

# Maxims & Mindfulness

**TAKE TIME FOR REFLECTION**

The Institute of Medicine, Education and Spirituality as Ochsner (IMESO)

## What is maxim?

- **A maxim is** an inner thought garnered from human reflection based on experience leading to behavior.
- **A maxim is** inspired by universal principles made personal and functional in life.
- **A maxim is** a habitual way of acting based on principles.
- **A maxim is** a sure guide recommended for a virtuous society.
- **A maxim is** meant to promote equanimity and elevation of spirit.

## What is Reflection?

The healing power of reflection can be expressed as “the power acquired by a consciousness to turn in upon oneself to take possession of itself as an object endowed with its own consistency and value: no longer merely to know oneself, no longer merely to know but to know that one knows” (Teilhard De Chardin). Reflection helps us to be raised into a new sphere of being and behavior.

The maxims presented in this book were written by fourth year medical students in a course on Character in Medicine. All students gave permission to publish these reflections.

## What is the Process?

Each day a maxim will be suggested for reflection. Ask yourself some of the following questions: What does this maxim mean to me? What is it suggesting for me to consider? What is it asking you to embrace? Does it remind you of any virtue? How will this change my behavior?

After reflecting on the maxim, write a few thoughts based on your reflection in this book and keep it private. After a week of writing, go back and reflect on what you have written.

The maxims are taken from medical students who participated in a course “Character in Medicine” with their consent to be used by others.



- Maxim 1:** Sometimes all you need to do is just be involved.
- Maxim 2:** Learning the little details does matter.
- Maxim 3:** Laughter is the best medicine.
- Maxim 4:** Learn daily and lean softly into discomfort.
- Maxim 5:** Silence is required to really soak up the richness of life.
- Maxim 6:** People offer their strengths, borne from reflection which add to the beautiful mosaic of life.
- Maxim 7:** Your intentions may be noble, but your actions speak volumes.
- Maxim 8:** The achievement of patient outcomes should never take away from respect for patient values.
- Maxim 9:** Anger serves no purpose, helps no cause and deepens wounds invisible to the naked eye.
- Maxim 10:** Forgiveness heals all wounds and solves all problems in life, and like all good things in life, it takes time and great patients to develop.
- Maxim 11:** Forgiveness avoids succumbing to guilt during a time of loss.
- Maxim 12:** Direction and context are important in life.
- Maxim 13:** Teamwork makes dreams work.
- Maxim 14:** Meaning is enriched in a life filled with love and compassion.
- Maxim 15:** It is important to respect other people's beliefs. You never know what you might find if you keep an open mind.
- Maxim 16:** There's no "I" in the word "team." It's not all about you.
- Maxim 17:** Patience is a virtue because anything that can go wrong, will go wrong.
- Maxim 18:** Meaning is enhanced when each new day finds a purpose.
- Maxim 19:** Live in the now.
- Maxim 20:** Reflecting on tough experiences can result in positive outcomes.
- Maxim 21:** It is only by the death of self that the soul can be revealed.
- Maxim 22:** Holistic medicine requires a holistic provider.
- Maxim 23:** Doing good is relative to each person's understanding.
- Maxim 24:** The inevitability of death is the mind's greatest obstacle.
- Maxim 25:** Forgiveness towards self is needed to find balance.
- Maxim 26:** Temperance requires a purposeful response to emotions.
- Maxim 27:** Life is fleeting, so be grateful and appreciative before it passes.
- Maxim 28:** Be curious, be persistent. Knowledge will come easily.
- Maxim 29:** Joy will come without effort to those who are beneficent, loving and altruistic.
- Maxim 30:** Courage is stepping out of your comfort zone and being open to what is new.
- Maxim 31:** Leadership is mutual trust between you and your teammates.
- Maxim 32:** Taking the time to connect and check in with your body and with your surroundings can promote emotional healing and growth.

