

Selected Discussion Quotes

Weaponization of Ignorance

Stephen M. Fry, Ph.D.

These excerpts are provided to help spark discussion and reflection.

“Ignorance is no longer merely the absence of knowledge. It has become a strategic resource — cultivated, protected, and deployed.”

“The most dangerous distortions are not always created by cynics. They are often repeated by people who believe they are defending something good.”

“When accuracy becomes negotiable, credibility becomes expendable.”

“Moral urgency can justify action. It cannot justify inaccuracy.”

“Outrage travels faster than correction, and certainty spreads more easily than doubt.”

“The erosion of truth rarely feels dramatic. It feels incremental — one exaggeration excused, one overstatement overlooked, one narrative repeated without verification.”

“The Integrity Gap widens when we apply one standard to our opponents and another to ourselves.”

“If the defense of democracy requires distortion, democracy is weakened in the process.”

“In a polarized environment, identity often determines what counts as evidence.”

“Repetition does not create truth. It creates familiarity — and familiarity can be mistaken for truth.”

“Credibility accumulates slowly and erodes quickly. Once spent, it is difficult to recover.”

“The temptation to exaggerate for a ‘good cause’ is strongest when we feel certain we are right.”

“Weaponized ignorance does not require universal belief. It requires only enough doubt to paralyze accountability.”

“When movements prioritize emotional impact over epistemic responsibility, they may win attention — but lose trust.”

“The long-term health of a democracy depends less on winning arguments than on maintaining shared standards of evidence.”

Suggested Use

Book clubs may wish to:

- Select one quote per participant and discuss reactions.
- Compare quotes that emphasize moral urgency with those emphasizing epistemic responsibility.
- Identify which quote feels most controversial — and why.