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When you look into the abyss quote

Something went wrong. Wait a moment and try again. Fow philosophers are as widely quoted and as widely misunderstood as Friedrich Nietzsche. Although he’s often assumed to be anti-Semitic because of the obsession with his idea of the “übermensch” (superior man), he was actually a vocal critic of anti-Semitism. Additionally, his nihilistic philosophies, which argue that the world has no underlying truth, make him difficult to understand. All the same, because he had to write in short bursts due to migraines and other illnesses, many of Nietzsche’s sayings are easily quotable. In this post, we’ll look at the real meaning of one of Nietzsche’s most famous aphorisms: “When you stare into the abyss, the abyss stares back.” What does the phrase “stare into the abyss” mean? The word “abyss” means a deep, almost endless cavern or hole. The literal meaning of this phrase, then, is to stare into endless darkness. To understand the actual meaning of the phrase, it helps to know the full sentence: “When you stare into the abyss, the abyss stares back.” In plain English, you might rephrase this as “When you confront evil, make sure it doesn’t influence you.” For example, if a politician is investigating corruption, they may begin to see it everywhere and may themselves become corrupt as a result. In a more extended use, the phrase can be used to mean the effect that study of anything at all can have on your mind. Endlessly seeking out the truth in an “abyss” can lead you to unpleasant truths, after all. In short, then, “staring into the abyss” means to deeply contemplate something foreign to yourself, and which may have consequences on your concept of your own self. What do the words in this phrase mean? An abyss is a canyon or other large hole so deep that it seems to be endless. Staring is the act of looking for a long time. It could also imply a very severe kind of focus, rather than a casual glance. Taken literally, then, this phrase is saying that someone is looking very hard into a nearly bottomless canyon. If you see this phrase, though, it’s unlikely to be literal. To figure out its more likely meaning, we will need to take a detour through 1800s German philosophy and the work of Friedrich Nietzsche A very brief introduction to Friedrich Nietzsche Friedrich Nietzsche was a German philosopher active in the late 1800s. To gain a real understanding of Nietzsche’s thought, you would probably need to take several university-level courses into modern philosophy. This article isn’t going to manage that, so we’ll make do with a very basic explanation of the core of his philosophical ideas. Some core ideas of Nietzsche’s philosophy Probably the single most important idea in Nietzschean philosophy is that truth is what you make of it, and that interpretation is essential to getting to the bottom of reality. As Nietzsche himself put it, “there are no facts, only interpretations.” Another core idea is a criticism of traditional religion and traditional moral values. Additionally, he was strongly opposed to nationalism and centralized forms of government. These ideas led to such cheerful phrases in Nietzsche’s writings as “God is dead” and “Everything the State says is a lie, and everything it has it has stolen.” Although Nietzsche’s philosophy seems pretty depressing, he comes through these dark places to end with the idea of an “affirmation of life,” where for a human being to affirm or hold up themselves carries more meaning precisely because of the general lack of meaning the universe has by default. In short, you can think of Nietzsche as saying: “So what if the universe is meaningless? That just means we can give it our own meaning.” Beyond Good and Evil and staring into an abyss Digressions aside, to really tease out Nietzsche’s meaning of “stare into the abyss” we need to look at the original use of the phrase. That original use took place in Beyond Good and Evil, a book of philosophical aphorisms or short sayings: He who fights with monsters should look to it that he himself does not become a monster. And if you gaze long into an abyss, the abyss also gazes into you. The first part of this aphorism immediately makes the meaning of the second part clearer. The saying as a whole is essentially a warning: If you’re going to confront evil, make sure you don’t adopt evil methods yourself. A great example is Russia’s communist revolution of the early 1900s. What began as a fight against the violent Tsarist government quickly led to the fighters themselves becoming violent fascists. With this in mind, we can interpret “stare into the abyss” as meaning something like “confront evil” or at least “contemplate evil.” Examples “After staring into the abyss of a police corruption case, the officer decided the best way to find the worst offenders was to offer the