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Quotes by Aristotle

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Aristotle (384 BCE - March 7, 322 BCE) was an ancient Greek philosopher, a student of Plato and teacher of Alexander the Great. He wrote on diverse subjects, including physics, poetry, biology and zoology, logic, rhetoric, politics and government, and ethics. Along with Socrates and Plato, Aristotle was one of the most influential of ancient Greek philosophers. They transformed Presocratic Greek philosophy into the foundations of Western philosophy as we know it. Some consider Plato and Aristotle to have founded two of the most important schools of Ancient philosophy; others consider Aristotelianism as a development and concretization of Plato's insights.

The two qualities which chiefly inspire regard and affection [Are] that a thing is your own and that it is your only one.

- Aristotle

Most people would rather give than get affection.

- Aristotle

Dignity consists not in possessing honors, but in the consciousness that we deserve them.

- Aristotle

What it lies in our power to do, it lies in our power not to do.

- Aristotle

Education is the best provision for old age.

- Aristotle

The educated differ from the uneducated as much as the living from the dead.

- Aristotle

The roots of education are bitter, but the fruit is sweet.

- Aristotle

Those who educate children well are more to be honored than they who produce them; for these only gave them life, those the art of living well.

- Aristotle

Education is an ornament in prosperity and a refuge in adversity.

- Aristotle

All who have meditated on the art of governing mankind have been convinced that the fate of empires depends on the education of youth.

- Aristotle

The beginning of reform is not so much to equalize property as to train the noble sort of natures not to desire more, and to prevent the lower from getting more.

- Aristotle

Equality consists in the same treatment of similar persons.

- Aristotle

The worst form of inequality is to try to make unequal things equal.

- Aristotle

No notice is taken of a little evil, but when it increases it strikes the eye.

- Aristotle

Excellence is an art won by training and habituation. We do not act rightly because we have virtue or excellence, but we rather have those because we have acted rightly. We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act but a habit.

- Aristotle

Pleasure in the job puts perfection in the work.

- Aristotle

It is the mark of an instructed mind to rest satisfied with the degree of precision which the nature of the subject admits and not to seek exactness when only an approximation of the

truth is possible.

- Aristotle

Cruel is the strife of brothers.

- Aristotle

Democracy arose from men's thinking that if they are equal in any respect, they are equal absolutely.

- Aristotle

Without friends, no one would want to live, even if he had all other goods.

- Aristotle

Without friends no one would choose to live.

- Aristotle

Wishing to be friends is quick work, but friendship is a slow-ripening fruit.

- Aristotle

A true friend is one soul in two bodies.

- Aristotle

To the query, What is a friend? his reply was A single soul dwelling in two bodies.

- Aristotle

In poverty and other misfortunes of life, true friends are a sure refuge. The young they keep out of mischief; to the old they are a comfort and aid in their weakness, and those in the prime of life they incite to noble deeds.

- Aristotle

Friendship is essentially a partnership.

- Aristotle

Friendship is composed of a single soul inhabiting two bodies.

- Aristotle

What is a friend? A single soul dwelling in two bodies.

- Aristotle

There is no great genius without a mixture of madness.

- Aristotle

For what is the best choice, for each individual is the highest it is possible for him to achieve.

- Aristotle

Man is a goal seeking animal. His life only has meaning if he is reaching out and striving for his goals.

- Aristotle

First, have a definite, clear practical ideal; a goal, an objective. Second, have the necessary means to achieve your ends; wisdom, money, materials, and methods. Third, adjust all your means to that end.

- Aristotle

It is easy to perform a good action, but not easy to acquire a settled habit of performing such actions.

- Aristotle

We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act, but a habit.

- Aristotle

It is well to be up before daybreak, for such habits contribute to health, wealth, and wisdom.

- Aristotle

If happiness is activity in accordance with excellence, it is reasonable that it should be in accordance with the highest excellence.

- Aristotle

Happiness is activity.

- Aristotle

Happiness depends upon ourselves.

- Aristotle

Happiness is a sort of action.

- Aristotle

Hope is a waking dream.

- Aristotle

Hope is the dream of a waking man.

- Aristotle

Either a beast or a god.

- Aristotle

Man is by nature a political animal.

- Aristotle

The secret to humor is surprise.

- Aristotle

No excellent soul is exempt from a mixture of madness.

