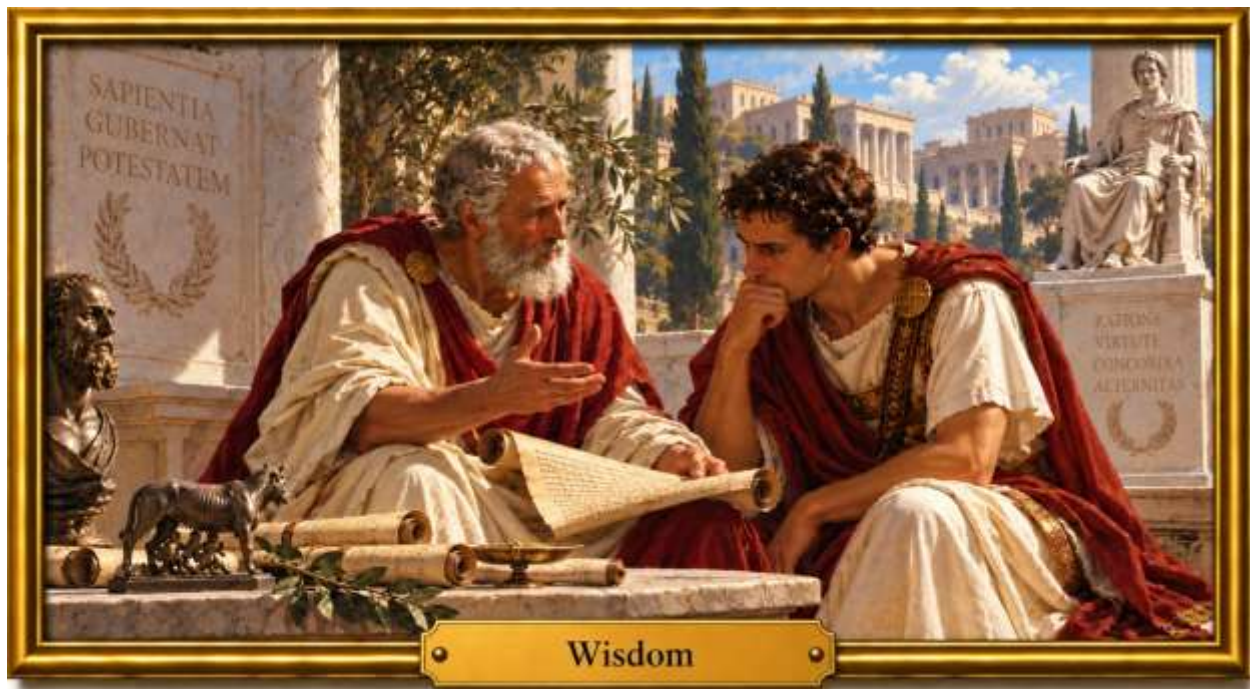


DictatorWarning.com: Chapter 8

INCREASING WISDOM (For Scholars)

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Increasing Your Wisdom

Be Realistic

Don't try to change what you can't control, such as how others treat you. Instead, focus on what you can control, such as how you treat others. You are always going to meet toxic people. Only try to change their toxic behavior if it is realistically possible; otherwise accept it and don't adopt their behavior. **Focus on your strengths and don't let people exploit your weaknesses.** Nietzsche (1844-1900) said: ""He who fights with monsters should be careful lest he thereby becomes a monster."

Adapt to Survive

In evolution, it wasn't the smartest or most powerful that survived, only the most adaptable survived. Thus, intelligence and power are no guarantees of survival. **To survive, you must be adaptable and able to change.**

Moderation in All Things

Avoid extremes and live with balance between excess and deprivation. **Know your limits and stay within them.**

Accept Challenges

Develop your ability to overcome adversity. **Face your fears and see obstacles as opportunities for growth.** Hope for the best and prepare for the worst. **Always have a backup plan.** Struggle is a part of life; it builds character, develops resilience, and ultimately leads to success.

Stay Calm

There is no point in getting upset if it accomplishes nothing. Instead, practice self-control and **stay calm.** Don't let your emotions cloud your judgment. Likewise, don't let other people or situations emotionally control you. If someone harms you or tries to deceive you, deal with them firmly and fairly. **Don't let people's actions further harm you by provoking persistent anger and desire for vengeance.**

Self-Control

Learn to control your own mind, emotions and actions. Mastering your own thoughts and behavior takes discipline and patience. Set realistic goals. Control impulsive decisions.

All You Can Change Is Your Future

Don't go through life feeling sorry for what happened to you. Don't waste time wishing that you had a different past. All these things won't change anything. Just **accept that you can't change your past – all you can change is your future.**

Learn From Nature

Cooperation: Trees in a forest don't attack each other, they cooperate. A group of tall trees act as a windbreak to protect smaller trees. Trees prevent the rain from eroding the hillside. (Likewise, a single person cannot build a pyramid. Little can be accomplished by acting alone.)

Diversity: No one plant takes over the whole forest. The forest ecosystem requires a vast diversity of species to create its balance – from the smallest bacteria to the largest tree.

Limits to Growth: Every system has its limits. As they say in the stock market: “No tree grows to heaven.” When systems are pushed past their limits, unless the system can rebalance, it collapses (as our economy is about to do).

Everything Cycles: Nothing is linear in nature – everything is constantly cycling. Plants and animals have a life cycle. The economy cycles; seasons cycle. Civilizations live then die. Stars are born, die, and are reborn.

Life is a Struggle: The laws of nature are harsh and only the most adaptable survive.

Life Is Unfair: Plants and animals that start life in a harsh environment die or have stunted growth. Whereas those starting life in a privileged environment flourish but lack the resilience of those that grew in a less privileged environment.

