

CARDINAL  
POINTS



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Cardinal Points

[www.athenapress.com](http://www.athenapress.com)

ISBN: 978-0-578-80902-1

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"Good sense, the fountain of the Muse's art,  
Let the strong page of Socrates impart."  
—HORACE



Thirteenth century art piece depicting the Nine Muses inspiring Pythagoras, Orpheus, and Arion by means of the Four Winds—the *Cardinal Points*—source of all Harmony.

FOR  
MY CHILDREN

## CARDINAL POINTS

1. There Are but Two Ways: Love, and No Love.
2. Be a Real Person.
3. Pray to God.
4. Follow God.
5. Congregate.
6. Treat Yourself Like a Stranger.
7. Nothing in Excess.
8. Cleanliness Is Next to Godliness.
9. Fifty Push-Ups in the Morning, Fifty Push-Ups in the Night.
10. Don't Listen to Bad Music.
11. Have a Best Friend.
12. People Tend to Become What They Pretend to Be.
13. Be a Gentleman.
14. Be a Scholar.
15. Speak Well.
16. Preach Repentance in the Street.
17. Every Day Face a Fear and You'll See It Disappear.
18. As Relates to Sleep, Observe These Rules:  
Six Hours for Men; Seven for Women; Eight Hours for *Fools*.
19. Do Homage to the Sun.
20. There's Nothing Better for a Man to Do in His Life  
Than to Work at What He Loves and Drink Wine With His Wife.
21. Wait for God to Send Your Spouse.
22. Confuse Work With Play.
23. A Morning Walk Is a Blessing for the Whole Day.
24. Have Kids.
25. Be a Family Man.

## CARDINAL POINTS

26. Keep Your Girls From Common Eyes.
27. The Life Is in the Blood.
28. Perspire Profusely Every Day.
29. Fast for Your Blessing.
30. Love Is Blind: Out of Sight, Out of Mind.
31. Be the Greatest.
32. Love Life, but Embrace Death.
33. A Different Set of Mothers Would Prove a Different World.
34. Never Admit to Yourself Mental Illness.
35. The Greatest Remedy for Anger Is Delay.
36. Chatter Is Silver and Silence Is Gold.
37. A Sweet Husband Is the Answer for an Angry Wife.
38. In Dealing With a Bully, the Best Pair of Fists  
Are Prevention and Preparedness.
39. Don't Act Like a Buffoon.
40. Do Not Become Unglued.
41. Prefer Freedom Before Money.
42. Live Just as Though You Were Poor to Keep From Being So.
43. Think Like a Caveman.
44. Forget the Phone, Grab a Beer.
45. There's Nothing More Vulgar Than to Be in a Hurry.
46. Repair to the Country.
47. Leave Yourself Some Venial Little Fault.
48. Do Not Be Discouraged at the Lord's Reproof.
49. Almost Anything Is Better Than Committing Suicide.
50. Stay Strong.



Read this as fast as you can read  
To fill the gaps in what you know.  
Then read again, but grab a pen  
To take some notes, and take it slow.



11. *Have a Best Friend*—

Life's a desert island  
None would choose to live on  
Without a fellow Robinson.\*  
So many dash and scramble  
At the first sight of cannibals,  
They're so desperate for a bond—  
Don't be so quick to respond.  
If you have just one compádre—  
Who loves you like a mádre—  
During threescore years and ten,  
Count yourself blessed among men.  
For such a boon is rarely given,  
Being the crown jewel of Heaven,  
Bestowed upon the righteous.  
For what friendship can be vicious  
That does not shortly self-destruct  
In envy, pride, distrust and lust?  
Nor can intimate relations  
Center upon reformation:  
Our lifeblood and ventilation  
Require reciprocation.  
Only deep can call unto deep.  
To be worthy of such a keep  
You must first be your own best friend,  
Shunning the opinions of men;  
A lover of sweet solitude—  
That does not mean we should be rude,  
But keep a tight-knit inner ring,  
To whom we can give everything,  
And whom we can trust with our life.  
There's no best friend like a good wife.

"Nothing shall I, while sane, compare with a dear friend."

—HORACE

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\* Robinson Crusoe.



## 12. *People Tend to Become What They Pretend to Be—*

Here we get into the topic of identity.

Sure we have natural inclinations and propensities;

But without a husbandman nature will grow a bended tree.

We have a mark to hit and a responsibility.

It is neither too easy nor an impossibility;

But a perfect state of affairs to test our fidelity:

Are we friends of the Creator or friends of the Enemy?