others a bribe.” In this example, a police officer confronts the evil of corruption before adopting its own methods. Other interpretations of the abyss Nietzsche being Nietzsche, it seems appropriate that we consider other possible meanings of the phrase “stare into the abyss.” Beyond the likely intended meaning, this phrase has also taken on an implication of considering something that’s likely to change your mindset. Some of this meaning is also in line with Nietzsche’s thought. For example, he was a dedicated seeker of truth but believed that his truths were “bloody.” What this means is that learning the truth about something is not always entirely positive. Even if it is, it can have a profound impact on the person who was looking for the truth. For instance, you might hear someone say “don’t stare too long into that abyss.” This person likely means, “don’t think about that too long or you might regret it.” Examples “I stared into the abyss for a while, full of melancholy. If even Lottie was cheating on me, was any kind of love true?” Here, staring into the abyss does not necessarily cause a turn to evil. Rather, it reveals what might be an uncomfortable and somewhat depressing idea. Hey fellow Linguaholics! It’s me, Marcel. I am the proud owner of linguaholic.com. Languages have always been my passion and I have studied Linguistics, Computational Linguistics and Sinology at the University of Zurich. It is my utmost pleasure to share with all of you guys what I know about languages and linguistics in general. At every moment of our lives, we all have one foot in a fairy tale and the other in the abyss. — Paulo Coelho 33 The truth is always an abyss. One must — as in a swimming pool — dare to dive from the quivering springboard of trivial everyday experience and sink into the depths, in order to later rise again — laughing and fighting for breath — to the now doubly illuminated surface of things. — Franz Kafka 221 And I, infinitesimal being, drunk with the great starry void, likeness, image of mystery, I felt myself a pure part of the abyss, I wheeled with the stars, my heart broke loose on the wind. — Pablo Neruda 158 And if you gaze for long into an abyss, the abyss gazes also into you. — Friedrich Nietzsche 140 Where you stumble, there lies your treasure. — Joseph Campbell 93 Have we not come to such an impasse in the modern world that we must love our enemies - or else? The chain reaction of evil - hate begetting hate, wars producing more wars - must be broken, or else we shall be plunged into the dark abyss of annihilation. — Martin Luther King, Jr. 86 Is it conceivable that a newly emancipated people can soar to the heights of liberty, and, unlike Icarus, neither have its wings melt nor fall into an abyss? Such a marvel is inconceivable and without precedent. There is no reasonable probability to bolster our hopes. — Simon Bolivar 64 If I saw the gates of hell open and I stood on the brink of the abyss, I would not despair; I would not lose hope of mercy, because I would trust in you, my God. — Gemma Galgani 82 I have nothing but contempt for the deceitful thing men call 'happiness,' and find myself with no choice but to push my characters, whom I pour my heart and soul out to create, into the abyss of tragedy. — Gen Urobuchi 77 Thus the abyss between 'myself' and 'yourself' will be filled in, which is the goal of all religious worship. — Sri Anandamayi Ma 71 I am young, I am twenty years old; yet I know nothing of life but despair, death, fear, and fatuous superficiality cast over an abyss of sorrow. I see how peoples are set against one another, and in silence, unknowingly, foolishly, obediently, innocently slay one another. — Erich Maria Remarque 68 The voice of the sea is seductive, never ceasing, whispering, clamoring, murmuring, inviting the soul to wander in abysses of solitude. — Kate Chopin 67 Those for whom the taxes are destined, demand sacrifice. Those who eat their fill, speak to the hungry, of wonderful times to come. Those who lead the country into the abyss, call ruling difficult, for ordinary folk. — Bertolt Brecht 66 America has become one of the foremost countries in regard to the depth of the abyss which lies between the handful of arrogant multimillionaires who wallow in filth and luxury, and the millions of working people who constantly live on the verge of pauperism. — Vladimir Lenin 62 The day after that wedding night I found that a distance of a thousand miles, abyss and discovery and irremediable metamorphosis, separated me from the day before. — Sidonie Gabrielle Colette 56 When you look into an abyss, the abyss also looks into you. — Friedrich Nietzsche I have fallen into an abyss: I live in a world so curious, so strange. Of the dream that was my life, this is my nightmare. — Camille Claudel 55 The Holy Bible is an abyss. It is impossible to explain how profound it is, impossible to explain