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Quotes by Epictetus

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Epictetus (c.55c.135) was a Greek Stoic philosopher. He was probably born at Hierapolis, Phrygia, and lived most of his life in Rome until his exile to Nicopolis in northwestern Greece, where he died. The name given by his parents, if one was given, is not known - the word epiktetos in Greek simply means "acquired."

All philosophy lies in two words, sustain and abstain.

- Epictetus

To accuse others for one's own misfortunes is a sign of want of education. To accuse oneself shows that one's education has begun. To accuse neither oneself nor others shows that one's education is complete.

- Epictetus

First say to yourself what you would be; and then do what you have to do.

- Epictetus

A strict belief, fate is the worst kind of slavery; on the other hand there is comfort in the thought that God will be moved by our prayers.

- Epictetus

Remember that you are an actor in a drama, of such a part as it may please the master to assign you, for a long time or for a little as he may choose. And if he will you to take the part of a poor man, or a cripple, or a ruler, or a private citizen, then may you act that part with grace! For to act well the part that is allotted to us, that indeed is ours to do, but to choose it is another s.

- Epictetus

Difficulties are things that show a person what they are.

- Epictetus

Difficulties show men what they are. In case of any difficulty, God has pitted you against a rough antagonist that you may be a conqueror, and this cannot be without toil.

- Epictetus

Practice yourself, for heaven's sake in little things, and then proceed to greater.

- Epictetus

Only the educated are free.

- Epictetus

What will the world be quite overturned when you die?

- Epictetus

For it is not death or hardship that is a fearful thing, but the fear of death and hardship.

- Epictetus

No man is free who is not a master of himself.

- Epictetus

Is freedom anything else than the right to live as we wish? Nothing else.

- Epictetus

Freedom is the right to live as we wish.

- Epictetus

The greater the difficulty the more glory in surmounting it. Skillful pilots gain their reputation from storms and tempests.

- Epictetus

He is a drunkard who takes more than three glasses though he be not drunk.

- Epictetus

God hath entrusted me with myself.

- Epictetus

No great thing is created suddenly.

- Epictetus

There is only one way to happiness and that is to cease worrying about things which are beyond the power of our will.

- Epictetus

Whoever does not regard what he has as most ample wealth, is unhappy, though he be master of the world.

- Epictetus

Neither should a ship rely on one small anchor, nor should life rest on a single hope.

- Epictetus

It is not he who gives abuse that affronts, but the view that we take of it as insulting; so that when one provokes you it is your own opinion which is provoking.

- Epictetus

Know, first, who you are, and then adorn yourself accordingly.

- Epictetus

It is impossible to begin to learn that which one thinks one already knows.

- Epictetus

Liars are the cause of all the sins and crimes in the world.

- Epictetus

A ship should not ride on a single anchor, nor life on a single hope.

- Epictetus

You are a little soul carrying around a corpse.

- Epictetus

Whenever you are angry, be assured that it is not only a present evil, but that you have increased a habit.

- Epictetus

Nature gave us one tongue and two ears so we could hear twice as much as we speak.

- Epictetus

Never in any case say I have lost such a thing, but I have returned it. Is your child dead? It is a return. Is your wife dead? It is a return. Are you deprived of your estate? is not this also a return?

- Epictetus

It is the sign of a dull mind to dwell upon the cares of the body, to prolong exercise, eating and drinking and other bodily functions. These things are best done by the way; all your attention must be given to the mind.

- Epictetus

Men are disturbed not by things that happen, but by their opinion of the things that happen.

- Epictetus

Nothing great is created suddenly, any more than a bunch of grapes or a fig. If you tell me that you desire a fig. I answer you that there must be time. Let it first blossom, then bear fruit, then ripen.

- Epictetus

The two powers which in my opinion constitute a wise man are those of bearing and forbearing.

- Epictetus

One that desires to excel should endeavor in those things that are in themselves most excellent.

- Epictetus

No greater thing is created suddenly, any more than a bunch of grapes or a fig. If you tell me that you desire a fig, I answer you that there must be time. Let it first blossom, then

bear fruit, then ripen.

- Epictetus

If you set your heart upon philosophy, you must straightway prepare yourself to be laughed at and mocked by many who will say Behold a philosopher arisen among us! or How came you by that brow of scorn? But do you cherish no scorn, but hold to those things which seem to you the best, as one set by God in that place. Remember too, that if you abide in those ways, those who first mocked you, the same shall afterwards reverence you; but if you yield to them, you will be laughed at twice as much as before.

- Epictetus

It is the nature of the wise to resist pleasures, but the foolish to be a slave to them.

- Epictetus

It's not what happens to you, but how you react to it that matters.

- Epictetus

Make the best use of what is in your power, and take the rest as it happens.

- Epictetus

He is a wise man who does not grieve for the things which he has not, but rejoices for those which he has.

- Epictetus

The soul's impurity consists in bad judgments, and purification consists in producing in it right judgments, and the pure soul is one which has right judgments.

- Epictetus

First learn the meaning of what you say, and then speak.

- Epictetus

So you wish to conquer in the Olympic games, my friend? And I too, by the Gods, and a fine thing it would be! But first mark the conditions and the consequences, and then set to work. You will have to put yourself under discipline; to eat by rule, to avoid cakes and sweetmeats; to take exercise at the appointed hour whether you like it or no, in cold and heat; to abstain from cold drinks and from wine at your will; in a word, to give yourself over to the trainer as to a physician. Then in the conflict itself you are likely enough to dislocate your wrist or twist your ankle, to swallow a great deal of dust, or to be severely thrashed, and, after all these things, to be defeated.

- Epictetus

Men are disturbed not by things, but by the view which they take of them.

- Epictetus

It is a sign of a dull nature to occupy oneself deeply in matters that concern the body; for instance, to be over much occupied about exercise, about eating and drinking, about easing oneself, about sexual intercourse.

- Epictetus

A man that seeks truth and loves it must be reckoned precious to any human society.

- Epictetus

The people have a right to the truth as they have a right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

- Epictetus

A wise man is he who does not grieve for the thing which he has not, but rejoices for those which he has.

- Epictetus

He who exercises wisdom exercises the knowledge which is about God.

- Epictetus

If you wish to be a writer; write!

- Epictetus

Who is not attracted by bright and pleasant children, to prattle, to creep, and to play with them?

- Epictetus

It is your own convictions which compels you; that is, choice compels choice.

- Epictetus

Covetousness like jealousy, when it has taken root, never leaves a person, but with their life. Cowardice is the dread of what will happen.

- Epictetus

If evil be spoken of you and it be true, correct yourself, if it be a lie, laugh at it.

- Epictetus

Let death be daily before your eyes, and you will never entertain any abject thought, nor too eagerly covet anything.

- Epictetus



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