wise
Women*

ACRONYMS

SINBADS

Women who are: Single In Need of Blokes, in
Absolutely Desperate State

USWISOMWAGMOHOTM

United Single Women In Search Of Men Who Aren't
Gay, Married, Or Hung-up On Their Mothers

SCUM

Society for Cutting Up Men manifesto

Valerie Solanas (1936-
1988), American radical
feminist writer who
gained notoriety for her
assassination attempt on
Andy Warhol

CHMD

Celebrity Hyperbole Mega-Defence

NEETS

Not in Education Employment or Training

SLITS

Still Living In The Sixties

DINK

Double Income No Kids

OINK

One Income No Kids

WIGGs

Women Into Gay Guys

ACTING

Acting is the most minor of gifts and not a very high-class way to earn a living. After all, Shirley Temple could do it at the age of four.

Katharine Hepburn
(1907-2003), American
actress

When I cry, do you want the tears to run all the way or shall I stop halfway down?

Margaret O'Brien (aged
six), American actress

Acting is like painting pictures on bathroom tissues. Ten minutes later you throw them away and they're gone.

Shelley Winters (1920-
2006), American actress

The stage is actor's country. You have to get your passport stamped every so often or they take away

your citizenship.

Dame Vanessa
Redgrave, British actress
and political activist

Acting is standing up naked and turning around very slowly.

Rosalind Russell (1907-
1976), American actress
and singer

What acting means is that you've got to get out of your own skin.

Katharine Hepburn

Scratch an actor and you'll find an actress.

Dorothy Parker (1893-
1967), American wit

I mean, the question actors most often get asked is how they can bear saying the same things over and over again, night after night, but God knows the answer to that is, don't we all anyway? Might as well get paid for it.

Elaine Dundy (1921-
2008), American novelist
and actress, in *The Dud
Avocado*, 1958

I was born at the age of 12 on a Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer lot.

Judy Garland (1922-
1969), American actress

I'm glad you like my Catherine. I like her too. She ruled 30 million people and had 3,000 lovers. I do the best I can in two hours.

Mae West (1893-1980),
American actress,
speaking from the stage
after her performance in
Catherine the Great

Dramatic art, in her opinion, is knowing how to fill a
sweater.

Bette Davis (1908-
1989), American actress,
on Jayne Mansfield

I just pretended I was a cartoon. I exaggerated every
move. Every time I made a movement, I would think
like a cartoon.

Kim Basinger, American
actress, on her role as a
cartoon seductress

All those actresses who turned the film down are
stupid. I believe that if you have the right equipment
and a point of view, that's a deadly combination.

Sharon Stone, American
actress, on her role in the
film *Basic Instinct*

If I quit the business tomorrow, I'd involve myself in
working with people. That's why I love this
profession.

Hannah Gordon, British
actress

I intend to keep entertaining people for as long as I
can. I'm going to be like George Burns, an old
trouper. And then, I hope, drop dead on the stage. If I

rise and I look down and I see all that happening, I'll be happy.

Debbie Reynolds,
American actress

The idea that acting is quintessentially 'feminine' carries with it a barely perceptible sneer, a suggestion that it is not the noblest or most dignified of professions. Acting is role-playing, role-playing is lying, and lying is a woman's game.

Molly Haskell, American
film critic and writer

I do 20 minutes every time the refrigerator door opens and the light comes on.

Debbie Reynolds,
referring to her life in
showbusiness

I believe in being kind to others. I don't make life hard for myself. And I believe you have to learn something every day. When you stop, you die.

Dame Evelyn Laye CBE
(1900-1996), English
actress and singer

When you are my size, have dirty ashy-blond hair and look like me, you will never, never get to play glamorous roles. I'm just grateful my career has peaked with this success. Glory be! It's been wonderful. Generally, in this business, if you haven't made it by 40, you can forget it. We wrinklies can no longer be shoved in the back room and forgotten. That's the message I preach to the world ... I make a good spokesperson. I'm a real bigmouth.

Estelle Getty (1923-2008), American actress

I never know what role to play on panel shows. If you're the girl, you're often meant to be the stupid one.

Isy Suttie, British actress and comedienne, in interview, 2012

When you do Shakespeare, they think you must be intelligent because they think you understand what you're saying.

Dame Helen Mirren, British actress

Performers never want to stop performing. Retirement isn't in my lexicon. I have such fun and, anyway, what would I do? People often ask what I could possibly do next that I haven't done already and I always answer the same way: I'd like to do it all over again, only this time better.

Liza Minnelli, American actress, in interview, 2012

There's something that sort of weirds me out about actors who want to be rock stars, and the other way round too.

Gwyneth Paltrow, American actress

Being a celebrity has taught me to hide, but being an actor has opened my soul.

Meryl Streep, American actress, Barnard

Commencement speech,
2010

With the number of people I ignore, I'm lucky I work at all in this town.

Helena Bonham Carter
CBE, British actress

I don't really see myself as an actress. I love music too much. I wouldn't mind a cameo, if I could just play myself.

