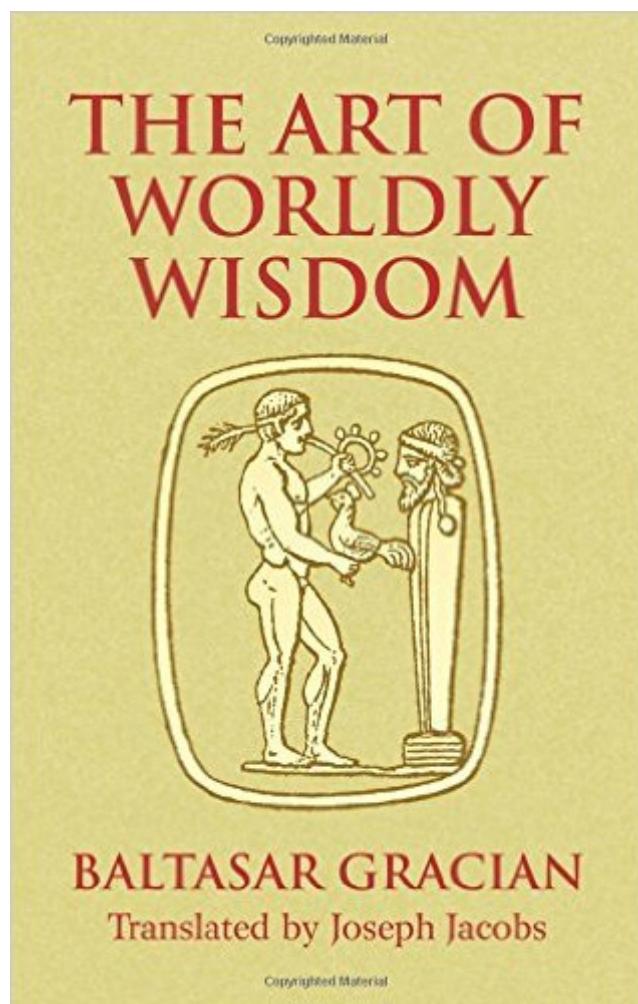


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The Art Of Worldly Wisdom (Dover Books On Western Philosophy)



Synopsis

"Think with the few and speak with the many," "Friends are a second existence," and "Be able to forget" are among this volume's 300 thought-provoking maxims on politics, professional life, and personal development. Published in 1637, it was an instant success throughout Europe. The Jesuit author's timeless advice, focusing on honesty and kindness, remains ever popular. A perfect browsing book of mental and spiritual refreshment, it can be opened at random and appreciated either for a few moments or for an extended period.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

As a generally well read person familiar with much in the way of 'wisdom literature,' I was surprised that I'd never heard of this little gem when a client recommended it. Its subtitle is "A Pocket Oracle" and it charmingly lives up to that and more. The book is comprised of 300 'wisdom packets' or 'doses' that are succinctly delivered in short lengths of approximately 9 to 19 lines each. Each one starts with a broad piece of advice followed up by explication. The broad range of topics include such things as proper attitudes to strategies in communication, love, politics and commerce. You can easily benefit by even picking any random page and reading a couple of 'doses' at a time. The books admirers include such luminaries as Arthur Schopenhauer and Friedrich Nietzsche, the latter of whom attested: "Europe never produced anything finer or more complicated in matters of moral subtlety." One of the shortest and best of the 300 little 'wisdom packets' is this:"Know your Major

Defect. Every talent is balanced by a fault, and if you give in to it, it will govern you like a tyrant. You can begin to overthrow it by paying heed to it: begin to conquer it by identifying it. Pay it the same attention as those who reproach you for it. To master yourself, you must reflect upon yourself. Once this imperfectio has surrendered, all others will follow." If you truly appreciate deeper wisdom emanating from astute observation, then you'll find this to be one of the most practical books on your shelf that you're sure to reference time and time again no matter what your station in life.

This book should be required reading in every University. It provides a lifetime of hard-won knowledge of how the world really works, in the span of a handful of pages. I only wish that I had discovered it in my youth, rather than in my middle years, where its brilliance is something of a cold comfort in light of how many lessons in the school of hard knocks it might have spared me. Gracian's work is akin to a blog, providing succinct stepping-stones on the path to worldly success. It is brilliantly insightful, and although it is centuries old, the observations and advice remain highly applicable to today. However, reading the book is a bittersweet experience: I found in the various aphorisms painfully obvious evidence of how far we as a species have drifted from earlier love of virtue, respect for the truth, and pursuit of enduring wisdom, and have instead walled ourselves into a prison with bricks of our most base and animalistic motivations, stacked ever higher in our mad rush to pour more electronic digits into our bank accounts, while ignoring the dwindling balances in our souls. For people who think that religious and educated men of the past were unsophisticated, boorish or otherwise inferior to those of today, a scan through these pages should quickly correct that impression. Thoughtful people of this present age can only aspire to the author's sophistication, eloquence and profound understanding of human nature. Four stars out of five, not for any failure of this translation or Gracian's overall brilliance, but simply because so much of this treasury of wisdom will be pearls before swine, wasted on a generation taught to value praise over achievement, citizens of a world pursuing information rather than wisdom, where the weight of an infotainment culture in which the mockery of concepts like virtue & truth as either outdated or naïf is grinding away humanity's natural love of good, noble and transcendent ideals.

This is NOT the translation pictured in the "Look Inside" preview (& not the Jacobs translation I was looking for). Pls correct that mistake for future shoppers.

It has been said that still waters run deep as it with this great work for it is not for the reader of shallow mind but for the reader whom wishes to plunge deeper within his own mind to become in

lighted by the joys this very good work will bring

This is a great read. I needed a thesaurus to work out some of the words and a few were over my head. Baltasar Gracian was years ahead of his time.

Really enjoyed this, the translation was acceptable. Many of these are maxims for life, take what you will, leave what won't.

A good introduction to Jesuit medieval thought and a useful companion to philosophy of Zeno and Marcus Aurelius

I've quoted the author in my blog, relying on the Qxford Book of Quotations. Decided that I needed the original, or as close as I could get. So I bought this and one other translation. I like both. The book is pithy, and offers a lot of advice that our modern politicians might well follow. The Art of Worldly Wisdom

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