**INSPIRATIONBASE**

*A collection of ethical leadership speeches*

David

Suzuki

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David Suzuki is a Canadian scientist and outspoken environmental advocate, and was one of the first dominant voices calling to fight climate change in the late 20th century. He is very well known for his commitment to making environmental and scientific issue relatable to the public. In 1990, he cofounded the David Suzuki Foundation, which is committed to environmental conservation and to providing research to government, businesses, and individuals. He has written numerous articles and books, and has been on television since the 1960s, hosting shows to share scientific findings with the public. His television series *The Nature of Things with David Suzuki* is especially well know. He has received several awards, such as the United Nations Environment Programme Medal in 1985 and UNESCO’s Kalinga Prize for Popularization of Science in 1968, and was named an Officer of the Order of Canada in 1977 and a Companion of the Order of Canada in 2006. (<https://www.britannica.com/biography/David-Suzuki>)

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| **DS 1*. David Suzuki warns that British Columbia will get a front row seat to climate change / Your Morning*** |   |
|  […] [N]ow when you look, as the documentary [*Beyond Climate*] shows, forest fires, you know, you see every year these mega fires that are going on, and it’s getting worse and hotter and bigger, and now our premier is saying this is a new normal. This is *not* the new normal, this is a new abnormal, and we’ve gotta stop continuing to put fuel on the fire.[…] [W]e all have to begin to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions at the individual level. But we need some big decisions to be made by the people we elect to office. So we’ve now got to make the need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions the number one issue in the next election, because we have the opportunity to get going on a very tough target, which is we’ve got to go off fossil fuels by 2050. By 2030, that’s only 12 years, we’ve got to reduce by at least 40 to 45%, so this is a big ask. But it’s the future of our children that’s at stake now. And the damn trouble is these politicians, they gotta worry about being reelected rather than making the tough decisions.  |
| **Date**  | 26/10/18Accessed 1 Apr. 2021 | **Source** | Your Morning on YouTube (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1zst6iGsjY8>), min. 1:19 - 1:42, 3:24 - 4:12; close captioning available. |

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| **DS 2*. David Suzuki doesn’t want to live forever / More with Anna Maria Tremonti*** |   |
|  People talk about sustainable development and we need green energy and clean technology and all of this stuff. We just have no idea what’s coming, because the one avenue to minimize the impact of climate change is Nature itself. All of the green things in the oceans and on land are the best mechanism we have to absorb carbon and give back oxygen. But we’ve been attacking the forests around the planet. You just have to look at the Amazon and what’s going on now. And so we‘re undermining the very factors that gave us the resilience to survive over long periods of time under tremendous stress. And we’ve never had so many human beings. I mean we’re now the most numerous mammal on the planet. And it takes just a lot of things just to keep us alive. So we’re in unknown territory. […] The problem with the idea of rights is we seem to feel that we can define the rights of everything. What about the right of a river to flow as it evolved to flow? What about the right of a songbird to live out its life as it evolved to live? What about the right of a forest, a community of organisms to live?[…] It’s certainly the involvement with Indigenous people that has really shaped the lives of our families now, and it’s not an accident that I have two Haida grandchildren. […] They taught me everything about the environment. Those are the deep lessons that I learned from Indigenous people. And I’ve always been grateful. You know you’d think after everything that’s been done to Indigenous people, they would be very wary about talking to anybody about anything. But they say over and over again, “We’re all in the same canoe. We’ve gotta be paddling together, not clashing with each other.” The generosity that I’ve experienced has been overwhelming. |
| **Date**  | 12/3/20Accessed 1 Apr. 2021 | **Source** | CBC on YouTube (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bOnUW-3EQ2w>), min. 27:13 - 28:15, 28:44 - 29:05, 54:58 - 55:52; close captioning available.  |

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| **DS 3*. David Suzuki Discusses “Rebellion” with The Journal*** |   |
| You can destroy the atmosphere that gives us weather, climate, the seasons, air to breathe. You can destroy that in order to protect the economy? Like what the hell is going on? The economy has become the issue that we’re bowing down before, and so long as we do that, we’re gonna continue to get the fossil fuel industry doing what it’s done now for over 40 years. |
| **Date**  | 26/11/20Accessed 1 Apr. 2021 | **Source** | The Queen’s Journal on YouTube (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eNh_DaPoiR0>), min. 2:58 - 3:23; close captioning available.  |

