

MIEP GIES QUOTES



ECHOES & REFLECTIONS

TEACHING THE HOLOCAUST. INSPIRING THE CLASSROOM.

Hermine “Miep” Gies (1909-2010) was one of the people who helped to hide Anne Frank from the Nazis during World War II. Anne went into hiding with her family when she was 13 years old in an annex above her father’s business in Amsterdam, a city in the Netherlands. Her family of four and several other Jewish people hid for two years before being discovered by Nazi soldiers.

Miep Gies worked for Anne’s father, Otto, and was a close family friend. Together with her husband and several co-workers, Miep secretly brought food and supplies to the eight people in hiding, risking her own life in the process. When the Nazis ultimately discovered the annex, Miep saved Anne’s diary before the soldiers could discover it. The *Diary of a Young Girl* became one of the most important historical documents we have today from the Holocaust era.

Though Miep Gies has been designated as “A Righteous Among the Nations” for her bravery and compassion, she insisted that we not remember her as a hero. Below are some of her thoughts on courage and the responsibility of ordinary people to take action against prejudice and hate.



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“I don’t like being called a hero because no one should ever think you have to be special to help others.”

“I am afraid that if people feel that I am a very special person, a sort of heroine, they may doubt whether they will do the same I once did.”

“But even an ordinary secretary or a housewife or a teenager can, within their own small ways, turn on a small light in a dark room.”

“We did our duty as human beings: helping people in need.”

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“I could anticipate the sleepless nights and the remorse I would feel later in life if I did not assist those in trouble. Remorse is far worse than any death I could have faced.”

“Any attempt at action is better than inaction. An attempt can go wrong, but inaction inevitably results in failure.”

“My story is a story of very ordinary people during extraordinarily terrible times. Times of which I hope will never, never come again. It is for all of us ordinary people all over the world to see that they do not.”

“The message to take from Anne’s story is to stop prejudice and discrimination right at its beginning. Prejudice starts when we speak about THE Jews, THE Arabs, THE Asians, THE Mexicans, THE Blacks, THE Whites. This leads to the feeling that all members of each such group think and act the same.”

“If any German had ever asked Anne to tell something about herself, I think she would be still with us today. However, nobody asked: she was just a Jew!”

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