

# A compilation of essays on people and their personalities

[People](#)



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THOSE PEOPLE NEXT DOOR \* AG Gardiner Points to Ponder NOTE: Read the text thoroughly. These notes have been prepared in helping you to have a better understanding of the text. Reading the text is a must for the terminal examination We seldom know our neighbors. London city has its inhabitants and people are busy with their domestic chores. Thus people often cohabit as virtual strangers showing the least interest in knowing their neighbors. This trait as mentioned by A. G. Gardiner is being increasingly noticeable in modern towns and cities in all parts of the world.

The ignorance to know people who live next door is a trait which is increasingly shared by city dwellers. The only sound is the noise generated by the fire irons and the piano which indicates that the other human beings are occupying the premises. (Picture of people living in London in the 20th Century) The aloofness in relationship in city dwellers is not to be construed as pride or incivility. It is the peculiar London way of living. Each person guards his or her personal space and does not show any curiosity in knowing the other.

Men have been described as lonely as oysters each living in their own shell. The life in villages are however different. People in the rural areas are inquisitive to know about their neighbors' whereabouts and well being. Villagers do not exist as individuals but as a collective social unit. The case of people reveling (it means taking pleasure in something) has been described in great detail. The incident described is of people enjoying themselves by having a party. There are the inmates of the house we also have the guests and the merry making continues till late hours of the morning.

According to Matida she had seen the revelers leave the house in a car at 4o'clock in the morning. Probably the din and bustle created by the neighbors' was not seen in good light. The question raised is can we have fun and frolic at the cost of disturbing our neighbors' peace? Is it something appropriate and sanctioned by the law or social conventions? The essayist A. G. Gardiner also brings out the differences between man and man. Each individual is different and very often we take the judgmental route in trying to ascribe reasons for human behavior.

Why do our neighbors sleep so late or wake so early, There is inquisitiveness about dress and way of living. How can our neighbors' enjoy more of holidays? Why do our neighbors not dress well or dress so shabbily? The habits of people the friends they associate with, the pets they keep often give credence to our worst fears about our neighbors. However, in most cases our fears do not have any founding are they are merely a figment of our imagination. People also have a tendency to believe the worst about their neighbors.

There are misleading statements and rumor in the air giving inappropriate portrayal of our neighbors' activities. However, when we happen to meet our neighbors' personally we find them to be different. There is nothing sinister (it means threatening) about them and our neighbors' are human just like us. It is the game of judgment and misjudgment which lends the unfavorable opinion giving rise to prejudices and biases. However, the St John's Wood case provides a different perspective. On the one hand there were two musicians living in a house imparting lessons to pupils on the piano.

The venture of course was started to earn a livelihood. The musical notes were construed as creation of noise and disturbance of peace by the neighbor. In retaliation the neighbor banged on tin cans to make things unpleasant for the musicians. In the first case it was effort made to earn an honest living and the musicians did not have the intention of being offensive. This leads to the need of being more sensitive to our neighbor's needs. We have to learn to respect our neighbor's sentiments. According to the essayist a perfect neighbor is one whom we never hear except when he pokes the fire.

HOW TO ESCAPE FROM INTELLECTUAL RUBBISH : Bertrand Russell NOTE: Read the text thoroughly. These notes have been prepared in helping you to have a better understanding of the text. Reading the text is a must for the terminal examination. According to Bertrand Russell if it is important to deduce matters; we must abide by the tenets of observation. The observation of matters and things must be undertaken by us and us alone. We must not believe others blindly. All evidence needs to be tested for its credibility and validity.

Thinking that a person knows things whereas in reality to remain ignorant of men and matters comes in the way of our deduction and findings. Russell has given us the example of Aristotle in a jocular manner stating that the best way for him to account for human teeth is to count them. Similarly if one is interested in knowing about the life of ' hedgehogs', then the appropriate course of action would be to find out more details about the animal by way of personal observation which can lead to appropriate deductions. There are however issues on which we have our passionate convictions..

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In many such cases we remain oblivious of our personal bias. Thus we become angry or frustrated when we have to face an opinion contrary to our beliefs (Say for example if we meet an atheist and the opinion given by the atheist makes us angry) The writer has quoted if someone believes that two and two are five, or Iceland is on the equator we tend to feel more of pity than anger. Persecution is used in theology (it means cruel treatment that is meted out to someone because of their race, religion or political beliefs) that is because religion is based more on opinion rather than evidence.