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| **DS 4*. Congress 2019 - Big Thinking - David Suzuki and Ian Mauro - Beyond Climate*** |   |
| For 95% of human existence we were nomadic hunter-gatherers. When you’re carrying everything you own on your back following plants and animals through the seasons, you know very well you’re utterly embedded in and dependent on Nature. […] I used to say that I feel like we’re in a car heading at a brick wall at a hundred miles an hour, and everybody in the car is arguing about where they wanna sit. You know, someone’s gotta say, “Put the brakes on and turn the wheel,” but those of us that have been saying that are locked in the car, so nobody pays attention. I don’t use that metaphor anymore. I use the metaphor of Roadrunner. Roadrunner is being chased down the road by Wile E. Coyote, and of course, he comes to the edge of the cliff and the Roadrunner turns ninety degrees, but Wile E. Coyote has too much momentum and goes right over, and there’s that moment when he’s poised there, when he suddenly realizes, oh my God, and then down he goes. That’s where we are. We’re over the edge of the cliff now. But that’s not an excuse to say it’s too late. I think it makes a difference whether you fall five feet or five hundred feet. And that’s what we can do now. It doesn’t make any sense to say it’s too late, let’s keep burning the coal and the frack gas and all that stuff. It doesn’t make any sense, because we’re just making a very uncertain future much more uncertain.[…] On October 4th, the Soviet Union shocked the world by launching Sputnik. Now, it was a very frightening time. At that time, the Soviet Union seemed so powerful, they were rolling over Africa, making inroads in South America and Asia, and the American really scrambled, and they got their three rockets in the Army Navy and Air Force, and they launched their shortly after, and everyone blew up. Meanwhile, the Soviets launched the first animal in space, a dog, Laika; Yuri Gagarin, the first man in space; the first team of cosmonauts; the first space walk; Valentina Tereshkova, the first woman. The Americans just said, “We gotta catch up to these guys.” They had no idea how to do it. You know, here I am, a Canadian, studying in the States. You just had to say, “I love science,” and they through money at you. It was a glorious time to be a budding scientist. And they formed NASA, they were pouring money into NSF and NIH and building science departments and universities. It was an amazing time. And then, in 1961, John F. Kennedy said, “We’re going to get astronauts to the moon and back within a decade.” Nobody knew how the hell to do it at that time. But he set a target and committed America to trying to pull that off. Nobody said, “All those damn Democrats are gonna spend us out of existence. We can’t catch up to the Soviets. It costs too much.” Everybody said, “Yes, let’s do that.” And it’s making the commitment that really matters. And what happened? Not only did they do it within less than a decade. They’re the only ones to land people on the moon and bring them back. But every year, 60 years later, when Nobel Prizes in science are announced, guess who still gets the majority of them. They’re American scientists or scientists studying in the States. And then, when NASA publishes every year a journal called Spin Off that lists hundreds of technologies and spin-off businesses that resulted from the space program. These were not the intention of getting to the moon first. They happen because of the commitment that we gotta beat the Russians to the moon, and now we have GPS, we have 24-hour news channels, we’ve got, well, maybe that’s not so great, but we’ve got ear thermometers and space blankets and laptop computers. And all of these things happened because Kennedy said, “We’ve got to beat the Russians to the moon.” And that’s the challenge now. We’ve got a real challenge, and we’ve got no choice it seems to me, but to take that challenge and commit ourselves. And I guarantee you: opportunities will fall out that we hadn’t even imagined. But you’ve got to make the commitment first. [Question from audience]: I personally, I’m very supportive of sustainable, but these people have their livelihoods on the line, these oil workers or coal miners. And personally, I find it very difficult to advocate my stance. I find it very difficult to look an oil worker in the eye and say, “Yes, my position is that I am supporting something that would put you out of your job and put you out of your livelihood.” That’s always been something I can’t imagine doing. So, what is your solution, or what can we tell people whose lives are immediately going to be drastically changed?David Suzuki: They’ve got to transform the way the work and, you know, I keep saying, there was a time when there was slavery in the United States, and the south argued vigorously that they couldn’t get rid of slavery; it would destroy the economy in the south. Some things you have to do because they have to be stopped. And that’s where we are. But we’re a society that doesn’t just cut the job off and then forget about you. We’re also a society that acts together, and we wanna help you make that transition if that’s possible. […] I think if you’re going to get into jobs in the economy, we’re going to lose every time. You have to start talking about, “Wait a minute now. What is it that really is at stake?” It’s the future for our children and future generations. To politicians, they don’t exist. They live within the framework between elections. But our concern is about the future and country that we’re leaving, and that’s what the discussion should always be. If you’re going to get into an economic job argument, you’re gonna lose every time, it seems to me. |
| **Date** | 7/6/19Accessed 1 Apr. 2021 | **Source** | IdeasIdees on YouTube (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wLq4O2i19A8), min. 21:55 - 22:12, 38:17 - 39:27, 40:25 - 43:30, 1:13:55 - 1:15:40; close captioning available. |

Collected by Daniela Ribitsch