

*Seek Wisdom,
Practice Kindness*

by

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Seek Wisdom, Practice Kindness
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My motto is this:

*Seek wisdom,
practice kindness.*

Wisdom is the knowledge of how to live one's life to one's best advantage.

Kindness is a combination of treating others with consideration for their feelings, and helping them when one can.

Do I always act wisely? No.

Am I kind? Sometimes.

Do I keep trying to seek wisdom and practice kindness, in spite of my many failures? Yes.

Over decades and centuries, a given word can take on many shades of meaning.

However, the more shades of meaning that a word has, the less useful it is in conveying a specific idea; so if my definitions seem simplistic, and not inclusive of all of the current shades of meaning, it is intentional. I've tried to limit my definition of any particular word so that I can convey a specific idea.

When I was a child, my character flaws may have been due to genetic predisposition, my environment, parental mistakes, or to some other reason; but now that I am an adult, I accept responsibility for all of my faults. No matter what the origin of a particular flaw might be, it is my choice whether to fix it or not, and if I choose not to do whatever is necessary to fix it, it is my fault, and no one else's.

For me, the greatest obstacles to seeking wisdom and practicing kindness are my impulses and my emotions.

An impulse is a release of energy from the subconscious, influencing one to do something.

Examples of impulses are desire and fear.

An emotion is a release of energy from the subconscious that seeks to express satisfaction or displeasure.

Examples of emotions are happiness, sadness and anger.

It could be successfully argued that emotions and impulses are in reality the same thing, both being releases of energy from the subconscious which influence behavior, but I like to distinguish between the two because it seems to help me understand them.

As life evolved from single-celled animals to more complex forms, the environment itself became more complex. Animals having a means of selecting from multiple stimuli had an advantage over animals that did not. Thus evolved consciousness. The conscious mind is the faculty for making choices.

The subconscious mind originally only sent impulses to the consciousness based on instinct, but as animals evolved, they developed the ability to learn. Thus, some of one's impulses are based on instinct, and others on learned behavior.

Our impulses and emotions do not separate us from the other highly developed animals, they are something that we have in common.

Desire is the impulse to obtain something.

Fear is the impulse to avoid something.

Nervousness is the conflict between desire and fear.

Desire and fear manifest themselves in different ways.

Envy is the desire to have something that someone else has.

Lust is the desire to have sex.

Sloth is the desire to do nothing when there is something one should or could do.

Acquisitiveness is the desire to get things, without necessarily placing importance on keeping them.

Greed is the desire to have and keep more of a particular thing than one needs or could possibly use.

Materialism is the desire to have and keep lots of things, but not necessarily alot of one specific thing.

Status is the relative importance one has in the opinions of other people, or in one's own mind.

Ambition is the desire to raise one's status.

The instinctive default seems to be that the highest ranking man is the one perceived to be the strongest, or most powerful; and the highest ranking woman is the one perceived to be the most beautiful, or the sexiest. This is easily understood from a biological perspective, for it is to the advantage of a man to reproduce with the best looking woman, with the underlying assumption being that the best looking woman will be the healthiest. From the female point of view, the strongest man will presumably sire the healthiest and strongest children for her, and can better protect her as well.

However, for those of us who can't realistically expect to compete in the arenas of strength or beauty, status depends on other things, such as celebrity, money, possessions, knowledge, ability, fashion, etc.

The reason that I have often dreamed of becoming in one way or another a celebrity, is that being a celebrity would automatically increase my status.

I have often imagined myself speaking with celebrities, because associating with a person of higher status would give me higher status.

When I tell someone a bit of gossip that doesn't affect him or her, but which may be of interest, it is because I feel that by saying this, I will increase my status in that person's eyes.

The reason that I like to show off new stuff that I get is usually that I feel that it will raise my status in the eyes of the person to whom I'm showing the stuff, or in the eyes of someone else to whom that person will speak.

I never say to myself, "Hey, I think I'll do such and such in front of so and so to increase my status!"; but when I try to understand my behavior in retrospect, it only makes sense when I take the desire for status into account.

