

99 Quotes by Seneca

Meditations to Live By

Lucius Annaeus

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1. Men do not care how nobly they live, but only how long, although it is within the reach of every man to live nobly, but within no man's power to live long.
2. Luck is what happens when preparation meets opportunity.
3. Every new beginning comes from some other beginning's end.
4. All cruelty springs from weakness.
5. Sometimes even to live is an act of courage.
6. We are more often frightened than hurt; and we suffer more from imagination than from reality.

7. If one does not know to which port one is sailing, no wind is favorable.
8. Religion is regarded by the common people as true, by the wise as false, and by the rulers as useful.
9. A great mind becomes a great fortune.
10. One of the most beautiful qualities of true friendship is to understand and to be understood.
11. He, who will not pardon others, must not himself expect pardon.
12. Night brings our troubles to the light, rather than banishes them.

13. Retire into yourself as much as possible.

Associate with people who are likely to improve you. Welcome those whom you are capable of improving. The process is a mutual one. People learn as they teach.

14. The important thing about a problem is not its solution, but the strength we gain in finding the solution.

15. It is unknown the place and uncertain the time where death awaits you; thus you must expect death to find you, every time, at every place.

16. It is not because things are difficult that

we do not dare; it is because we do not dare that things are difficult.

17. The Best sign of Wisdom is the consistency between the words and deeds.

18. We suffer more in imagination than in reality.

19. Don't stumble over something behind you.

20. True happiness is to enjoy the present, without anxious dependence upon the future, not to amuse ourselves with either hopes or fears but to rest satisfied with what we have, which is sufficient, for he that is so wants nothing. The greatest

blessings of mankind are within us and within our reach. A wise man is content with his lot, whatever it may be, without wishing for what he has not.

21. It's all in your head. You have the power to make things seem hard or easy or even amusing. The choice is yours.

22. If you don't know, ask. You will be a fool for the moment, but a wise man for the rest of your life.

23. No tree becomes rooted and sturdy unless many a wind assails it. For by its very tossing it tightens its grip and plants its

roots more securely; the fragile trees are those that have grown in a sunny valley.

24. Find a path or make one.

25. Be not dazzled by beauty, but look for those inward qualities which are lasting.

26. No one can lead a happy life, or even one that is bearable, without the pursuit of wisdom, and that the perfection of wisdom is what makes the happy life, although even the beginnings of wisdom make life bearable. Yet this conviction, clear as it is, needs to be strengthened and given deeper roots through daily reflec-

tion; making noble resolutions is not as important as keeping the resolutions you have made already.

27. You are your choices.

28. We must take care to live not merely a long life, but a full one; for living a long life requires only good fortune, but living a full life requires character. Long is the life that is fully lived; it is fulfilled only when the mind supplies its own good qualities and empowers itself from within.

29. A physician is not angry at the intemperance of a mad patient, nor does he take it

ill to be railed at by a man in fever. Just so should a wise man treat all mankind, as a physician does his patient, and look upon them only as sick and extravagant.

30. Lay hold of today's task, and you will not depend so much upon tomorrow's.

31. On him does death lie heavily, who, but too well known to all, dies to himself unknown.

32. Delay not; swift is the flight of fortune's greatest favors.

33. When you die, it will not be because you are sick, but because you were alive.

34. Hang on to your youthful enthusiasms —
you'll be able to use them better when
you're older.
35. If you wish another to keep your secret,
first keep it to yourself.
36. True happiness is...to enjoy the present,
without anxious dependence upon the fu-
ture.
37. It is true greatness to have in one the
frailty of a man and the security of a god.
38. Difficulties strengthen the mind, as labor
does the body.
39. Shun no toil to make yourself remarkable

by some talent or other; yet do not devote yourself to one branch exclusively. Strive to get clear notions about all. Give up no science entirely; for science is but one.

40. God is near you, is with you, is inside you.

41. We become wiser by adversity; prosperity destroys our appreciation of the right.

42. Wealth is the slave of a wise man. The master of a fool.

43. Be silent as to services you have rendered, but speak of favors you have received.

44. There is no one more unfortunate than the man who has never been unfortunate.

For it has never been in his power to try himself.

45. As the mother's womb holds us for ten months, making us ready, not for the womb itself, but for life, just so, through our lives, we are making ourselves ready for another birth...Therefore look forward without fear to that appointed hour - the last hour of the body, but not of the soul...That day, which you fear as being the end of all things, is the birthday of your eternity.
46. There is nothing that we can properly call our own but our time, and yet everybody

fools us out of it who has a mind to do it.

