

# Spaceforsoul Quotes about community

## The African philosophy of Ubuntu

### William Flippin

‘The philosophy of Ubuntu derives from a Nguni word, ubuntu meaning “the quality of being human.” Ubuntu manifests itself through various human acts, clearly visible in social, political, and economic situations, as well as among family. According to sociolinguist Buntu Mfenyana, it “runs through the veins of all Africans, is embodied in the oft-repeated: “Ubuntu nguntu ngabanye abantu” (“A person is a person through other people”). This African proverb reveals a world view that we owe our selfhood to others, that we are first and foremost social beings, that, if you will, no man/woman is an island, or as the African would have it, “One finger cannot pick up a grain.” Ubuntu is, at the same time, a deeply personal philosophy that calls on us to mirror our humanity for each other.’

### Satish Kumar

Extract from ‘You Are therefore I Am: A declaration of dependence’

‘In parts of Africa there is a word ‘ubuntu’, meaning ‘we are’. There is no such thing as ‘I am’ nor ‘it is’, always ‘we are’; we are a web of relationships. It does not just refer to humanity; it means the whole of existence is together, interlinked, totally connected. The Native Americans call it Earth family; sky-father, earth-mother, ocean grandmother, buffalo brother.

Hindus say “*So Hum*” – ‘You are, therefore I am’ I did not drop from the sky, I was born of a mother: mother is, therefore I am. I learned much from the teaching of the Buddha, Maravir, Jesus, Mohammed – these great teachers are, therefore I am. I am fed by the fruits of the Earth, the sun gives me warmth, water moistens me, I breathe air. These elements are, therefore I am. I am influenced and inspired by Ghandi, Tolstoy, Tagore, and Van Gogh. My ancestors are, therefore I am.

There is no separate, isolated, disconnected self. Things appear separate if we see them as separate, they appear related when we see them as related. It is all in the seeing. Seers see the whole... We are part of the *anima mundi*, the world soul.'

### Nelson Mandela

'In Africa there is a concept known as 'ubuntu' - the profound sense that we are human only through the humanity of others; that if we are to accomplish anything in this world it will in equal measure be due to the work and achievement of others.'

### Barak Obama

There is a word in South Africa - Ubuntu - that describes [Mandela's] greatest gift: his recognition that we are all bound together in ways that can be invisible to the eye; that there is a oneness to humanity; that we achieve ourselves by sharing ourselves with others, and caring for those around us.'

### Desmond Tutu

'One of the sayings in our country is Ubuntu – the essence of being human. Ubuntu speaks particularly about the fact that you can't exist as a human being in isolation. It speaks about our interconnectedness. You can't be human by yourself and when you have this quality – Ubuntu - you are known for your generosity. We think of ourselves far too frequently as just individuals, separated from one another, whereas you are connected and what you do affects the whole World. When you do well, it spreads out; it is for the whole of humanity.'

'A person with ubuntu is open and available to others, affirming of others, does not feel threatened that others are able and good, for he or she has a proper self-assurance that comes from knowing that he or she belongs in a greater whole and is diminished when others are humiliated or diminished, when others are tortured or oppressed.'

## The nature of true community

### Wendell Berry

'A proper community, we should remember also, is a commonwealth: a place, a resource, an economy. It answers the needs, practical as well as social and spiritual, of its members - among them the need to need one another. The answer to the present alignment of political power with wealth is the restoration of the identity of community and economy.'

### Dorothy Day

'We have all known the long loneliness and we have learned that the only solution is love and that love comes with community.'

### David Elkins

'Community is extremely important. While there are many things one can do alone to nurture the soul, few things are as important for spiritual life as having companions who understand and support one's journey.'

'Rather than calling for conformity to a common belief system, my vision of spiritual community is one which supports each person in his or her own spiritual journey... The overarching structure of the community would be a respectful tolerance for diverse perspectives... spiritual communities could be created which would support individual journeys rather than requiring everyone to fit into standard belief systems. I am convinced that traditional religion often kills the soul by forcing it into a small, suffocating box. A community which promotes freedom for the soul and creative searching for answers to life's spiritual questions would indeed be a godsend to spiritual seekers disillusioned by traditional religion. Such a community, it seems to me would be a path to the sacred.'

### Martin Luther King

'Our goal is to create a beloved community and this will require a qualitative change in our souls and a qualitative change in our lives.'

'The end is reconciliation; the end is redemption; the end is the creation of the Beloved Community. It is this type of spirit and this type of love that can transform opponents into friends. It is this type of understanding goodwill that will transform the deep gloom of the old age into the exuberant gladness of the new age. It is this love which will bring about miracles in the hearts of men.'

### Parker Palmer

'Community is a place where the connections felt in our hearts make themselves known in the bonds between people, and where the tuggings and pullings of those bonds keep opening our hearts.'

### Pope John Paul 11

'A community needs a soul if it is to become a true home for human beings. You, the people must give it this soul.'

### Scott Peck

'Community is and must be inclusive. The great enemy of community is exclusivity. Groups that exclude others because they are poor or doubters or divorced or sinners or of some different race or nationality are not communities; they are cliques--actually defensive bastions against community.'

### David Spangl

'Some people think they are in community, but they are only in proximity. True community requires commitment and openness. It is a willingness to extend yourself to encounter and know the other.'