Flattery is doing or saying something so that someone else feels higher in status, in order to achieve some selfish end of one's own.

Pride has two main usages, both of which are common enough so that I must mention them, rather than narrowing pride to one definition.

Pride in one sense is the satisfaction of doing a job well.

Pride is also the feeling that one is better than another person; not simply better at something, but more worthy of life.

Both forms of pride stem from the sense of one's status.

Self-esteem is the sense of one's worth, regardless of one's place in the opinions of others.

Because everyone has worth, everyone should have a strong sense of self-esteem.

Unfortunately, sometimes one allow the opinions of others to influence how one feels about one's self. Should one allow this to take place to an extreme degree, this could lead to prima donna behavior in the case of overvaluation, or obsequiousness in the opposite case.

Humility is the lack of importance placed on status (not to be confused with a desire to have low status).

Humility is a precious gem. It is freedom from the slavery of the desire for status.

One of the greatest feelings of peace that I have ever experienced was when I imagined myself in a situation in which I had no concern for status. I felt self-esteem, but not only did I not place importance on how others felt about me, I did not place myself above or below others in any way. It was a liberating moment that I have only felt completely once or twice since, but which I intend, over time, to make a part of my everyday state of mind.

Jealousy is the fear that someone will become more important, and one's self less important, in the opinions or affections of a particular person.

It is in essence the fear of the loss of one's status, coupled with the elevation of another's status, in the eyes of someone else.

Hope is the expectation that a desire will be satisfied.

Anxiety is the expectaion that a fear will be realized.

Happiness is a release of energy based on a sense of gain.

This gain can be the realization of a hope, or it can be from a sudden surprise gain.

In the case of a satisfied hope, the amount of energy released is in direct proportion to the strength of the desire that has been satisfied, or that one fully expects to be satisfied.

In the case of a surprise gain, the amount of happiness is in direct proportion to the magnitude of the perceived gain.

Sadness is a release of energy based on a sense of loss.

The amount of energy released is in direct proportion to the importance of the perceived loss.

Grief is extreme sadness.

Sometimes I don't know the importance I've placed on something until I see my reaction to losing it, or to my fear of losing it.

The energy from a positive or a negative event can be so great that it can not be expressed fully at one time.

The energy from such a situation is stored within one's self, and as one thinks about it over time, the energy is slowly released.

This is the reality behind the saying, ``Time heals all wounds''.

Resentment is the feeling that someone or something has wronged one.

Anger is the release of energy from a resentment.

Regret is the feeling that one should have done something differently.

The strength of the regret is in direct proportion to the perceived effect of the wrong choice that one has made.

Guilt is the feeling that one has done wrong.

The strength of the guilt is in direct proportion to the magnitude of the perceived wrong.

The difference between regret and guilt is that with regret, one intended well, but it turned out to be the wrong choice; and with guilt, one knew better, but didn't do the right thing.

Stress is energy directed internally, and can be caused by desire, fear, resentment, regret, or feelings of guilt.

Forgiveness is the release of energy bound up in a resentment, a regret, or a guilty feeling.

Sometimes forgiveness occurs a little bit at a time, and sometimes it happens all at once.

It is just as important to forgive one's self as it is to forgive others, for when energy is bound up in a resentment, in a regret or in a guilty feeling, one cannot be fully content.

When one asks pardon of another for a wrong that one has committed, it can be of benefit to the other person by helping him or her to release the energy of a resentment.

It can also result in the release of energy of one's own regret or guilty feeling.

Selfishness is placing importance on one's own impulses without considering the needs or feelings of others.

Altruism is setting aside one's own needs and desires, and caring only about the needs and desires of another person(s).

Neither selfishness nor altruism is healthy, but a balance between the two must be achieved for one's maximum well-being.

A personal bond is a relationship developed with another person, an animal, or even an object or an idea, that one considers important to one's self.

If a personal bond is broken through no perceived fault of the other, such as the death of a loved one, sadness results.

If the bond is broken through the perceived fault of the other, such as an apparent betrayal of a friend, resentment results.

Pleasure is a positive feeling from some stimulus, physical or mental.

Ecstasy is a high state of pleasure.

