

Father Gracian's Words of Wisdom

Father Gracian was a Jesuit scholar who lived in the 17th century in Spain. He was a military chaplain who observed men of intelligence and positions of power. He concluded that almost anyone could master a situation and be successful. He set down 300 maxims in the art of achievement. Here are but a few:

1. Don't show off more excess ability than the job requires. The person who displays a little more of it each day keeps a reserve on hand and no one ever discovers the limits of his talents.
2. Know your best quality. All people could achieve eminence in something if they knew what they excelled in.
3. Keep matters in suspense. Once declared, resolutions lie open to criticism. If they turn out badly, you will be twice unfortunate.
4. Don't talk about yourself. If you do, you show a lack of good judgment and become a nuisance to others.
5. Associate with those you can learn from. Enjoy their company, learn from them and what you pass on from this will be rewarded with applause.
6. Be brief. Brevity is pleasant and it gets more done. Good things, if brief, are twice as good and bad things don't seem so bad.
7. Plan for bad fortune while your fortune is good. In the summer it is wiser and easier to provide for winter. Keep a following of friends and grateful people - someday you will value what seems unimportant now.
8. Never exaggerate. To overvalue something is a form of lying. It can ruin your reputation for good taste and wisdom.
9. Act sooner than later. The wise grasp immediately what has to be done, and do it with pleasure thus enhancing their reputation.
10. Don't complain. This encourages others to behave like those we complain about. It is better to praise others, so as to win still more favours from them.
11. Follow through. What is worth starting is worth finishing. If it isn't worth finishing, why begin at all?
12. Quit while you are ahead. Lady Luck gets tired when she has to carry someone on her back for a long time.

So - be careful how you end things. What matters isn't being applauded when you arrive, but being missed when you leave. (Reader's Digest)

- Submitted by Alice Miller

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