If a man borrows a paltry sum of money, there must be bonds and securities, and every common civility is presently charged upon the account. But he who has my time thinks he owes me nothing for it, though it be a debt that gratitude itself can never repay.

47. The abundance of books is distraction.

48. Drunkenness is nothing but voluntary madness.

49. I have withdrawn not only from men, but from affairs, especially my own affairs; I

am working for later generations, writing down some ideas that may be of assistance to them.

50. He who asks with timidity invites a refusal.

51. Eyes will not see when the heart wishes them to be blind.

52. To see a man fearless in dangers, untainted with lusts, happy in adversity, composed in a tumult, and laughing at all those things which are generally either coveted or feared, all men must acknowledge that this can be from nothing else but a beam

of divinity that influences a mortal body.

53. He is most powerful who governs himself.

54. We all sorely complain of the shortness

of time, and yet have much more than

we know what to do with. Our lives are

either spent in doing nothing at all, or

in doing nothing to the purpose, or in

doing nothing that we ought to do. We are

always complaining that our days are few,

and acting as though there would be no

end of them.

55. Philosophy is the art and law of life, and it

teaches us what to do in all cases, and, like

good marksmen, to hit the white at any distance.

56. Associate with people who are likely to improve you.

57. Death: There's nothing bad about it at all except the thing that comes before it — the fear of it.

58. Nature has made us passive, and to suffer is our lot. While we are in the flesh every man has his chain and his clog; only it is looser and lighter to one man than to another, and he is more at ease who takes it up and carries it than he who drags it.

59. Death is the wish of some, the relief of many, and the end of all.
60. There is nothing more despicable than an old man who has no other proof than his age to offer of his having lived long in the world.
61. Nothing is ours except time.
62. The best cure for anger is delay.
63. No one can keep a mask on long.
64. Begin at once to live, and count each day as a separate life.
65. The mind, unless it is pure and holy, cannot see God.

66. There is nothing wrong with changing a plan when the situation has changed.
67. He, who decides a case without hearing the other side, though he decides justly, cannot be considered just.
68. You want to live — but do you know how to live? You are scared of dying — and, tell me, is the kind of life you lead really any different from being dead?
69. We gain so much by quickness, and lose so much by slowness.
70. The primary sign of a well-ordered mind is a man's ability to remain in one place

and linger in his own company.

71. It is a rough road that leads to the heights of greatness. As is a tale, so is life: not how long it is, but how good it is, is what matters.

72. You learn to know a pilot in a storm.

73. As was his language so was his life.

74. Laugh at your problems; everybody else does.

75. My advice is really this: what we hear the philosophers saying and what we find in their writings should be applied in our pursuit of the happy life. We should hunt

out the helpful pieces of teaching and the spirited and noble-minded sayings which are capable of immediate practical application — not far-fetched or archaic expressions or extravagant metaphors and figures of speech — and learn them so well that words become works.

76. Our fears are always more numerous than our dangers.

77. Friendship always benefits; love sometimes injures.

78. There is nothing in the world so much admired as a man who knows how to bear

unhappiness with courage.

79. Set aside a certain number of days, during

which you shall be content with the scant-

iest and cheapest fare, with coarse and

rough dress, saying to yourself the while:

“Is this the condition that I feared?”

80. There is no easy way from the earth to the

stars.

81. It is more fitting for a man to laugh at life

than to lament over it.

82. The state of that man's mind who feels

too intense an interest as to future events,

must be most deplorable.

83. Fortune's not content with knocking a man down; she sends him spinning head over heels, crash upon crash.
84. Be wary of the man who urges an action in which he himself incurs no risk.
85. It is the practice of the multitude to bark at eminent men, as little dogs do at strangers.
86. It is the sign of a weak mind to be unable to bear wealth.
87. Do the best you can . . . enjoy the present . . . rest satisfied with what you have.
88. He who boasts of his pedigree praises that which does not belong to him.

89. We are always complaining that our days are few, and acting as though there would be no end to them.
90. The worst evil of all is to leave the ranks of the living before one dies.
91. You can tell the character of every man when you see how he receives praise.
92. Time discovers truth. Time heals what reason cannot.
93. The person you are matters more than the place to which you go.
94. There has never been any great genius without a spice of madness.

95. It is not that we have so little time but that we lose so much. ... The life we receive is not short but we make it so; we are not ill provided but use what we have wastefully.
96. Never to wrong others takes one a long way towards peace of mind.
97. Life without the courage to die is slavery.
98. The day which we fear as our last is but the birthday of eternity.
99. What need is there to weep over parts of life? The whole of it calls for tears.