Pain is a negative feeling from some stimulus, physical or mental.

Misery is a high state of pain.

Physical pleasure is usually stronger than mental pleasure (for example, the physical pleasure of eating several slices of pizza is usually greater than the mental pleasure of sticking to a diet).

Physical pain usually hurts more than mental pain (for example, the physical pain of catching a three hundred pound woman who has jumped from a second floor window of a burning house, is stronger than mental pain of the guilt of not catching her).

Relief is the release of energy resulting in the cessation of a mental pain, such as anxiety or guilt, or cessation of a physical pain.

The amount of relief is in direct proportion to the strength of the pain.

One's attention is the focus of one's conscious mind. Sometimes one's attention can be focused on more than one thing, such as when walking and chewing gum at the same time, but there is usually an item on which one's attention is primarily focused.

Pain and pleasure are the measures used in decision making. When one's attention is focused on something, the subconscious sends an impulse(s), apparently based on whether the object of one's attention is likely to give pleasure and/or pain. Then the conscious must decide whether the reward will be greater and the loss less by following the impulse(s), or by following a course of action determined by one's reason. If the mental pleasure will be greater, and the mental pain less, by following one's reason than by following the impulse(s), one will usually do the

"reasonable" thing, otherwise one will typically follow the impulse(s).

Willpower is the ability to do the "reasonable" thing, when following an impulse would provide greater pleasure and lesser pain.

Desire and fear have an important part in my life. They are the great motivators.

If it were not for my desire to live, why would I bother to save my life by moving from the path of an oncoming elephant? In the proper proportion, desire and fear are good.

The counterweights of desire and fear are reason and faith (specifically the faith, or belief, that everything will be okay).

Reason is the product of conscious deliberation.

Faith is the belief that something is true, without having the physical facts to prove it.

In my experience, if I have faith that everything will work out okay, it usually does; but in all honesty, I can't say if everything seeming to work out is because of my faith that things will work out, or "supernatural" guidance, or coincidence, or just that I choose to look at the positive side of things.

Every emotional transaction involves the transfer of energy.

Peace of mind is attained when one's impulses and one's reason are in accord (if my impulse is to eat pizza, and my reason tells me no, I am not at peace; if my impulse says eat pizza, and my reason agrees, I am at peace).

Complete contentment is attained when one's impulses are not strong enough to govern one's behavior, and when one has forgiven all wrongs, those perceived wrongs done to one's self, and those perceived wrongs, intentional or otherwise, that one has done to others.

When I feel a strong impulse, I am taken away from my current degree of contentment in direct proportion to the strength of the impulse, and I only return to my previous state of contentment when the impulse is either satisfied or eliminated.

Although my mind may be at peace, in the sense that there is no conflict between my reason and my impulses, I may not be content, depending on the strength of the current impulse(s).

I can achieve maximum contentment by being satisfied with that which I already have, by not being afraid to lose that which I have, and by forgiving all resentments, regrets, and guilt.

I have never achieved that level of contentment, but I believe it is possible, and it is one of the most important of my goals in life.

I was walking down the street one day, when I realized that whether I was happy or not didn't depend on factors outside of me, it depended on me choosing to be happy.

There are positive and negative things all around me; and on which of the two that I focus will determine to a large extent my state of mind.

A realist sees both the positive and the negative in their relative measure.

An optimist sees predominately the positive side of things.

An excess of optimism can lead to a sort of innocence, which is not healthy because it is a disorted view of the world.

A pessimist sees predominately the negative side of things.

An excess of pessimism can lead to bitterness, or, when combined with low self-esteem, depression.

I saw someone coming down the street. He appeared to want to speak to me. I desired to not speak with him. I was unhappy. I felt it was his fault for intruding on my life.

I saw the same person coming down the street. He appeared to want to speak to me. I didn't desire to speak or to not speak. I accepted whatever would happen. I was not annoyed. I felt good.

It was raining outside. I desired for it not to rain. The rainy day was ugly. I was unhappy.

It was raining outside. I didn't desire for it to rain or for it not to rain. I accepted whatever would happen. The rainy day was beautiful. I felt good.