- Aristotle

The virtue of justice consists in moderation, as regulated by wisdom.

- Aristotle

The law is reason, free from passion.

- Aristotle

The end of labor is to gain leisure.

- Aristotle

We give up leisure in order that we may have leisure, just as we go to war in order that we may have peace.

- Aristotle

It is Homer who has chiefly taught other poets the art of telling lies skillfully.

- Aristotle

The energy of the mind is the essence of life.

- Aristotle

We praise a man who feels angry on the right grounds and against the right persons and also in the right manner at the right moment and for the right length of time.

- Aristotle

Anyone can become angry -- that is easy. But to be angry with the right person, to the right degree, at the right time, for the right purpose, and in the right way -- this is not easy.

- Aristotle

At his best, man is the noblest of all animals; separated from law and justice he is the worst.

- Aristotle

Wicked men obey from fear; good men, from love.

- Aristotle

Love is composed of a single soul inhabiting two bodies.

- Aristotle

No great genius has ever existed without some touch of madness.

- Aristotle

Memory is the scribe of the soul.

- Aristotle

So it is naturally with the male and the female; the one is superior, the other inferior; the one governs, the other is governed; and the same rule must necessarily hold good with respect to all mankind.

- Aristotle

The most perfect political community must be amongst those who are in the middle rank, and those states are best instituted wherein these are a larger and more respectable part, if possible, than both the other; or, if that cannot be, at least than either of them separate.

- Aristotle

It is better to rise from life as from a banquet -- neither thirsty nor drunken.

- Aristotle

It's best to rise from life like a banquet, neither thirsty or drunken.

- Aristotle

Moral excellence comes about as a result of habit. We become just by doing just acts, temperate by doing temperate acts, brave by doing brave acts.

- Aristotle

The moral virtues, then, are produced in us neither by nature nor against nature. Nature, indeed, prepares in us the ground for their reception, but their complete formation is the product of habit.

- Aristotle

All men by nature desire to know.

- Aristotle

Nature does nothing uselessly.

- Aristotle

This is the reason why mothers are more devoted to their children than fathers: it is that they suffer more in giving them birth and are more certain that they are their own.

- Aristotle

The aim of the wise is not to secure pleasure, but to avoid pain.

- Aristotle

Poetry is finer and more philosophical than history; for poetry expresses the universal, and history only the particular.

- Aristotle

Homer has taught all other poets the art of telling lies skillfully.

- Aristotle

Therefore, the good of man must be the end of the science of politics.

- Aristotle

What the statesman is most anxious to produce is a certain moral character in his fellow citizens, namely a disposition to virtue and the performance of virtuous actions.

- Aristotle

Personal beauty is a greater recommendation than any letter of reference.

- Aristotle

Beauty depends on size as well as symmetry. No very small animal can be beautiful, for looking at it takes so small a portion of time that the impression of it will be confused. Nor can any very large one, for a whole view of it cannot be had at once, and so there will be no unity and completeness.

- Aristotle

Probable impossibilities are to be preferred to improbable possibilities.

- Aristotle

Poverty is the parent of revolution and crime.

- Aristotle

Praise invariably implies a reference to a higher standard.

- Aristotle

The generality of men are naturally apt to be swayed by fear rather than reverence, and to refrain from evil rather because of the punishment that it brings than because of its own foulness.

- Aristotle

For as the interposition of a rivulet, however small, will occasion the line of the phalanx to fluctuate, so any trifling disagreement will be the cause of seditions; but they will not so soon flow from anything else as from the disagreement between virtue and vice, and next to that between poverty and riches.

- Aristotle

Bad men are full of repentance.

- Aristotle

No one will dare maintain that it is better to do injustice than to bear it.

- Aristotle

In revolutions the occasions may be trifling but great interest are at stake.

- Aristotle

Inferiors revolt in order that they may be equal, and equals that they may be superior.
Such is the state of mind which creates revolutions.

- Aristotle

I count him braver who overcomes his desires than him who conquers his enemies; for the hardest victory is over self.

- Aristotle

Nor was civil society founded merely to preserve the lives of its members; but that they might live well: for otherwise a state might be composed of slaves, or the animal creation... nor is it an alliance mutually to defend each other from injuries, or for a commercial intercourse. But whosoever endeavors to establish wholesome laws in a state, attends to the virtues and vices of each individual who composes it; from whence it is evident, that the first care of him who would found a city, truly deserving that name, and not nominally so, must be to have his citizens virtuous.

