

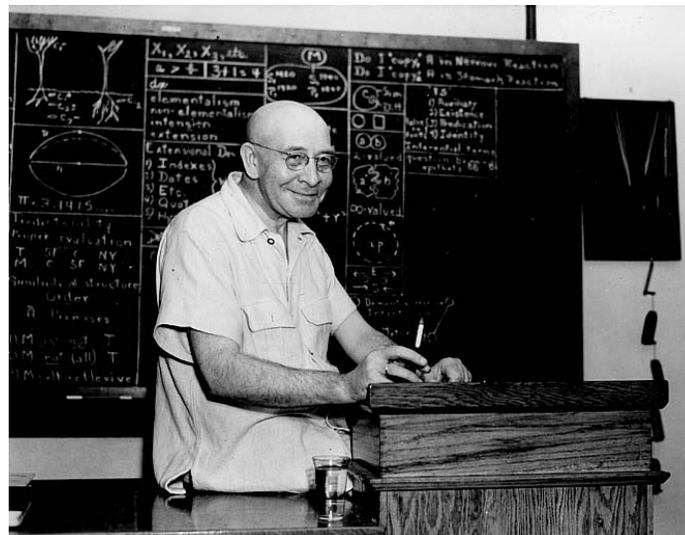
## Quotes on Time-Binding

Korzybski, A. (1921). *Manhood of Humanity*. The Haddon Craftsmen: Scranton, PA.

*“The origin of this work was a new functional definition of ‘man’, as formulated in 1921, based on an analysis of uniquely human potentialities; namely, that each generation may begin where the former left off. This characteristic I called the ‘time-binding’ capacity... We need not blind ourselves with the old dogma that ‘human nature cannot be changed’, for we find that it can be changed. We must begin to realize our potentialities as humans, then we may approach the future with some hope.”*

“The ‘survival of the fittest’ for animals – for *space-binders* – is survival *in space*, which means fighting and other brutal forms of struggle; on the other hand, ‘survival of the fittest’ for human beings *as such* – that is, for *time-binders* – is survival *in time*, which means intellectual or spiritual competition, struggle for excellence, for making the *best* survive. The-fittest-in-time – those who make the best survive – are those who do the most in producing values for all mankind including *posterity*. This is the scientific base for natural ethics...”

“I hope to show, that by mathematical philosophy, by rigorously scientific thinking, we can arrive at the true conception of what a human being really is and that in thus discovering the characteristic nature of man we come to the secret and source of ethics. Ethics as a science will investigate and explain the essential nature of man and the obligations which the essential nature of man imposes upon human beings. It will be seen that to live righteously, to live ethically, is to live in accordance with the laws of human nature; and when it is clearly seen that man is a natural being, a part of nature literally, then it will be seen that the laws of human nature – the only possible rules for ethical conduct – are no more *supernatural* and no more *man-made* than is the law of gravitation, for example, or any other natural law.”



“Ethics in the stifling grip of myth and legalism is not convincing enough to exercise controlling influence. Such is the situation in which we find ourselves. Being still in our childhood and thinking like savages, we looked up the World War as a personal creation of a “war-lord,” because those interested in it told us so. We neglected to use our common sense and look deeper into its origins; to perform for ourselves the duty which political philosophy did not perform for us – the duty of thinking in terms of facts and not in terms of metaphysical speculations. Knowledge of facts would have told us that the war lords were only the representatives of the ruling classes. A system of social and economic order built exclusively on selfishness, greed, “survival of the fittest,” and ruthless competition, must cease to exist, or exist by means of war. The representatives of this system determined to continue to exist, and so war was the consequence. The ruling classes carried the whole system under which they lived to its logical conclusion and natural issue, which is to “grab what you can.” This motto is not peculiar to any one country; it is the motto of our whole civilization and is the inevitable outcome of our stupid philosophy regarding the characteristic nature of man and the proper potentialities of human life. Where are we to find the true doctrines? Where the true philosophy? If we go back over the history of civilization, we find that in all “sciences,” except the exact ones, private opinions and theories have shaped our beliefs, colored our mental processes and controlled our destinies; we see, for example, pessimism opposed to optimism, materialism to spiritualism, realism to idealism, capitalism to socialism, and so on endlessly. Each of the disputatious systems has a large number of followers and each faction looks upon the others as deprived of truth, common sense and knowledge. All of them play with the words “natural law” which they ignorantly presume to have as the basis and content of their own particular doctrine.”

“If those who know why and how neglect to act, those who do not know will act, and the world will continue to flounder.”

“This new functional definition of humans as time-binders...explains...how we humans, and humans alone, were able to produce...civilizations, making us by necessity interdependent, and the builders of our own destinies.”

“Do you ask why it is that the “social” sciences – the so-called sciences of ethics, etc. – have lagged behind? The answer is not far to seek nor difficult to understand. They have lagged behind, partly because they have been hampered by the traditions and the habits of a bygone world – they have lagged behind, partly because they have depended upon the barren methods of verbalistic philosophy – they have been metaphysical instead of scientific; they have lagged behind, partly because they have been often dominated by the lusts of cunning “politicians” instead of being led by the wisdom of enlightened statesmen; they have lagged behind, partly because they have been predominantly concerned to protect “vested interests,” upon which they have in the main depended for support; the *fundamental* cause, however, of their lagging behind is found in the astonishing fact that, despite their being by their very nature most *immediately* concerned with the affairs of mankind, they have not discovered what Man really is but have from time immemorial falsely regarded human beings either as animals or else as combinations of animals and something supernatural.”