It was sunny outside. I wanted it to snow. The sunny day was ugly to me. I was unhappy.

It was sunny outside. I didn't desire for it to snow or for it not to snow. I accepted whatever would happen. The sunny day was beautiful. I felt good.

*I saw something that was beautiful.
I wanted it, but I couldn't have it. I
kept thinking about it. I felt
incomplete.*

*I saw something that was beautiful.
I couldn't have it, but I didn't desire
to have it or to not have it. It was
lovely to see. I felt good.*

The word love is normally used to describe many types of feeling. In its most general sense, it is a strong, positive feeling about something.

Love is used to describe a powerful desire for something.

Love is used to describe the pleasure of some action, such as skiing, or reading, or eating.

Love is used to describe the strength of a personal bond with someone or something.

Love is also used to describe a feeling of infatuation.

Infatuation is the extreme overvaluation of another person or object.

The opposite of infatuation is hate.

A healthy viewpoint concerning infatuation and hate lies between the two, which is neither adoration nor hate. The people and things around one are neither gods nor demons.

Love, in its highest sense (as far as I can see), requires a deep understanding of, and a sense of unity with, the object of love.

I can only love, in the higher sense of which I'm speaking, to the degree that I can understand the loved one. I can love my children to a higher degree than they can love me, because I can understand them more than they can understand me, and I can feel a greater sense of identification with them than they can with me. For the same reason, I could never love a god to the degree that a god could love me.

The opposite of the higher love of which I speak is individualism, the sense of being something completely separate from the rest of the world.

If I seek to embrace the world and the life that I can reasonably expect to lead here, a balance must be found between the understanding of the unity of all things, and the idea that I am something separate from the world around me. I must accept that I am an individual, but that I am also a part of a greater whole.

Goodness lies in seeking the well-being of those around one, without being domineering in the process.

Goodness is creative, in that it leads to the world around one's self becoming a better place to live.

Evil lies in seeking to cause pain to others, for the sake of hurting them.

Evil is destructive, in that it leads to one's world being a worse place to live.

If wisdom is the knowledge of how to live my life to my best advantage, what is to my best advantage?

In my opinion, contentment is the ultimate goal; for whether I have money or not, or a good sex life or not, or whether I feast at a banquet or pick food from a trash can, if I find contentment then nothing is missing; and should I find true contentment, the luxuries of life will be just icing on the cake. Without contentment, the luxuries of life can be comforting, but their comfort only goes skin deep.

Is there one supreme being over the universe? I don't know.

Are there beings superior to humans? When I consider the vast number of galaxies and stars that are out there, and the planets that must also be out there, it seems impossible that there are not somewhere some beings superior to us.

Are there superior beings watching over us? I can't say for sure, but sometimes some very improbable things happen that make it seem like there are.

If there were a being capable of managing the affairs of just this planet, that being would be far inferior in ability to a being capable of managing the affairs of this galaxy; and a being capable of managing just this galaxy would be far inferior to a supreme being over the entire universe. If I were to have reason to believe that a superior being were guiding my life, how could I know if it were a god of just this planet, who would be unimaginably superior to me, or if it were a higher non-supreme being, or the supreme being? I couldn't know, unless that higher being were to tell me.

Does a part of one's self, one's soul, perhaps, exist after the death of one's body?

I don't know.

If there is life after death, the notion of one's soul burning in eternal hellfire is an impossibility. The notion that a superior being is going to wreak vengeance on the soul of someone who has made mistakes over the course of a few decades of life, by tormenting that soul with agonizing pain for millions and billions and countless trillions of years, is ridiculous. If there is punishment for the mistakes made in this life, it is for the purpose of making one better, and it is not to be feared, but embraced.

At this point in time, my focus is not in understanding whether beings superior to me exist or not (although I would love to know). My focus is on understanding myself, and mastering myself to the degree that I can. Should the day arrive that I am satisfied with my level of self-knowledge and self-control, then I will no doubt turn my attention to the search for higher beings; but until then, I think that whatever the chain of command of the universe is, right now my best interests lie in looking inward, and at the world that I see around me.