Take the example of arithmetic and theology in arithmetic you have to have the knowledge to do things the right way in order to get the right answers. The study of mathematics is thus more logical where answers are deduced scientifically. Religion or theology is based more on opinions of what the prophet or sages have said and are not based on credible evidence. We the people living in different lands tend to suffer from national prejudice. By national prejudice we mean that we are given to believe that our nation is the best, there cannot be any better culture, religion, social structure, way of life and the like.

However, when we travel and travel extensively and meet people of foreign lands we find things to be different. The appropriate way to know about others opinion is to read a different newspaper that advocates a different ideology (beliefs or ideas). You might think that the newspaper is mad and the people believing the ideas are mad. But then again the people believing in the doctrine and the philosophy advocated in the newspaper must be also considering you to be mad, for you to be holding a different point of view and a different set of opinion.

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Thus there are always the two sides of the coin. The writer has also cautioned us that becoming aware of foreign customs does not always have a beneficial effect. Read the example of China (Page 54, 2nd paragraph) where the writer says the custom amongst Chinese women was to have small feet and among the Manchus for the men was to wear pigtaails. There was the adoption of custom by the conquered and the victorious which in a way shows the trait associated with intermingling of culture. The writer speaks of having an argument with a person having a different bias.

Probably having such a debate will help us to know the others perception and point of view more lucidly. Mahatma Gandhi for example believed that deplored railways and steamboats and machinery and all the benefits associated with the industrial revolution. This opinion will sound as contrary to development and especially to the western ears who take the advantage of western technology for granted. In such a case it is always good to test the arguments of the opponent party before refuting it. This helps in understanding the others point of view most admirably.

The writer says that if a person has an imaginary dialogue with himself justifying both sides of the arguments trying to debate the pros and cons of the situation then he would develop a better understanding of the situation. There are no rights and wrong answers, the arguments are more based on opinions and not verified by facts and figures. For example there can be one argument that capital punishment is a crime and should be abolished and yet another set of argument that the evil doers of the heinous crime should be hanged.

Both sides of arguments has a reason and it is indeed mentally challenging and invigorating to debate the pros and cons of the situation However, we must be wary of opinions, of opinions that flatter our self esteem. For example opinions like there is no question that men are superior, or one's nation is superior, or our values are the best or our culture has no parallels such arguments are baseless and are filled with demerits on a large scale. The rational person will be able to apply reason as to the code of conduct and justifications to such abominable code of behavior.

Apart form the false sense of esteem that is floated by people and nations there is the element of fear that holds us down. Fear often originates from inventing or assuming rumors of disaster during war times or our fear of ghosts which have no practical founding. These fears pulls us down, and makes us think of things comforting like the heaven for ourselves and hell for our enemies. These thoughts are the figment of our imagination the fears can take various forms and may include fear of death, fear of the dark, fear of the unknown and such specific terrors.

The way out for it would be to guard ourselves against fears by sheer effort of will power. This act will help us to think more logically and rationally. Fear happens to be the main source of superstition and a source of cruelty. To conquer fear marks the beginning of wisdom and helps us to champion the cause of truth and make our life more meaningful and a worthier one. How to overcome fear One way is to persuade ourselves that we are immune (protected) from disaster. The other way is by way of practicing courage. The later one is more difficult as it becomes impossible after a certain point. The former is the one which is more popular.

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Primitive magic served the purpose of securing safety either by injuring enemies, or by protecting oneself by talismans, spells and incantations. Such believes have survived over the ages and many people believe in mascots and sorcery which later was condemned by the church. Magic however has a simple way of avoiding terror and witches were burnt for centuries. However, newer beliefs did set in and there is the concept of Gods and heroes surrounded by good spirits Plato belief that the next world being governed by the state not because they were true but to make soldiers more willing to die in battle makes interesting reading.

It is thus important for people to learn to be more rational and scientific in their outlook and believe in the power of observation. People are to avoid being dogmatic (it means rigid) and learn to appreciate others opinion. Then the source of opinion is to be found through logical reasoning and its authenticity is to be ascribed. ON MARRIAGE Ernest Baker NOTE: Read the text thoroughly. These notes have been prepared in helping you to have a better understanding of the text. Reading the text is a must for the terminal examination Summary Thefamilyhas been portrayed as being a single society.

