

# You Know What You Think Of A Monkey But Do You Know What A Monkey Thinks Of You?

A Man Is Really Measured, Not by What He Thinks of Himself, but by What Others Think of Him. He Cannot Afford to Ignore the Opinions of Others!



I know very definitely what we think about monkeys. Scientists have studied them, circus and amusement men have captured and exhibited them, faunal naturalists have shot them

—despite the fact that shooting a monkey seems brutally akin to shooting a child.

We have classified monkeys into many families, separated from the rest of the apes from which it is believed the human species descended, and done our best to reduce to some form or system the incoherent, meaningless chatter with which they cry to one another as they swing from the tree tops.

As a result, we believe we know that monkeys will be monkeys always; that, while some few members of some few of the higher species can be taught marvelous tricks, the ordinary monkey brain will never develop beyond its present state; in other words, that monkeys will always be foolish, half idiotic creatures, doing with the utmost seeming gravity the most absurd things, and, no matter how carefully trained, just stopping short of that impassable barrier between instinct and reason.

It would be interesting to know what the monkey, peering down on a party of sailors from the top of a coconut tree, or lowering gloomily at an audience from behind the bars of a circus cage, thinks of human beings.

It may be that he regards them servilely, as does a dog, who is always eager to acknowledge man as his master. It may be that he regards them with the haughty contempt so evident in all the feline tribes, from the lion down to the ordinary house cat. Monkeys are sometimes affectionate, but their affection seems always to be tempered with a prankish waywardness very like that of a half-witted child.

In any event, it is not likely that any of the funny, furry, long-tailed apes that look on man from the jungle have half as high an opinion of him as he has of himself. It would be reasonable to suppose that they look on him as a sort of walking joke; one that must not be approached too closely; a feeble creature, ridiculous because he lacks a tail, not to be suffered too much familiarity

because he carries death in his hands, yet withal much less dangerous than a lion or a tiger.

In the curious half solemn, half ridiculous procession from birth to death that we call life are many sets and tribes and races of men, many cliques and companies, each bound together by some slender tie of blood or education or association, each looking on the members of other cliques or companies as strangers and of a strange race—as alien as the monkeys of the jungle.

Every man knows what he thinks of himself; he fancies that he knows what others think of him. But never, by a merciful provision, is he permitted really to KNOW what others think of him.

And each company of men, set apart from the others by reason of some bond of calling, is regarded by those of other occupations as of a peculiar nature, not to be regarded as men, but as plumbers, or doctors, or hotel clerks, or actors—all supposed to be of one kind of nature, and entirely different from the rest of the world.

You will hear a man account for some peculiarity in a fellow man by saying: "Oh, he is an actor. That is the reason he is improvident or temperamental." Yet among actors are those who are so little improvident that they retain as a keepsake the first dollar they ever earned, and others who are so little temperamental that they can look unmoved on scenes that would upset the equilibrium of an undertaker.

It may be that all men are not brothers, but assuredly all classes of men are human. You will find the same types in a meeting of wholesale grocers as you will in a society for ethical culture. It is only the inability of one collection to understand another collection or to see in them the characteristics that are prominent in their own kind that makes life seem like such a complicated affair, and the solution of its simplest problems seem so difficult.

There are men in this country who, because they have succeeded in piling up more dollars than other men, calmly assume that they are of a superior sort, and undertake to settle for their brothers all the difficulties that have arisen to confound them.

One man decides that the need of his brothers is books; and he gives them books—books that will lie for generations corded high on dusty shelves, while the crowd rushes past outside the door and never looks between two covers.

He knows what he thinks of the other men in the world; but he has not the slightest idea what they think of him. Thus far he has never been disturbed by a frank expression of opinion, and he will probably pass along on his way into another existence sublimely confident that he of all men has understood his fellows, and given them what was good for them.

Yet there are multitudes of people who would rather have one kind word of encouragement or advice from a truly successful man than whole libraries of books from the richest man who ever gave them out as souvenirs of his own good fortune, and who have more esteem for the man who has taught them how to help themselves than for all the self-constituted philanthropists in the world.

For philanthropy is not a question of money; it is a matter of understanding one's fellow men, and few there be who are born with this rarest of talents.

Another man conceives it to be his duty to equip missionary establishments in foreign lands, forgetting that there is more real need of missionary work in every great city than there is in all the islands of the South Seas or all the barbaric countries of the Old World.

His opinion of his fellow men—of those whom he sees, with whom he deals, and whom he employs—is fixed; he would not and could not change it. Their opinion of him is something of which he knows and cares nothing. Perhaps he would do more with the incredible fortune he has accumulated if he tried to get a little more knowledge of the men about him. But he has never considered that worth his while.

Perhaps you have seen a man talking loudly and importantly to a company of other men—dwelling on his own performances and accomplishments, impatient of interruption, insistent on monopolizing the whole conversation. It would be a rude shock to his vanity if he knew that the men around him were either amused or bored by his egotism, and that the impression he is creating is exactly the reverse of what he intends.

You see every day women decked out in useless and unnecessary finery, in a wealth of decoration that none save the Queen of a cannibal island ought really to envy, and fancying that, because she has loaded down her natural attractions with a vulgar display, she has enhanced them. She makes a pathetic spectacle, and the most pathetic thing about it is her belief that the pitying glances that are bestowed on her are glances of admiration.

If you could know the sacrifices and the struggles that girls who barely earn enough to keep alive must make in order to buy shoes that pinch their feet, corsets that distort their waists, and great unhealthy hanks of Chinese hair, you might better understand what a price must be paid because people cannot see themselves as others see them. The young women who invest what little they

can spare in these atrocities of dress do so in the pathetic belief that they are making themselves beautiful. They cannot see with the eyes of others, so they can never know that they are only making themselves hideous, even in the sight of the men whose opinions they most value.

Many men fancy that they are so important, so sufficient unto themselves that they can safely ignore the opinion of the whole world. But no talent, no genius, no inherited or acquired power justifies a man in following the dictates of his own sweet will.

Among the millions and millions of people in the world a man is little more than an atom. He is fortunate if he can make an impression on the world, if by doing something that is of service to his fellows he can be remembered a little while. But Fame itself is only the world's estimate of a man, only the place he has made in the opinions of others.

It is easy for one to say that he would prefer to be right though the whole world was against him; but remember that when the whole world is against a man he is never right.

The weight of public opinion is always for good in the long run, as Lincoln so well knew and so well phrased in his proverb about fooling the people.

Let a man be guided by the opinions of the majority of his fellows; let him try to see himself as others see him, and appear in their eyes as he would have them appear in his, and he cannot go far wrong.

For the general public mind, happily prefers integrity to sham, loves courage and self reliance, and disapproves of everything that is dishonest, or scoundrelly, or purely selfish.