- Maxim 33:** Working through another's grief as well as your own allows you to practice humanity, openness and vulnerability.
- Maxim 34:** Speaking up about injustices may be uncomfortable at first but will always be the proper action in the end.
- Maxim 35:** Perseverance is not only an act of courage but also an important act of forgiveness to oneself.
- Maxim 36:** Leadership and courage are the most vital factors in fostering and taking care of one's community.
- Maxim 37:** Holistic medicine requires a holistic provider: Doing good is relative to each person's understanding.
- Maxim 38:** The inevitability of death is the mind's greatest obstacle.
- Maxim 39:** Courage is the balm to unfairness.
- Maxim 40:** Temperance requires a purposeful response to emotions.
- Maxim 41:** Judge others not by their age, skin or language, but by their identity; since identity is fluid, one should never judge others.
- Maxim 42:** Joy will come without effort to those who are beneficent, loving and altruistic.
- Maxim 43:** Significant power differences cripple justice.
- Maxim 44:** Listen to others with curiosity.
- Maxim 45:** Maintaining temperance fosters circumspection.
- Maxim 46:** Strive to keep a balanced perspective.
- Maxim 47:** Respecting one's dignity can open minds.
- Maxim 48:** Forgiving is more than forgetting.
- Maxim 49:** The good physician treats the disease. The great physician treats the patient's story surrounding the disease.
- Maxim 50:** Tragedy begets compassion.
- Maxim 51:** Receptive listening can save someone's life: Joy will come without effort to those who are beneficent.
- Maxim 52:** Take a moment, recognize your bias and then walk into a conversation.
- Maxim 53:** The journey is the stuff of reflection.
- Maxim 54:** Sometimes the hardest thing and the right thing are the same.
- Maxim 55:** Words in haste, and without thought, last a lifetime.
- Maxim 56:** Be humble to see your mistakes, courageous to admit them and wise enough to correct them.
- Maxim 57:** People who judge others tell more about who they are than the individual they are judging.
- Maxim 58:** Equanimity is a word for a positive philosophy of life.
- Maxim 59:** Equanimity is a welcome friend amid chaos.
- Maxim 60:** Practicing sadness finds sadness, but practicing forgiveness finds happiness.

- Maxim 61:** Be willing to admit when you've changed your mind, don't persist when the original decision turns out to be a poor one.
- Maxim 62:** Power lies in who decides who makes the choice, not the chooser themselves.
- Maxim 63:** Learn the rules like a pro, so you can break them like an artist.
- Maxim 64:** Mastering forgiveness is important, especially when life is scary, awful and unfair to those you love.
- Maxim 65:** Revenge is corrosive unto death, but forgiveness builds and encourages life.
- Maxim 66:** Doing what is good is relative to each person's understanding.
- Maxim 67:** Taking the time to connect and check in with your body and your surroundings can promote emotional healing and growth.
- Maxim 68:** Speaking up about injustices may be uncomfortable at first but will always be the proper action in the end.
- Maxim 69:** Leadership and courage are the most vital factors in fostering and taking care of one's community.
- Maxim 70:** Holistic medicine requires a holistic provider.
- Maxim 71:** Performance isn't just about doing the big things, it's about showing up with intention when it counts..
- Maxim 72:** Character is a home; it is built piece by piece, not all at once.
- Maxim 73:** Daily choices, trivial as they may seem, shape who we are day by day.
- Maxim 74:** Discipline is choosing between what you want now and what you want most.
- Maxim 75:** Integrity is not just about what we say, but how we say it and carry it to completion.
- Maxim 76:** Try to end life with hope intact.
- Maxim 77:** Set an example not for others, but for yourself.
- Maxim 78:** The root of anger is usually pain.
- Maxim 79:** When we understand the depth of God's love for us we are able to love others more deeply.
- Maxim 80:** Transcendent moments stay with us because they remind us of who we are, what we value, and what makes life worth living.



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