There were eminent people like Aristotle who viewed the family as a federal society. The family has been divided into three distinct groups. The first group comprises the husband and the wife the second group has in its ambit parents and children and the third group consists of the master of the house and his servants. Thus three different societies have been earmarked by the older writers. These writers did not recognize the family as a single society.



Leibniz was wiser he believed the family system contained four societies and that is the family itself inclusive of the other three groups.

The nuptial society or the consortium (a group of people who work in cooperation with each other) that is the husband and the wife exists in its pure and isolated stage only during the period of honeymoon. The period is compared with Adam and Eve's life in the garden where the individuals have a blessed time. However, the times changes and priorities change with the birth of the child. This is compared with the loss of Eden. The man has just the memory of the honeymoon period and the woman gets busy in caring for the child. Marriage however enforces strict codes of discipline, demands and its own system of education.

Marriage requires adjustment of personalities (that is the husband and the wife) who have diametrically opposite personalities. A common way of life is chalked out. Marriage thus is full of delight and difficulty, disagreement and reconciliation, differences and comprises. It becomes more like a way of give and take adjustment and adaptability being called into play. The author sarcastically says that marriage is the only kind of democracy where you find debate and compromise being increasingly used to settle differences. The institution of marriage is funny indeed.

There are distinct differences in preferences and life styles of both men and women. Men for instance like warm room, with windows happily and firmly shut, a good fire and a pipe of tobacco. Women love the singing air, the open window and the sight of driving clouds. Man loves to think that he is dying when he is ill women do not entertain such thoughts and are more practical.

Man is always on the look out for novelty and always wishes to hear or see <https://assignbuster.com/a-compilation-of-essays-on-people-and-their-personalities/>

something new. Women face the daily chores steadily. The writer says that women do smile at men and find them to be annoying, exciting and annoying like obstinate playboys of the human world.

It is again the women who bring in stability and good sense in the lives of men. Thus we find great differences in the thinking pattern of men and women. The writer says that men and women are yoked together in marriages for better or for worse. They however have respect for one another's differences. The man and the woman remain different in their thoughts, action and deeds. The differences persist for ever. Marriages only seem perfect only when there is identity of interests or pursuits. However, there is sympathy and sharing in plenty. Marriages succeed when partners listen to each other and report events truthfully.

Common interests do bring the partners together. Communication in marriages increases when things are done together. A wife who loves music tries to influence her husband into liking music and to attending concerts and musical shows. The writer says that novelty must be discovered by pursuing common interests like travelling. These acts appear to be substitutes for comradeship, and cooperation. Marriages thus at times become less passionate and remain more like an institution. Like the monk, the couple gains more from observation and experience.

The writer says that rules for marriage like it persists in monastery would create more of happy marriages. Romance keeps the marriages alive. If we ascribe divine influence in marriages then we would not just accept marriages to be a 'human contract'. Agreement of the husband and wife is essential to the existence of marriage. The institution of marriage is however <https://assignbuster.com/a-compilation-of-essays-on-people-and-their-personalities/>

created by the divine scheme wherein we say that all marriages are made in heaven. MENDING WALL (Summary) A stone wall separates the speaker's property from his neighbor's. In spring, the two meet to walk the wall and jointly make repairs.

The speaker sees no reason for the wall to be kept—there are no cows to be contained, just apple and pine trees. He does not believe in walls for the sake of walls. The neighbor resorts to an old adage: “ Good fences make good neighbors. ” The speaker remains unconvinced and mischievously presses the neighbor to look beyond the old-fashioned folly of such reasoning. His neighbor will not be swayed. The speaker envisions his neighbor as a holdover from a justifiably outmoded era, a living example of a dark-age mentality. But the neighbor simply repeats the adage.

The image at the heart of “ Mending Wall” is arresting: two men meeting on terms of civility and neighborliness to build a barrier between them. They do so out of tradition, out of habit. Yet the very earth conspires against them and makes their task Sisyphean. Sisyphus, you may recall, is the figure in Greek mythology condemned perpetually to push a boulder up a hill, only to have the boulder roll down again. These men push boulders back on top of the wall; yet just as inevitably, whether at the hand of hunters or sprites, or the frost and thaw of nature's invisible hand, the boulders tumble down again.