Some would say that we are all sinners, but I would say that we are all slaves to impulse, at one time or another, and in varying degrees.

Freeing one's self involves finding a healthy level of self esteem, practicing humility and kindness, and relying on reason and faith.

Quotes That May Guide or Inspire

*Unsolicited advice is often
unwelcome advice.*

Confucius said: "To study and not think is a waste. To think and not study is dangerous." - from The Analects.

Confucius said: "If you are virtuous, you will not be lonely. You will always have friends." - from The Analects.

*Argue for your limitations, and sure
enough, they're yours. -
from Illusions, by Richard Bach.*

*Be your own star, for strength is
from within,
And one against the world will
always win.*

*-from the introduction to The
Oxford Book of French Verse*

*[I don't think one against the world
will always win, but it's an inspiring
thought, and strength does come
from within.]*

*A man who can read and doesn't,
has no advantage over the man
who can't read. -Mark Twain*

*The mind is its own place, and in
itself can make a heaven of hell, a
hell of heaven. - John Milton,
Paradise Lost*

Confucius said: "You might force people to act according to a certain principle, but you won't be able to force them to understand it." - The Analects

There were four things the master had eliminated from himself: imposing his will, arbitrariness, stubbornness and egotism. - The Analects

Confucius said: "I have never seen one who loves virtue as much as he loves sex." - The Analects

Confucius said: "Base yourself in loyalty and trust. Don't be companion with those who are not your moral equal. When you make a mistake, don't hesitate to correct it." - The Analects

Chi Lu asked about serving the spirits. Confucius said, "If you can't yet serve men, how can you serve the spirits?"

*Lu said, "May I ask about death?"
Confucius said, "If you don't understand what life is, how will you understand death?" -The Analects*

Confucius said: "The Superior Man develops people's good points, not their bad points. The inferior man does the opposite." - The Analects

Fan Chih asked about the meaning of humaneness.

Confucius said "love others."

He asked about the meaning of "knowledge."

*The Master said, "Know others."-
The Analects*

Tseng Tzu said: "The Superior Man doesn't worry about those things which are outside of his control." - The Analects

Confucius said: "I don't worry about being unknown. I worry about my lack of ability." - The Analects

Tzu Lu asked about the qualities of the Superior Man. Confucius said, "He cultivates himself by comforting others." - The Analects

Confucius said: "When a person should be spoken with, and you don't speak with them, you lose them. When a person shouldn't be spoken with and you speak to them, you waste your breath. The wise do not lose people, nor do they waste their breath." - The Analects

Confucius said: "The Superior Man seeks within himself. The inferior man seeks within others." - The Analects

Tzu Kung asked: "Is there a single concept that we can take as a guide for the actions of our whole life?"

Confucius said, "What about 'fairness'? What you don't like done to yourself, don't do to others." - The Analects

Confucius said: "To make a mistake and not correct it: this is a real mistake." - The Analects

Confucius said: "Expect much from yourself and little from others and you will avoid incurring resentments." - The Analects

Confucius said: "Speak enough to make the point, and then leave it at that." - The Analects

Confucius said: "There are three kinds of friendship which are beneficial and three kinds of friendship which are harmful. Friendship with the Righteous, friendship with the sincere and friendship with the learned are all beneficial. Friendship with the deceptive, friendship with the unprincipled and friendship with smooth talkers are harmful." - The Analects

Confucius said: "There are three kinds of enjoyment which are beneficial and three kinds of enjoyment which are harmful. The enjoyment of cultivation in music and ritual, the enjoyment of speaking of the goodness of others and the enjoyment of being surrounded by friends of good character are all beneficial. The enjoyment of arrogance, the enjoyment of dissipation and the enjoyment of comfort are all harmful." - The Analects

*Lord, make me an instrument of
your peace:*

*Where there is hatred, let me sow
love;*

Where there is injury, pardon;

Where there is doubt, faith;

Where there is despair, hope;

Where there is darkness, light;

And where there is sadness, joy.