The weak can become strong, the timid soul bold as a lion.

Masculine and feminine are gradient as we apply them.

The loveless soul can come to love by persistently tryin'!

There's nothing stopping us marching a road worthy of Zion.

It costs some tears: to fight oneself is harder than a diamond.

No! here is the noblest spectacle *God* can cast an eye on.

But to chisel out His image trapped inside the ore of iron

Is the only way to be oneself, safe from the singing Siren.



Odysseus and the Sirens



15. *Speak Well*—or at least know how to—  
Conforming to the lowly, and the well-to-do.  
There is poetry in many forms of common slang;  
But avoid the lowest, or you'll garner a bad name.  
And yet, much of it springs from a poverty  
Of sophistication and vocabulary.  
And we ought to be zealous to preserve our language,  
Shunning poor words, and keeping old ones from damage.  
The voice is a barometer by which men are known—  
Whether educated or ignorant, weak or strong.  
Speak succinctly, articulately, and orderly;  
And never be considered vulgar in higher company.  
Always think before you talk; put some bass in your voice;  
A plethora of books will give the best word choice.  
Though, to speak as one writes, is reprehensible;  
(And to write as one speaks is just as insensible).

"He that thinks with more extent than another  
will want words of larger meaning."  
—SAMUEL JOHNSON



19. *Do Homage to the Sun—*

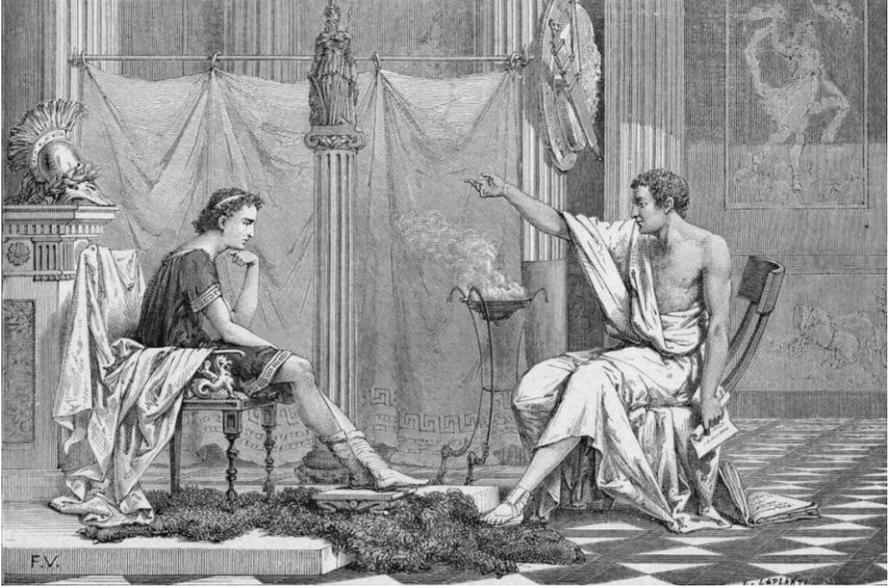
The harbinger of fun.  
Once the day has begun,  
*We're off!* our course to run.  
The starting pistol drawn  
Never fail to see blaze;  
And may Rosy-Fingered Dawn  
Inspire your heart with her lays.  
From Ra to Apollo  
Much of the world has followed  
Some type of Sun-worship  
Not too hard to swallow.  
Even the Old Testament  
Tabernacle entrance  
Faced the Orient  
To show the Sun its due reverence.  
One African tribe  
Awaits the dawn in submittal,  
And as it betides  
They bedew their palms with spittle  
And reach for the rays;  
And when asked *What for?*  
They cannot say  
Except that it's quite natural.  
And we are like the flowers,  
Needing rain and sunshine;  
Many of our waking hours  
Should be dallied outside.  
Choose an olive complexion  
Before a pale one.  
*May you live every day of your life—*  
In the sun.

