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Extracts from the Book: 'EXCELLENCE' by J.W. Gardner:

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1. "The extremes of equalitarianism are also unstable and vulnerable. People have innumerable reasons for wanting, needing and enjoying vigorous leadership. And gifted, hard-driving people are usually available to supply that need. When an organisation under the suppressing force of extreme equalitarianism reaches a sufficiently dead level of mediocrity, it may be ready prey to the vitality of men who are prepared to step in with personal force and initiative."
(page 23 - Chapter : The Three-way Contest)
2. "The world is only beginning to see that the wealth of a nation consists more than in anything else in the number of superior men that it harbors".
(page 33 - Chapter : The Great Talent Hunt)
3. "It was said of German university students at the end of the nineteenth century that one-third broke down, one-third went to the devil, and the remaining third went on to govern Europe."
(page 65 - Chapter : Education as a Sorting-out Process)
4. "A cynical friend of mine said recently, 'Everyone has two personalities these days - the one under his hat and the one in his employment file.'
(page 82 - Chapter : College and the Alternatives).
5. "We must learn to honor excellence (indeed to demand it) in every socially accepted human activity, however humble the activity, and to scorn shoddiness, however exalted the activity. As I said in another connection: "An excellent plumber is infinitely more admirable than an incompetent philosopher. The society which scorns excellence in plumbing because plumbing is a humble activity and tolerates shoddiness in philosophy because it is an exalted activity will neither have good plumbing nor good philosophy. Neither its pipes nor its theories will hold water"
(page 86 - Chapter: College and the Alternatives).

6. "If one is concerned to bring into the leadership ranks of a profession or a class or a society the men best qualified to exercise that leadership, the sensible thing is to guard the door with rigorous selection procedures, rigorous procedures for testing ability, rigorous courses for preparation. And the purpose of the rigor is not simply to screen out the less able but to screen out the less highly motivated. The ones who get through will then not only be men of superior ability but men of superior character."
(page 100 - Chapter : Motivation).
7. "We must understand that high motivation is as precious a commodity as talent and that if we do not have a system which selects for this attribute as well as for talent we shall have to resign ourselves to a good deal of flabbiness in our leadership ranks. And we must recognise that one way of bringing highly motivated people to the top is to impose barriers which must be hurdled on the way to the top"
(page 100 - Chapter : Motivation).
8. "Genius is subject to the same laws which regulate the production of cotton and molasses. The supply adjusts itself to the demand. The quantity may be diminished by restrictions, and multiplied by bounties."
(page 101 - Chapter - Motivation).
9. "The government was considering the dispatch of an expedition to Burma to take Rangoon. The Cabinet summoned Wellington and asked him who would be the ablest general to head such an undertaking. He said, "Send Lord Chambermere" The government officials protested: "But we have always understood that your Grace thought Lord Chambermere a fool". The Duke's response was vigorous and to the point. "So he is a fool, and a damned fool, but he can take Rangoon."
(page 127 - Chapter : The Idea of Excellence)

10. "Existence is a strange bargain. Life owes us little; we owe it everything. The only true happiness comes from squandering ourselves for a purpose"
- John Mason Brown
(page 149 - Chapter : The Aims of a Free People).
11. "The sense of uselessness," said Thomas Huxley, "is the severest shock which our system can sustain".
(page 153 - Chapter : The Aims of a Free People).
12. "But we also have shared aims. And our hope of greatness as a nation lies in these shared aims."
(page 155 - Chapter : The Aims of a Free People).