

IDEAS I MUST NEVER FORGET
claritas, integritas, veritas

Much learning is methodical, some is random. Some of these quotes are drawn from predictable sources, some I stumbled across. Regardless of their haphazard arrangement, there is a kind of wisdom here and I read these regularly.

Clarence A. Crawford

Happiness is an activity.
Aristotle, more or less

Health, strength, and beauty he will value only in so far as they bring soundness of mind, and you will find him keeping his bodily frame in tune always for the sake of the resulting concord in the soul.
Plato, *The Republic*, Book IX

The body's mischiefs, as Plato proves, proceed from the soul: and if the mind be not first satisfied, the body can never be cured.
Robert Burton, *The Anatomy of Melancholy*

Most of us walk unseeing through the world, unaware alike of its beauties, its wonders, and the strange and sometimes terrible intensity of the lives that are being lived around us.
Rachel Carson

All the world reposes in beauty to him who preserves equipoise in his life, and moves serenely on his path without secret violence.
Henry David Thoreau, *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers*

I learned this, at least, by my experiment: that if one advances confidently in the direction of his dreams, and endeavors to live the life which he has imagined, he will meet with a success unexpected in common hours.
Henry David Thoreau, *Walden*

Not to laugh, not to lament, not to curse, but to understand.
Spinoza

There is always an easy solution to every human problem—neat,
plausible, and wrong.
H. L. Mencken

History embodies the triumph of memory over the spirit of corruption,
and if we deny the truth of our existence, we lose the right to our own
names.

Lewis Lapham in *Harper's*, January 1991; commenting on
Ronald Reagan's autobiography

A poetic appreciation of life, combined with a knowledge of nature,
creates humility, which in turn becomes the greatness of man.
Olaus Murie

I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just.
Thomas Jefferson

Every particle of matter attracts every other particle with a force
proportional to the product of the masses and inversely proportional to the
square of the distances between them.

Proposition VII, Book III, *Principia Mathematica*, Sir Isaac Newton

Why should that apple always descend perpendicularly to the ground,
thought he to himself? Why should it not go sideways or upwards, but
constantly to the earth's centre? Assuredly, the reason is, that the earth draws
it. There must be a drawing power in matter: and the sum of the drawing
power in the matter of the earth must be in the earth's centre, not in any side
of the earth....If matter thus draws matter, it must be in proportion to its
quantity. Therefore the apple draws the earth, as well as the earth draws the
apple. That there is a power, like that we here call gravity, which extends
itself through the universe.

Sir Isaac Newton, describing his famous insight to a friend,
shortly before his death.

God knows the cogitations of the wise, that they are vain.
St. Augustine

He who puts on wisdom, puts on grief; and a heart that understands cuts like rust in the bones.

St. Augustine

Even when I was a fairly precocious young man, the nothingness of the hopes and strivings which chases most men restlessly through life came to my consciousness with considerable vitality.....Out yonder there was this huge world, which exists independently of us human beings and which stands before us like a great, eternal riddle....The contemplation of this world beckoned like a liberation, and I soon noticed that many a man whom I had learned to esteem and to admire had found inner freedom and security in devoted occupation with it.

Albert Einstein

For in much wisdom is much vexation, and he who increases knowledge increases sorrow.

Ecclesiastes

The courage of a soldier is found to be the cheapest and most common quality of human nature.

Edward Gibbon, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, volume 3.

Hubris means forgetting where the real source of power lies and imagining that it is in oneself.

Ernest Becker

To refrain from idle talk is hard; to quiet the gibbering of memory and imagination is much harder; hardest of all is to still the voices of craving and aversion within the will.

Aldous Huxley, *The Perennial Philosophy*, p. 218.

Mind is a function of the organic function of the brain and almost certainly of the rest of the body as well. In this it is like digestion, which until the early nineteenth century appeared to be just as inscrutable as thought or mind seem today.

Sherwin B. Nuland in *The American Scholar*, Summer 2001

During a melancholic attack his super-ego becomes over-severe, abuses the poor ego, humiliates it and ill-treats it, threatens it with the direst punishments, reproaches it for the actions in the remotest past which had been taken lightly at the time—as though it had spent the whole interval in collecting accusations and had only been waiting for its present access of strength in order to bring them up and make a condemnatory judgment on their basis.

Sigmund Freud, Lecture XXXI, *New Introductory Lectures*

Sometimes I rode all day, but there was nothing. Everywhere the valleys were empty, and if I stopped to listen, they would be listening too. The hills looked, and did not know me.

John G. Neihardt, *When the Tree Flowered*

Your mind will be like its habitual thoughts; for the soul becomes dyed with the color of its thoughts.

Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations*, Book Five: 16

It seems that to be known is to have one's life and duration somehow in the keeping of others.

Montaigne, "Of Glory"

Come down and leave
a trace with me along swollen
riverbanks and in crusted tundra.
Let your bones walk its bones,
walk your ideas into something new.

Amy Crawford, from "Continuing a Conversation on Place,
Poetry, Love"

The way we spend our days...is the way we spend our lives.

Annie Dillard, *The Writing Life*

The best lack all conviction, while the worst
Are full of passionate intensity.

W. B. Yeats, from "The Second Coming"

The range of our desires should be circumscribed and restrained to a narrow limit of the nearest and most contiguous good things.

Montaigne, "Of Husbanding Your Will"

Every man rushes elsewhere and into the future, because no man has arrived at himself.

Montaigne, "Of Physiognomy"

[Socrates is] courageous in death not because his soul is immortal but because he is mortal.

Montaigne, "Of Physiognomy"

Life is what happens to you while you're busy making other plans.
attributed to John Lennon

You will die not because you are sick but because you are alive.
Seneca

Shakespeare wished to impress upon us the truth, that action is the chief end of existence – that no faculties of intellect, however brilliant, can be considered valuable, or indeed otherwise than as misfortunes, if they withdraw us from, or render us repugnant to action, and lead us to think and think of doing, until the time has elapsed when we can do anything effectually.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge, from "Hamlet," *Shakespearean Criticism*

"I do not believe in God, but I am afraid of Him."

Spoken by the character Florentino Ariza, a man who spent his entire life looking for love, in *Love in the Time of Cholera*, Gabriel Garcia Marquez

"I have tried, too, in my time to be a philosopher; but I don't know how, cheerfulness was always breaking in."

Attributed to 18th century Englishman Oliver Edwards by Pico Iyer in *Falling off the Map*

"We are such stuff
As dreams are made on, and our little life
Is rounded with a sleep."

Spoken by Prospero, *The Tempest*, Act I