- Aristotle

The soul never thinks without a picture.

- Aristotle

We must no more ask whether the soul and body are one than ask whether the wax and the figure impressed on it are one.

- Aristotle

Suffering becomes beautiful when anyone bears great calamities with cheerfulness, not through insensibility but through greatness of mind.

- Aristotle

We become just by performing just action, temperate by performing temperate actions, brave by performing brave action.

- Aristotle

Men acquire a particular quality by constantly acting a particular way. We become just by performing just actions, temperate by performing temperate actions, brave by performing brave actions.

- Aristotle

For the things we have to learn before we can do them, we learn by doing them.

- Aristotle

All human actions have one or more of these seven causes: chance, nature, compulsions, habit, reason, passion, desire.

- Aristotle

Well begun is half done.

- Aristotle

Character is that which reveals moral purpose, exposing the class of things a man chooses or avoids.

- Aristotle

Dignity does not consist in possessing honors, but in deserving them.

- Aristotle

The one exclusive sign of thorough knowledge is the power of teaching.

- Aristotle

Great men are always of a nature originally melancholy.

- Aristotle

The true end of tragedy is to purify the passions.

- Aristotle

The least initial deviation from the truth is multiplied later a thousandfold.

- Aristotle

Plato is dear to me, but dearer still is truth.

- Aristotle

All virtue is summed up in dealing justly.

- Aristotle

Of all the varieties of virtues, liberalism is the most beloved.

- Aristotle

The greatest virtues are those which are most useful to other persons.

- Aristotle

Wit is educated insolence.

- Aristotle

Melancholy men are of all others the most witty.

- Aristotle

It was through the feeling of wonder that men now and at first began to philosophize.

- Aristotle

To write well, express yourself like common people, but think like a wise man. Or, think as wise men do, but speak as the common people do.

- Aristotle

The young are permanently in a state resembling intoxication.

- Aristotle

They 'Young People' have exalted notions, because they have not been humbled by life or learned its necessary limitations; moreover, their hopeful disposition makes them think themselves equal to great things -- and that means having exalted notions. They would always rather do noble deeds than useful ones: Their lives are regulated more by moral feeling than by reasoning -- all their mistakes are in the direction of doing things excessively and vehemently. They overdo everything -- they love too much, hate too much, and the same with everything else.

- Aristotle

A great city is not to be confounded with a populous one.

- Aristotle

Bashfulness is an ornament to youth, but a reproach to old age.

- Aristotle

The ideal man bears the accidents of life with dignity and grace, making the best of circumstances.

- Aristotle

It is easy to fly into a passion... anybody can do that, but to be angry with the right person to the right extent and at the right time and in the right way that is not easy.

- Aristotle

The beauty of the soul shines out when a man bears with composure one heavy mischance after another, not because he does not feel them, but because he is a man of high and heroic temper.

- Aristotle

Every rascal is not a thief, but every thief is a rascal.

- Aristotle

The wise man does not expose himself needlessly to danger, since there are few things for which he cares sufficiently; but he is willing, in great crises, to give even his life -- knowing that under certain conditions it is not worthwhile to live.

- Aristotle

The Good of man is the active exercise of his souls faculties in conformity with excellence or virtue, or if there be several human excellences or virtues, in conformity with the best and most perfect among them.

- Aristotle

[The educated differ from the uneducated] as much as the living from the dead.

- Aristotle

When several villages are united in a single complete community, large enough to be nearly or quite self-sufficing, the state comes into existence, originating in the bare needs of life, and continuing in existence for the sake of a good life.

- Aristotle

[The argument of Alcidamas:] Everyone honours the wise. Thus the Parians have honoured Archilochus, in spite of his bitter tongue; the Chians Homer, though he was not their countryman; the Mytilenaeans Sappho, though she was a woman; the Lacedaemonians actually made Chilon a member of their senate, though they are the least literary of men; the inhabitants of Lampsacus gave public burial to Anaxagoras, though he was an alien, and honour him even to this day.

- Aristotle

One thing alone not even God can do,
To make undone whatever hath been done.

- Aristotle



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