"Truly the light is sweet,  
and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun."  
—ECCLESIASTES 11:7



25. *Be a Family Man*—

It's one thing you won't regret.  
Fear and tremble as you grant  
Childhood its due respect.  
Oh! to hold the little hand,  
And be entrusted with the world—  
Giving flight to Peter Pan  
And sipping tea with fairy girls.  
If true happiness is praise,  
Who can glorify God more?  
With glowing smiles on their face,  
And unpretentious laughter roar;  
Soaking up the summer rays—  
Just like you and I did before.  
We tried our hand, and had our days,  
It's time to make space and move o'er.  
Give them the best possible,  
Starting with being ever near.  
A gift can be an obstacle  
If it means you must disappear.  
Who else will make them disciples  
And teach by example to share?  
The Father and Mother couple  
Produce a balanced atmosphere.  
This is the first time they have seen  
The blazing chariot in the sky.  
Mother Earth's body-hair is green,  
The sounding wind must be her sigh.  
Every waddling adult seems  
A giant in a child's eyes.  
With whom can they share this strange scene?  
The lot falls to both you and I.  
'Tis said Alexander the Great  
Was tutored by Aristotle.



Aristotle Tutoring Young Alexander

"I am indebted to my father for living, but to my teacher for living well."  
—ALEXANDER THE GREAT

The youth would sit up until late  
Learning in the palace grotto.  
His praise of King Phillip was slight,  
Who made his mother's belly swell;  
He praised much more the Stagirite\*  
For the sweet boon of living well.  
Fun and games, shields and swords,  
Hide and Seek, and Duck, Duck, Goose,  
Should be as constant as deep words  
Of philosophy put to use.  
Every child in the household  
Needs to be a history buff.  
Only then will they break the mold  
When the world would stuff them with fluff.

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\* Aristotle of Stagira.



Who does not teach his son a trade  
Teaches him how to be a thief:  
The pangs of parenthood delayed  
Rebound with a more cutting grief.  
Much greater than inheritances  
Is a heritage in love,  
Zest for life, sharpest senses,  
Knowledge of the Lord above.  
Who would imbibe life's elixir  
Need only visit the playroom.  
If you're just not that quick, sir,  
They will be fast asleep quite soon.  
But not until you've paid your dues  
Of a fairytale before bed—  
Maybe one from the Hindus,  
Or the Brothers Grimm instead.

“Show me a family of readers,  
and I will show you the people who move the world.”  
—NAPOLEON BONAPARTE



### 32. *Love Life, but Embrace Death—*

What is man, but a breath?  
No one is of yet mature—  
*Dirt* is the great equalizer.  
How many Great have come and gone?  
And should we not go with the throng?  
The ripened corn longs to be reaped:  
A full life needs eternal sleep.  
If we have seen but one mountain,  
A grassy glade, or rushing glen,  
The vast expanse of an ocean,  
Then we have beheld all of them—  
From day-to-day life is the same.  
We should not give the Giver blame,  
For packing away the board game.  
To what right can we lay a claim?  
Some bugs live but twenty-four hours,  
With days not much different from ours:  
We rise, go to work, then retire—  
What matter if we too expire?  
Familiar pleasures soon grow old,  
And searching for a pot of gold  
Is vanity of vanities!  
And even Ecclesiastes  
Will tell you that we do not know  
Whithersoever we shall go.  
Better to side with what we see:  
There will be no more you or me.  
We do not need the fear of Hell  
To goad us into living well.  
Life has its share of penalties;  
Without goodness there is no ease.  
Nor can we thrive in constant fear  
At the thought of not being here:  
What we shall be forevermore



We were prior to being born.  
Never shall we cross paths with Death,  
For where we are he is not yet  
But remains knocking at the door;  
Once he has come we are no more.  
But hold life the *most* precious thing!  
Pay heed to what the poets sing.  
Of all mankind they are the best—  
Who fling away time and success  
For cherry blossoms and sunsets.  
Legend makes Homer mendicant.  
Keats dropped out of residency  
For a career in poetry.  
The mighty G.K. Chesterton  
And Robert Louis Stevenson  
Loved life intensely, yet we see  
From love of money they were free.  
Horace declined an imperial post,  
Preferring toasting wine as host.  
So did Li-Po, the Chinese bard—  
But following him is too hard:  
Nearby an oarsman he reclined  
Watching the Yellow River wind  
With singing girls and his wine jug—  
*He tried to give the moon a hug.*  
It was only a reflection  
On the water, and he fell in!  
That's how this man took his last breath—  
Loving life and embracing death.



"When the gods created mankind,  
They appointed death for mankind,  
Kept eternal life in their own hands.  
So let your stomach be full,  
Day and night enjoy yourself in every way,  
Every day arrange for pleasures.  
Day and night, dance and play,  
Wear fresh clothes.  
Keep your head washed, bathe in water,  
Appreciate the child who holds your hand,  
Let your wife enjoy herself in your lap."  
—THE EPIC OF GILGAMESH



*END OF SAMPLE*