

“You see things; you say, ‘Why?’ But I dream things that never were; and I say, ‘Why not?’”

Playwright, and Nobel laureate George Bernard Shaw’s quote appears in his 1921 play *Back to Methuselah*, spoken by the Serpent in the “In the Beginning” section. It has since become a rallying cry for visionaries, reformers, and dreamers, encapsulating Shaw’s belief in human potential and the power of imagination to challenge the status quo.

The line contrasts two mindsets:

- **The observer who questions the present** — “You see things; you say, ‘Why?’” — reflects a critical, often skeptical attitude toward reality.
- **The visionary who imagines the future** — “I dream things that never were; and I say, ‘Why not?’” — embodies creativity, optimism, and the courage to challenge limitations.

The “why not?” is a call to action, rejecting complacency and daring to imagine and create a better world. The quote has been popularized beyond Shaw’s work, notably by Robert F. Kennedy, who used it to inspire political and social change. It remains a timeless reminder that progress often begins with the audacity, to imagine what could be.

In short: Shaw’s “why not” is a philosophical and motivational statement — a call to dream boldly, question limits, and act on the vision.