

Environmental Ethics Quotations

1. The question is not Can they *reason*? nor Can they *talk*? but Can they *suffer*?
Jeremy Bentham (1789)
2. To be a subject-of-a-life...involves more than merely being alive and more than merely being conscious. To be the subject-of-a-life is to be an individual whose life is characterized by...[having] beliefs and desires; perception, memory and a sense of the future, including one's own future; an emotional life together with feelings of pleasure and pain; preference and welfare-interests; a psychological identity over time; and an individual welfare in the sense that one's experiential life fares well or ill for one, logically independent of one's utility for others and logically independent of one being the object of anyone else's interests.
Tom Regan (1993)
3. The biocentric outlook on nature has four main components. (1) Humans are thought of as members of the Earth's community of life, holding that membership on the same terms as apply to all the nonhuman members. (2) The Earth's natural ecosystems as a totality are seen as a complex web of interconnected elements, with the sound biological functioning of each being dependent on the sound biological functioning of the others.... (3) Each individual organism is conceived of as a teleological center of life, pursuing its own good in its own way. (4) Whether we are concerned with standards of merit or with the concept of inherent worth, the claim that humans by their very nature are superior to other species is a groundless claim and, in the light of elements (1), (2), and (3) above, must be rejected as nothing more than an irrational bias in our own favor.
Paul Taylor (1981)
4. Eight-Point Platform of Deep Ecology
 1. The well-being and flourishing of human and non-human life on Earth have value in themselves (synonyms: intrinsic value, inherent worth). These values are independent of the usefulness of the non-human world for human purposes.
 2. Richness and diversity of life forms contribute to the realization of these values and are also values in themselves.
 3. Humans have no right to reduce this richness and diversity except to satisfy vital needs.
 4. The flourishing of human life and cultures is compatible with a substantially smaller human population. The flourishing of non-human life *requires* a smaller human population.
 5. Present human interference with the non-human world is excessive, and the situation is rapidly worsening.
 6. Policies must therefore be changed. These policies affect basic economic, technological, and ideological structures. The resulting state of affairs will be deeply different from the present.
 7. The ideological change will be mainly that of appreciating life quality (dwelling in situations of inherent value) rather than adhering to an increasingly higher standard of living. There will be a profound awareness of the difference between bigness and greatness.
 8. Those who subscribe to the foregoing points have an obligation directly or indirectly to try to implement the necessary changes.Arne Naess and George Sessions (1984)
5. What humans ought to respect are dynamic life forms preserved in historical lines, vital information processes that persist genetically over millions of years, overleaping short-lived individuals. It is not *form* (species) as mere morphology, but the *formative* (speciating) process that humans ought to preserve, although the process cannot be preserved without its products.
Holmes Rolston III (1988)
6. When we see land as a community to which we belong, we may begin to use it with love and respect.... That land is a community is the basic concept of ecology, but that land is to be loved and respected is an extension of ethics.
Aldo Leopold (1949)