O Divine Master,

Grant that I may not so much seek

To be consoled as to console;

*To be understood, as to
understand;*

To be loved, as to love;

For it is in giving that we receive,

*It is in pardoning that we are
pardoned,*

*And it is in dying that we are born
to eternal light. -Francis of Assisi*

Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.

- Matthew 5:23 - 5:24

Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.

- Matthew 5:43 - 5:45

Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven. Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth: That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly.

- Matthew 6:1 - 6:4

And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.

- Matthew 6:5 - 6:6

Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again. And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.

- Matthew 7:1 - 7:5

Reprove not a scorner, lest he hate thee: rebuke a wise man, and he will love thee. - Proverbs 9:8

The way of a fool is right in his own eyes: but he that listens to counsel is wise.

- Proverbs 12:15

*A prudent man concealeth
knowledge: but the heart of fools
proclaimeth foolishness.
- Proverbs 12:23*

*Heaviness in the heart of man
maketh it stoop: but a good word
maketh it glad.*

- Proverbs 12:25

*There is that maketh himself rich,
yet hath nothing: there is that
maketh himself poor, yet hath
great riches.*

- Proverbs 13:7

*How much better is it to get
wisdom than gold! and to get
understanding rather to be chosen
than silver!*

- Proverbs 16:16

*The heart of the prudent getteth
knowledge; and the ear of the wise
seeketh knowledge.
- Proverbs 18:15*

*He that gets wisdom loves his own
soul: he that keeps
understanding shall find good.
- Proverbs 19:9*

*Hear counsel, and receive
instruction, that you may be
wise in your latter end.
- Proverbs 19:20*

Even a child is known by his doings, whether his work be pure, and whether it be right.

- Proverbs 20:11

*Speak not in the ears of a fool: for
he will despise the wisdom of
thy words.*

- Proverbs 23:9

*Apply your heart unto instruction,
and your ears to the words of
knowledge.*

- Proverbs 23:12

*Through wisdom is an house
builded; and by understanding it is
established: And by knowledge
shall the chambers be filled with all
precious and pleasant riches.*

- Proverbs 24:3 & 4

*A word fitly spoken is like apples of
gold in pictures of silver.
- Proverbs 25:11*

He that hath no rule over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down, and without walls.

- Proverbs 25:28

*A man's pride shall bring him low:
but honour shall uphold the
humble in spirit.*

- Proverbs 29:23

The partial becomes complete; the crooked, straight; the empty, full; the worn out, new. He whose (desires) are few gets them; he whose (desires) are many goes astray. Therefore the sage holds in his embrace the one thing (of humility), and manifests it to all the world. He is free from self-display, and therefore he shines; from self-assertion, and therefore he is distinguished; from self-boasting, and therefore his merit is acknowledged; from self-complacency, and therefore he acquires superiority. It is because he is thus free from striving that therefore no one in the world is

able to strive with him.
- the Tao te Ching

*He who stands on his tiptoes does not stand firm; he who stretches his legs does not walk (easily). (So), he who displays himself does not shine; he who asserts his own views is not distinguished; he who vaunts himself does not find his merit acknowledged; he who is self-conceited has no superiority allowed to him.
- the Tao te Ching*

The skillful traveller leaves no traces of his wheels or footsteps; the skillful speaker says nothing that can be found fault with or blamed; the skilful reckoner uses no tallies; the skillful closer needs no bolts or bars, while to open what he has shut will be impossible; the skilful binder uses no strings or knots, while to unloose what he has bound will be impossible. In the same way the sage is always skilful at saving men, and so he does not cast away any man; he is always skilful at saving things, and so he does not cast away anything. This is called 'Hiding the light of his

procedure'.
- the Tao te Ching

*He who knows other men is discerning; he who knows himself is intelligent. He who overcomes others is strong; he who overcomes himself is mighty. He who is satisfied with his lot is rich; he who goes on acting with energy has a (firm) will.
- the Tao te Ching*

There is no guilt greater than to sanction ambition; no calamity greater than to be discontented with one's lot; no fault greater than the wish to be getting. Therefore the sufficiency of contentment is an enduring and unchanging sufficiency.