Nature Always Finds a Way: On earth, even in harsh environments, Nature finds a way to survive. However, even this has its limits (e.g., other planets and moons lack life).

Life Is Controlled by Both Nature and Nurture: Successful adaptation requires both “good genes” and “good environment”. In humans, “good personality”, “good life experiences”, and “good culture” also are part of this equation.

Random Chance: Often in life, random chance determines the outcome.

Don't Despise Your Enemies

Treat them fairly as fellow humans who disagree with you. If they are dangerous, act firmly and justly.

Increase Your and Others' Wellbeing

Promote human and environmental wellbeing. Instead of asking every day, “What will make me happy?” you should be asking, “What is the right thing to do – what will promote human and environmental wellbeing?” This humanitarian goal is much richer than hedonistic happiness pursued for its own sake.

Conscientiousness

Be organized, careful, persistent, trustworthy, and responsible. Don't let your life become unstable and chaotic.

Prepare For Death

You could die at any moment (e.g., car accident, disease, war). Death is inevitable; **accept your mortality and live your life to the fullest; let go of trivial things.** Live a humanitarian life; be grateful to be alive.

Stay Healthy

Mental and physical health are prerequisites for wisdom and happiness. Regular exercise, healthy eating, adequate sleep, and regular contact with friends maintain a healthy mind.

Make Evidence-Based Decisions

Seek feedback on plans and welcome alternative ideas. Learn from education and experience; **correct your mistakes.** Do not fear failure, learn from it. Be able to distinguish facts from opinions. Facts can be verified as being true, while opinions lack such verification.

Teach

Educate others so that they become more skilled and capable of inheriting your leadership through a planned transition.

Expectations Alter Happiness

It is not an external event, but how you interpret this event, that can dramatically influence your happiness. You cannot control others' behavior, but you can control how you interpret and react to their behavior.

Behavior Alters Happiness

Your behavior can influence your mood, though it does not control it completely. Everyday actions - such as sleeping well, moving your body, and connecting with others - can improve your mood. Mental disorders can dysregulate mood, but in healthy individuals, **social behavior usually plays a major role in regulating mood**:

- Healthy social behavior usually increases happiness.
- Toxic social behavior usually decreases your/others' happiness.

Your Thinking, Emotion, and Behavior All Interact

Because these functions are interconnected, changing one can affect the others. Severe mood or cognitive disorders cannot be cured simply by having more positive behavior or thoughts, but these severe disorders can be partially improved by these positive changes.

Random Fortune and Homeostasis

Ancient Greek philosophers viewed **life as cyclical, like a pendulum swinging between good and bad fortune**. They attributed these **random shifts** to the goddess Tyche and believed that the goddess Nemesis provided **a corrective force, reversing extremes and restoring balance**. The Romans later renamed Tyche as Fortuna; hence our phrase "good fortune" meaning "good luck".



*My picture “**Fortune vs Nemesis**” portrays the unpredictable forces that shape our lives. Two lovers are shown within their fragile globe while the immense forces surrounding it change.*

Modern science has proven that **all natural systems, physical and biological, strive to maintain balance by a process termed homeostasis**. Thus, forces that disrupt this balance are opposed by forces that try to re-establish this balance. **This is identical to Newton’s third law of motion** (also called the law of action and reaction), which states: “For every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction.” Thus, **expect that there will be an automatic opposing force whenever you try to change a system** (e.g., trying to diet).

Constructive vs Destructive Forces

Ancient Greek philosophers believed that **healthy behavior was constructive and created beauty; whereas toxic behavior was destructive and created ugliness**. You can use this ancient yardstick to measure these constructive vs destructive forces in your own life.



*My picture “**Construction vs Destruction**” portrays these two unpredictable forces. These forces represent the deeper human struggle between creating what is beautiful and worthwhile versus destroying it. Two lovers are shown within their fragile globe while these immense forces surrounding it change*

In modern science, this concept of opposing constructive vs destructive forces is referred to as **anabolism** vs **catabolism**. All living systems strive to survive, and this process involves both construction and destruction. If the living system’s growth is greater than its decay – the system will survive.

You are the architect of your own fate. **Your constructive versus destructive behavior will determine your fate – unless random fortune or misfortune intervenes.**

You can measure your constructive vs destructive social behavior using my [Leadership Evaluation Tool](#).

Avoid Magical Thinking

There are **no magical solutions** to humanity's problems, including climate crisis, illness, war, pollution, poverty, and environmental destruction. Throughout history, religion has stated that magically everything is part of God's plan and that God will protect us if we have enough faith.

A current form of this magical thinking is the "Prosperity Gospel" which promises that donating to the church will magically bring God's blessings through greater wealth, health, or success. The problem is that this donation-dependent blessing doesn't materialize.

A more dangerous form of magical thinking is the belief that everything is unfolding according to God's Plan and that God wouldn't let the current climate crisis destroy our world. By now it should be obvious that this magical thinking isn't working.

Throughout almost all of history, the average lifespan was 35 years. The **major gains in human longevity** over the past two centuries **were due to science, not magic**.

If God created the world and is therefore credited with the good that occurs, logic suggests God should also bear responsibility for the harm that occurs. Consider a clock: if it breaks, is the clock at fault, or its maker? Or consider an AI system that becomes autonomous and causes damage. Is responsibility assigned to the AI system, with its built-in capacity to go rogue, or to the creator who designed it?

Why would a magical loving God idly stand by while humans kill each other merely because humans have "free will" to choose right from wrong? Would loving parents idly stand by while their children kill each other merely because their children have "free will" to choose right from wrong?

Wouldn't it be better to **focus on increasing human and environmental wellbeing and forget all this magical thinking?**