Still, the neighbors persist. The poem, thus, seems to meditate conventionally on three grand themes: barrier-building (segregation, in the broadest sense of the word), the doomed nature of this enterprise, and our persistence in this activity regardless. But, as we so often see when we look <https://assignbuster.com/a-compilation-of-essays-on-people-and-their-personalities/>

closely at Frost's best poems, what begins in folksy straightforwardness ends in complex ambiguity. The speaker would have us believe that there are two types of people: those who stubbornly insist on building superfluous walls (with clichés as their justification) and those who would dispense with this practice—wall-builders and wall-breakers.

But are these impulses so easily separable? And what does the poem really say about the necessity of boundaries? The speaker may scorn his neighbor's obstinate wall-building, may observe the activity with humorous detachment, but he himself goes to the wall at all times of the year to mend the damage done by hunters; it is the speaker who contacts the neighbor at wall-mending time to set the annual appointment. Which person, then, is the real wall-builder? The speaker says he sees no need for a wall here, but this implies that there may be a need for a wall elsewhere— " where there are cows," for example.

Yet the speaker must derive something, some use, some satisfaction, out of the exercise of wall-building, or why would he initiate it here? There is something in him that does love a wall, or at least the act of making a wall. This wall-building act seems ancient, for it is described in ritual terms. It involves " spells" to counteract the " elves," and the neighbor appears a Stone-Age savage while he hoists and transports a boulder. Well, wall-building is ancient and enduring—the building of the first walls, both literal and figurative, marked the very foundation of society.

Unless you are an absolute anarchist and do not mind livestock munching your lettuce, you probably recognize the need for literal boundaries.

Figuratively, rules and laws are walls; justice is the process of wall-mending.  
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The ritual of wall maintenance highlights the dual and complementary nature of human society: The rights of the individual (property boundaries, proper boundaries) are affirmed through the affirmation of other individuals' rights. And it demonstrates another benefit of community; for this communal act, this civic "game," offers a good excuse for the speaker to interact with his neighbor.

Wall-building is social, both in the sense of "societal" and "sociable." What seems an act of anti-social self-confinement can, thus, ironically, be interpreted as a great social gesture. Perhaps the speaker does believe that good fences make good neighbors—for again, it is he who initiates the wall-mending. Of course, a little bit of mutual trust, communication, and goodwill would seem to achieve the same purpose between well-disposed neighbors—at least where there are no cows. And the poem says it twice: "something there is that does not love a wall. There is some intent and value in wall-breaking, and there is some powerful tendency toward this destruction. Can it be simply that wall-breaking creates the conditions that facilitate wall-building? Are the groundswells a call to community-building—nature's nudge toward concerted action? Or are they benevolent forces urging the demolition of traditional, small-minded boundaries? The poem does not resolve this question, and the narrator, who speaks for the groundswells but acts as a fence-builder, remains a contradiction.

Many of Frost's poems can be reasonably interpreted as commenting on the creative process; "Mending Wall" is no exception. On the basic level, we can find here a discussion of the construction-disruption duality of creativity. Creation is a positive act—a mending or a building. Even the most

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destructive-seeming creativity results in a change, the building of some new state of being: If you tear down an edifice, you create a new view for the folks living in the house across the way. Yet creation is also disruptive: If nothing else, it disrupts the status quo.

Stated another way, disruption is creative: It is the impetus that leads directly, mysteriously (as with the groundswells), to creation. Does the stone wall embody this duality? In any case, there is something about “walking the line”—and building it, mending it, balancing each stone with equal parts skill and spell—that evokes the mysterious and laborious act of making poetry. On a level more specific to the author, the question of boundaries and their worth is directly applicable to Frost’s poetry.

Barriers confine, but for some people they also encourage freedom and productivity by offering challenging frameworks within which to work. On principle, Frost did not write free verse. His creative process involved engaging poetic form (the rules, tradition, and boundaries—the walls—of the poetic world) and making it distinctly his own. By maintaining the tradition of formal poetry in unique ways, he was simultaneously a mender and breaker of walls. Every year, two neighbors meet to repair the stone wall that divides their property.