Cheryl Cole, British
singer with Girls Aloud

I'm not someone who sacrifices all for the cinema; my life will be always more important.

Natalie Portman,
American actress

ACTION

It is far easier to act under conditions of tyranny than to think.

Hannah Arendt (1906-
1975), German-American
philosopher

I needed a vice real quick.

Mia Farrow, American
actress and humanitarian,
confessing that she only
started smoking during
relationship problems
with Woody Allen

You are going to get a big surprise with the next thing I do.

Diana, Princess of Wales
(1961-1997), to reporters
in St Tropez, *Guardian*,
1997

Don't worry, when I sell you to Crewe, you won't be able to see them from there.

Karren Brady, British
businesswoman, sporting
executive and former MD
of Birmingham City
Football Club, said to a
player at Birmingham
Football Club who
observed, 'I can see your
tits in that shirt.' (The
player was sold soon
after.)

ADVERTISING

I have nothing to do with aspects of advertising; I can't even tell a Cinzano from a Martini. But I do trust the public to tell the difference between real life and advertisements, which is more than better-educated worthies seem willing to do.

Edwina Currie, British
novelist and former MP,
arguing in favour of
advertising on the BBC
and against the notion
that advertising is bad for
the public

Fantastically voluptuous sex-kitten goddess needs major licking from a rich, well-hung man.

Dawn French, British novelist and comedienne, when asked how she would describe herself in a lonely hearts ad

ADVICE

If you want a thing well done, get a couple of old broads to do it.

Bette Davis (1908-1989), American actress

I give myself sometimes admirable advice, but I am incapable of taking it.

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu (1689-1762), British society hostess and wit

Advice is what we ask for when we already know the answer but wish we didn't.

Erica Jong, American writer and poet

If I had to give young writers advice, I'd say don't listen to writers talking about writing.

Lillian Hellman (1905-1984), American dramatist

The strongest piece of advice I would give to any young woman is don't screw around and don't smoke.

Edwina Currie, British
novelist and former MP

Take the wife.

Edwina Currie (then
junior Health Minister),
advising businessmen
travelling abroad on how
to avoid catching AIDS

The way to a man's heart is through his stomach.

Fanny Fern (1811-
1872), American writer

Kill him.

Ivana Trump, Czech
former athlete and
socialite giving advice to
women deserted

Haste is the enemy of politeness.

Drusilla Beyfus, British
journalist and author

After 40, a woman has to choose between losing her
figure or her face. My advice is to keep your face and
stay sitting down.

Libby Purves OBE,
British radio presenter
and journalist, in article in
the *Times*

Once, when I was struggling, my mum told me a
phrase she'd read: 'Love the flower in winter when it
says nothing.' I liked the idea that everyone has their
winter. There are times when you're quiet, then you
come round again.

Abi Morgan, British
playwright

Advice to persons about to marry – don't.

Punch, English
humorous periodical,
1845

Don't compromise yourself. You're all you've got.

Janis Joplin (1943-1970),
American singer-
songwriter

Pop stars should not eat.

Lady Gaga, American
singer

AFFAIRS

I knew about the affair ... I told Paddy ... 'Look, kiddo, you've got to come clean or people will think that it's something much worse.'

Jane Ashdown, on her
husband Paddy's much-
publicised affair

Baloney!

Barbara Bush, wife of
George W. Bush, on the
allegations that her
husband had had an affair

I don't sleep with married men, but what I mean is that I don't sleep with happily married men.

Britt Ekland, Swedish
actress

If you are going to do something like my husband did, you should at least have the decency to do it out of the country, not next door. That's what any other man would do.

Lady Sarah Graham-Moon, after her husband began an affair with a woman in the neighbouring village; in revenge, she cut up his Savile Row suits and distributed his vintage wine collection

I haven't had as many affairs as Joan Crawford - but outside of a cat house, who has?

Bette Davis (1908-1989), American actress

There were three of us in this marriage, so it was a bit crowded.

Diana, Princess of Wales (1961-1997), *Panorama* interview, 1995

I was naive - I ignored all the warning signs.

Mia Farrow, American actress and humanitarian, after revelations of Woody Allen's affair

We could not continue without risking discovery.

Edwina Currie, British novelist and former MP, speaking of her affair with John Major

I wish somebody had sat me down and said, 'You are doing a good job, but there is going to be trouble.'

Carole Caplin, lifestyle
coach to Cherie Blair, wife
of former British Prime
Minister Tony Blair

I enjoyed being an adulteress ... taking a certain vengeance of the fact that my husband was not being faithful.

Joan Collins, British
actress

AGEING

Age - you just wake up one morning, and you got it.

Moms Mabley (1894-
1975), American
comedienne

Old age is not an illness, it is a timeless ascent. As power diminishes, we grow towards the light.

May Sarton (1912-
1995), Belgian-born
American writer

If beauty is a letter of introduction, wrinkles are a good résumé.

Mary Ellen Pinkham,
American author of Guide
to Good-Enough
Housekeeping

I refuse to admit that I'm more than 52 even if that does make my sons illegitimate.