

Key Takeaways From “The Art of Worldly Wisdom” by Baltasar Gracian

- There is more required nowadays to make a single wise man than formerly to make Seven Sages
- It is the fool's misfortune to fail in obtaining the position, the employment, the neighborhood, and the circle of friends that suit him
- Mix a little mystery with everything and the very mystery arouses veneration
- Silence is the holy of holies of worldly wisdom
- Knowledge and courage are the elements of greatness
- The wise can do anything
- A man without knowledge, a world without light
- The wise man would rather see men needing him than thanking him
- Hope has a good memory, gratitude a bad one
- More is to be got from dependence than from courtesy
- Keep hope alive without entirely satisfying it
- To make oneself always needed even by a patron on the throne
- The complete man is wise in speech and prudent in act
- To be without passions is a privilege of the highest order of mind
- There is no higher rule than that over oneself, over one's impulses
- Let friendly intercourse be a school of knowledge, and culture be taught through conversation
- We are always attracted to others by our own interest
- Man's life is a warfare against the malice of men
- A bad manner spoils everything
- Fine behavior is a joy in life
- Knowledge and good intentions together ensure continuances of success
- Not always act on second thoughts: they can discern the plan the second time
- Be spotless, the indispensable condition of perfection
- Keep the imagination under control
- He cannot make himself understood who does not himself easily understand
- The excesses of popular applause never satisfy the sensible
- Have the reputation of being gracious
- That is the great advantage of a commanding position- to be able to do more good than others
- To be occupied in what does not concern you is worse than doing nothing
- Know your strongest point, your pre-eminent gift
- All fools come to grief from want of thought

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Taken directly out of the book

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- The wise man thinks over everything
- It is an important object of attention not to talk in superlatives
- The wise man therefore retires into silence, and if allows himself to come out of it, he does so in the shade and before few and fit persons
- Never lose self-respect or be too familiar with oneself
- Owe more to the strictness of your self-judgment than to all external sanctions
- Never be embarrassed
- Let a man therefore be so much and so great a master over himself that neither in the most fortunate nor in the most adverse circumstances can anything cause his reputation injury by disturbing his self-possession, but rather enhance it by showing his superiority
- It's a sign of a noble heart dowered with patience, never to be in a hurry, never to be in a passion
- First be master over yourself if you would be master over others
- Profound intelligence is the only foundation for immortality
- Attach more importance to a graceful exit than to applause on entrance
- Neither give or take bad news unless it can help
- Even in enjoyment never go to extremes
- You should learn to seize things not by the blade, which cuts, but by the handle, which saves you from harm
- A wise man gets more use from his enemies than a fool from his friends
- Flattery is more dangerous than hatred
- Show yourself less and you will be rewarded by being esteemed more
- It is far easier to prevent than to rectify
- Man is born a barbarian and only raises himself above the beast by culture
- A great man ought to be little in his behavior. He ought to never pry too minutely into things
- One ought to act in such cases with the generosity of a gentleman
- Every man behaves according to his heart and his understanding
- Know yourself in talents and capacity, in judgment and inclination
- You cannot master yourself unless you know yourself
- There are mirrors for the face but none for the mind
- Lead a good life
- A virtuous life never dies
- Never set to work at anything if you have any doubts of its prudence
- Action is dangerous where prudence is in doubt
- The reputation of wisdom is the last triumph of fame

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- Variety in excellences is the delight of life
- No one must know the extent of his abilities
- Keep expectation alive
- Obtain and preserve a reputation
- It is not enough to be right, if right seem false and ill
- You should aim to be independent of any one vote, of any one fashion, of any one century
- Don't be a bore
- If you wish to be valued, be valued for your talents, not anything adventitious
- Show no self-satisfaction
- Leave things before things leave them
- Wisely withdraw from the chance of mishaps
- Every friend is good and wise for his friend
- The way to gain friendly feelings is to do friendly acts
- Seek some one every day to be a well-wisher if not a friend
- Every competition damages the credit
- Men of good-will are always at peace
- Only act with honorable men
- Never talk of yourself
- Politeness is the main ingredient of culture
- Avoid becoming disliked
- Live practically
- Think more highly of what fate has given you than of what it has denied
- Avoid affectation
- Get yourself missed
- You should keep your desires sealed up, still more your defects
- The wise try to hide the errors
- Reputation depends more on what is hidden than on what is done
- Learn to forget
- Never complain
- Things do not pass for what they are but for what they seem
- Better be wise with the many than a fool all alone
- A man is judged by his friends
- Friendship multiplies the good of life and divides the evil
- There is always time to add a word, never to withdraw one
- Profound secrecy has some of the luster of the divine
- One should not make use of great confidence for little things

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- Do not live in a hurry
- To know how to separate things is to know how to enjoy them
- Be slow in enjoyment, quick at work, for men see work ended with pleasure, pleasure ended with regret
- Only truth can give true reputation
- Without intelligence, true life is impossible
- The more a man shows, the less he has
- A single lie destroys a whole reputation for integrity
- Every one fully persuaded is a fool
- A great man takes more pleasure in doing a favor than in receiving one
- He may always hope for the best, but he always expects the worst
- Know how to appreciate
- To know how to make use of every one is useful knowledge
- The true road to respect is through merit
- Leave something to wish for, so as not to be miserable from very happiness
- When desire dies, fear is born
- The greatest fool is he who thinks he is not one and all others are
- One should speak well and act honorably
- Be moderate and calm
- The wise generally die after they have lost their reason
- Neither love nor hate, forever
- The sage saves himself from worries and embarrassments, and shows his mastery over himself
- Many things cause pain which would cause pleasure if regarded their advantages
- To be master of oneself one should know oneself
- Do not be a slave of first impressions
- Do not be witty at the cost of others
- He that speaks ill will always hear worse
- We live to know and to know ourselves
- It often costs more to displease a man than it would have cost to please him
- Know how to ask
- Nothing really belongs to us but time
- Neither belong entirely to yourself nor entirely to others
- Do not explain overmuch
- One should never give beyond the possibility of return
- Find out some one to share your troubles

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- The things we remember best are those better forgotten
- Our intelligence, prudence, and courage, even our beauty, must always be ready for trial
- The day he is seen to be very human he ceases to be though divine
- Even alone he acts as if the eyes of the whole world were upon him
- Be a saint
- Health, holiness, and headpiece make a man happy