The narrator is skeptical of this tradition, unable to understand the need for a wall when there is no livestock to be contained on the property, only apples and pine trees. He does not believe that a wall should exist simply for the sake of existing. Moreover, he cannot help but notice that the natural world seems to dislike the wall as much as he does: mysterious gaps appear, boulders fall for no reason. The neighbor, on the other hand, asserts that the <https://assignbuster.com/a-compilation-of-essays-on-people-and-their-personalities/>

wall is crucial to maintaining their relationship, asserting, “ Good fences make good neighbors. Over the course of the mending, the narrator attempts to convince his neighbor otherwise and accuses him of being old-fashioned for maintaining the tradition so strictly. No matter what the narrator says, though, the neighbor stands his ground, repeating only: “ Good fences make good neighbors. ” Analysis This poem is the first work in Frost's second book of poetry, “ North of Boston,” which was published upon his return from England in 1915. While living in England with his family, Frost was exceptionally homesick for the farm in New Hampshire where he had lived with his wife from 1900 to 1909.

Despite the eventual failure of the farm, Frost associated his time in New Hampshire with a peaceful, rural sensibility that he instilled in the majority of his subsequent poems. “ Mending Wall” is autobiographical on an even more specific level: a French-Canadian named Napoleon Guay had been Frost’s neighbor in New Hampshire, and the two had often walked along their property line and repaired the wall that separated their land. Ironically, the most famous line of the poem (“ Good fences make good neighbors”) was not invented by Frost himself, but was rather a phrase that Guay frequently declared to Frost during their walks.

This particular adage was a popular colonial proverb in the middle of the 17th century, but variations of it also appeared in Norway (“ There must be a fence between good neighbors”), Germany (“ Between neighbor’s gardens a fence is good”), Japan (“ Build a fence even between intimate friends”), and even India (“ Love your neighbor, but do not throw down the dividing wall”).

In terms of form, “ Mending Wall” is not structured with stanzas; it is a simple forty-five lines of first-person narrative.

Frost does maintain iambic stresses, but he is flexible with the form in order to maintain the conversational feel of the poem. He also shies away from any obvious rhyme patterns and instead relies upon the occasional internal rhyme and the use of assonance in certain ending terms (such as “ wall,” “ hill,” “ balls,” “ well”). In the poem itself, Frost creates two distinct characters who have different ideas about what exactly makes a person a good neighbor. The narrator deplores his neighbor’s preoccupation with repairing the wall; he views it as old-fashioned and even archaic.

After all, he quips, his apples are not going to invade the property of his neighbor’s pinecones. Moreover, within a land of such of such freedom and discovery, the narrator asks, are such borders necessary to maintain relationships between people? Despite the narrator’s skeptical view of the wall, the neighbor maintains his seemingly “ old-fashioned” mentality, responding to each of the narrator’s disgruntled questions and rationalizations with nothing more than the adage: “ Good fences make good neighbors. As the narrator points out, the very act of mending the wall seems to be in opposition to nature. Every year, stones are dislodged and gaps suddenly appear, all without explanation. Every year, the two neighbors fill the gaps and replace the fallen boulders, only to have parts of the wall fall over again in the coming months. It seems as if nature is attempting to destroy the barriers that man has created on the land, even as man continues to repair the barriers, simply out of habit and tradition.



Ironically, while the narrator seems to begrudge the annual repairing of the wall, Frost subtly points out that the narrator is actually more active than the neighbor. It is the narrator who selects the day for mending and informs his neighbor across the property. Moreover, the narrator himself walks along the wall at other points during the year in order to repair the damage that has been done by local hunters. Despite his skeptical attitude, it seems that the narrator is even more tied to the tradition of wall-mending than his neighbor.

Perhaps his skeptical questions and quips can then be read as an attempt to justify his own behavior to himself. While he chooses to present himself as a modern man, far beyond old-fashioned traditions, the narrator is really no different from his neighbor: he too clings to the concept of property and division, of ownership and individuality. Ultimately, the presence of the wall between the properties does ensure a quality relationship between the two neighbors.

By maintaining the division between the properties, the narrator and his neighbor are able to maintain their individuality and personal identity as farmers: one of apple trees, and one of pine trees. Moreover, the annual act of mending the wall also provides an opportunity for the two men to interact and communicate with each other, an event that might not otherwise occur in an isolated rural environment. The act of meeting to repair the wall allows the two men to develop their relationship and the overall community far more than if each maintained their isolation on separate properties.