how simple it is. — Ernest Hello 52 The process of delving into the black abyss is to me the keenest form of fascination. — H. P. Lovecraft 50 A child's fear is a world whose dark corners are quite unknown to grownup people; it has its sky and its abysses, a sky without stars, abysses into which no light can ever penetrate. — Julien Green 47 Writing is utter solitude, the descent into the cold abyss of oneself. — Franz Kafka 45 Meditation gives you the wherewithal to pause, observe how easily the mind can exaggerate the severity of a setback, and resist getting drawn into the abyss. — Richard Davidson 45 Safety lies in tending towards our highest and not in resting content with an inferior potentiality. To rest in or follow after an inferior potentiality may seem safe, rational, comfortable, easy, but it ends badly, in some futility or in a mere circling down the abyss or in a stagnant morass. Our right and natural road is towards the summits. — Sri Aurobindo 44 If you become involved with me, you will be throwing yourself into the abyss. — Franz Kafka 43 Abyss (wrestler) - Wrestling (originally Total Nonstop Action (TNA) Wrestling) under the ring name Abyss. He is currently signed to WWE as a producer. He became a one-time NWA World Made in Abyss - Made in Abyss (Japanese: メイドインアビス, Hepburn: Meido in Abisu) is a Japanese manga series by Akihiro Tsukushi and published by Takeshobo. It has been serialized Abyss - Abyss may refer to: Abyss (religion), a bottomless pit, or a passage to the underworld The Abyss (1910 film), a Danish silent film starring Asta Nielsen Ghosts of the Abyss - Ghosts of the Abyss is a 2003 American documentary film released by Walt Disney Pictures and Walden Media. It was directed by Academy Award-winning filmmaker Seasons in the Abyss - Seasons in the Abyss is the fifth studio album by American thrash metal band Slayer, released on October 9, 1990 by Def American Records. Recording sessions Abyss (TV series) - Abyss (Korean; ; RR: Eobiseu) is a 2019 South Korean television series starring Park Bo-young, Ahn Hyo-seop and Lee Sung-jae. It aired on tvN's Mondays Tales of the Abyss - Tales of the Abyss (テイルズ オブ アビス, Teiruzu Obu I Abisu) is a role-playing video game developed by Namco Tales Studio as the eighth main title in their At the Abyss - At the Abyss: An Insider's History of the Cold War (ISBN 0-89141-821-0) is an autobiographical book about Thomas C. Reed's experience at Lawrence Livermore Uncharted: Golden Abyss - Uncharted: Golden Abyss is an action-adventure game, the fourth entry in the Uncharted series. It is the first portable entry in the series, released Out of abysses of illiteracy. Through labyrinths of Lies, Across wastelands of Disease . . . We advance Out of dead-ends of Poverty, Through wilderness of Superstition, Across barricades of Jim Crowism . . . We advance. — Melvin B. Tolson 42 You have delivered up our holy German Fatherland to one of the greatest demagogues of all time. I solemnly prophesy that this accursed man will cast our Reich into the abyss and bring our nation to inconceivable misery. Future generations will damn you in your grave for what you have done. — Ian Kershaw 42 People who've had any genuine spiritual experience always know that they don't know. They are utterly humbled before mystery. They are in awe before the abyss of it all, in wonder at eternity and depth, and a Love, which is incomprehensible to the mind. — Richard Rohr 39 My whole life has been spent walking by the side of a bottomless chasm, jumping from stone to stone. Sometimes I try to leave my narrow path and join the swirling mainstream of life, but I always find myself drawn inexorably back towards the chasm's edge, and there I shall walk until the day I finally fall into the abyss. — Edvard Munch 36 The listener must be gripped and whether he likes it or not, drawn into the flight path of the sounds without special training being necessary. The sensual shock must be just as forceful as when one hears a clap of thunder or looks into a bottomless abyss — Iannis Xenakis 35 What is love? There is nothing in the world, neither man nor Devil nor any thing, that I hold as suspect as love, for it penetrates the soul more than any other thing. Nothing exists that so fills and binds the heart as love does. Therefore, unless you have those weapons that subdue it, the soul plunges through love into an immense abyss. — Umberto Eco 34 The truth is always an abyss. — Franz Kafka It's a depressing fact of life that eventually the clock expires; eventually the sand in the hourglass runs out. It's the leaving behind of everything that matters to us that hurts the most. — Ben Shapiro 32 The bliss of the elect in heaven would not be perfect unless they were able to look across the abyss and enjoy the agonies of their brethren in eternal fire. — Pope Gregory I 32

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