- the Tao te Ching

To those who are good (to me), I am good; and to those who are not good (to me), I am also good;--and thus (all) get to be good. To those who are sincere (with me), I am sincere; and to those who are not sincere (with me), I am also sincere;--and thus (all) get to be sincere.

- the Tao te Ching

*He who lightly promises is sure to keep but little faith; he who is continually thinking things easy is sure to find them difficult. Therefore the sage sees difficulty even in what seems easy, and so never has any difficulties.
- the Tao te Ching*

That which is at rest is easily kept hold of; before a thing has given indications of its presence, it is easy to take measures against it; that which is brittle is easily broken; that which is very small is easily dispersed. Action should be taken before a thing has made its appearance; order should be secured before disorder has begun. - the Tao te Ching

The tree which fills the arms grew from the tiniest sprout; the tower of nine storeys rose from a (small) heap of earth; the journey of a thousand li commenced with a single step.

- the Tao te Ching

That whereby the rivers and seas are able to receive the homage and tribute of all the valley streams, is their skill in being lower than they;--it is thus that they are the kings of them all. So it is that the sage (ruler), wishing to be above men, puts himself by his words below them, and, wishing to be before them, places his person behind them. In this way though he has his place above them, men do not feel his weight, nor though he has his place before them, do they feel it an injury to them. Therefore all in the world delight to exalt him and do not weary of him. Because he does not strive, no

*one finds it possible to strive with
him.*

- the Tao te Ching

*To know and yet (think) we do not know is the highest (attainment); not to know (and yet think) we do know is a disease. It is simply by being pained at (the thought of) having this disease that we are preserved from it. The sage has not the disease. He knows the pain that would be inseparable from it, and therefore he does not have it.
-the Tao te Ching*

*Sincere words are not fine; fine words are not sincere.
- the Tao te Ching*

Silence is golden.
- old popular saying

To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven: a time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted; a time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up; a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance; a time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing; a time to get, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away; a time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak; a

*time to love, and a time to hate; a
time of war, and a time of peace.
- Ecclesiastes 3:1 - 3:8*

I have seen the travail, which God hath given to the sons of men to be exercised in it. He hath made every thing beautiful in his time: also he hath set the world in their heart, so that no man can find out the work that God maketh from the beginning to the end. I know that there is no good in them, but for a man to rejoice, and to do good in his life. And also that every man should eat and drink, and enjoy the good of all his labour, it is the gift of God.

- Ecclesiastes 3:10 - 3:13

I said in mine heart concerning the estate of the sons of men, that God might manifest them, and that they might see that they themselves are beasts. For that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; even one thing befalleth them: as the one dieth, so dieth the other; yea, they have all one breath; so that a man hath no preeminence above a beast: for all is vanity. All go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again. Who knoweth the spirit of man that goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast that goeth downward to the earth? Wherefore I perceive that there is nothing

*better, than that a man should
rejoice in his own works; for that is
his portion: for who shall bring him
to see what shall be after him?
- Ecclesiastes 3:18 - 3:22*

Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter any thing before God: for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few. For a dream cometh through the multitude of business; and a fool's voice is known by multitude of words.

- Ecclesiastes 5:2 - 5:3

*Better is it that thou shouldst not
vow, than that thou shouldst vow
and not pay.*

- Ecclesiastes 5:5

*It is better to hear the rebuke of the
wise, than for a man to hear
the song of fools.
- Ecclesiastes 7:5*

Be not hasty in thy spirit to be angry: for anger resteth in the bosom of fools.

- Ecclesiastes 7:9

Wisdom is good with an inheritance: and by it there is profit to them that see the sun. For wisdom is a defence, and money is a defence: but the excellency of knowledge is, that wisdom giveth life to them that have it.

- Ecclesiastes 7:11 - 7:12

*Wisdom strengtheneth the wise
more than ten mighty men which
are in the city.*

- Ecclesiastes 7:19

Also take no heed unto all words that are spoken; lest you hear your servant curse you: For oftentimes also your own heart knows that you yourself likewise have cursed others.

- Ecclesiastes 7:21 - 7:22

Easier said than done.
- *Old adage*