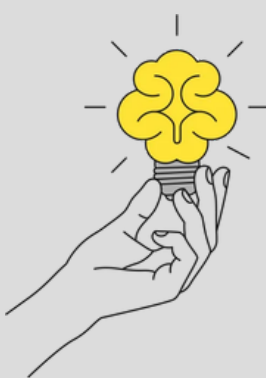




**Better decisions,  
based on the world's  
timeless ideas  
to help you build a  
flourishing life.**



**50 Quotes**

From the wisdom of ancient philosophers  
to the insights of modern-day thinkers.

Welcome to Spread Great Ideas, or just "SGI" for short.

I'm glad you're here.

SGI distills the enduring wisdom of the world's greatest thinkers - Friedrich Nietzsche, Aristotle, Carl Jung, Socrates, Thomas Jefferson, and more - into clear, actionable insights.

For those pursuing a life grounded in purpose, liberty, and benevolent self-interest.

The goal is simple: better decisions, based on the world's timeless ideas, to help you build a flourishing life.

The medium by which ideas spread changes. Technology, censorship, attention spans, political climate, cultural norms. The channel keeps shifting.

The timeless nature of ideas doesn't.

Thought has always led to action. The Ancient Greeks had a word for this: praxeology. Made famous by Aristotle. Re-popularized centuries later by Ludwig von Mises of the Austrian school.

The idea is simple. Humans engage in purposeful behavior. Not reflexive. Not accidental. Purposeful.

Not all ideas are created equal, as evidenced by their outcomes.

The **50 quotes** that follow are the ones SGI returns to the most. They come from the writers and thinkers whose work shapes how we think about liberty, achievement, and the life of an independent mind.

Enjoy.

Brian David Crane  
Founder, [SpreadGreatIdeas.org](http://SpreadGreatIdeas.org)



01

“The chief evil is unlimited government, and nobody is qualified to wield unlimited power.”

***F.A. Hayek***

*(The Constitution of Liberty, 1960)*





02

“A society that chooses between capitalism and socialism does not choose between two social systems; it chooses between social cooperation and the disintegration of society.”

***Ludwig von Mises***

*(Human Action, 1949)*





03

“When plunder becomes a way of life for a group of men in a society, over the course of time they create for themselves a legal system that authorizes it and a moral code that glorifies it.”

***Frédéric Bastiat***

*(Economic Sophisms, 2nd Series)*





04

"The state is that great fiction by which everyone tries to live at the expense of everyone else."

***Frédéric Bastiat***  
*(The State / L'État)*





05

"Underlying most arguments against the free market is a lack of belief in freedom itself."

***Milton Friedman***

*(Capitalism and Freedom, 1962)*





06

"A society that puts equality before freedom will get neither. A society that puts freedom before equality will get a high degree of both."

***Milton Friedman***

*(Created Equal, Free to Choose ep. 5)*





07

"I have never understood why it is 'greed' to want to keep the money you earned but not greed to want to take somebody else's money."

***Thomas Sowell***

*(Barbarians Inside the Gates, 1999)*





08

"It's government people, not rich people, who have the power to coerce and make our lives miserable. Coercive power goes hand in hand with government."

***Walter E. Williams***

*(American Contempt for Liberty, 2015)*





09

"The whole aim of practical politics is to keep the populace alarmed (and hence clamorous to be led to safety) by an endless series of hobgoblins, most of them imaginary."

***H.L. Mencken***

*(In Defense of Women, 1918)*





10

"The most dangerous man to any government is the man who is able to think things out for himself, without regard to the prevailing superstitions and taboos."

***H.L. Mencken***

*(Prejudices: Third Series, 1922)*





11

"Egalitarianism, in every form and shape, is incompatible with the idea of private property. Private property implies exclusivity, inequality, and difference."

***Hans-Hermann Hoppe***

*(Democracy: The God That Failed, 2001)*





12

"The art of economics consists in looking not merely at the immediate but at the longer effects of any act or policy; it consists in tracing the consequences of that policy not merely for one group but for all groups."

***Henry Hazlitt***

*(Economics in One Lesson, 1946)*





13

"There is no social entity with a good that undergoes some sacrifice for its own good. There are only individual people, different individual people, with their own individual lives."

***Robert Nozick***

*(Anarchy, State, and Utopia, 1974)*





14

"If all mankind minus one were of one opinion, and only one person were of the contrary opinion, mankind would be no more justified in silencing that one person than he, if he had the power, would be justified in silencing mankind."

***John Stuart Mill***

*(On Liberty, 1859)*





15

"A man is none the less a slave because he is allowed to choose a new master once in a term of years."

***Lysander Spooner***

*(No Treason No. VI: The Constitution of No Authority, 1870)*





16

"There are only two things we should fight for. One is the defense of our homes and the other is the Bill of Rights."

***Smedley D. Butler***

*(War Is a Racket, 1935)*





17

"When men yield up the privilege of thinking, the last shadow of liberty quits the horizon."

***Thomas Paine***

*(Reflections on Titles, 1775)*





18

"I have sworn upon the altar of God eternal hostility against every form of tyranny over the mind of man."

***Thomas Jefferson***

*(Letter to Benjamin Rush,  
September 23, 1800)*





19

"They who can give up essential liberty to obtain a little temporary safety deserve neither liberty nor safety."

***Benjamin Franklin***

*(Pennsylvania Assembly: Reply to the Governor, November 11, 1755)*





20

"If men were angels, no government would be necessary."

**James Madison**

*(Federalist No. 51, 1788)*





21

"Power over a man's subsistence is power over his will."

***Alexander Hamilton***  
*(Federalist No. 79, 1788)*





22

"Liberty, once lost, is lost forever."

***John Adams***

*(Letter to Abigail Adams, July 17, 1775)*





23

"Power is not a means, it is an end. One does not establish a dictatorship in order to safeguard a revolution; one makes the revolution in order to establish the dictatorship."

**George Orwell**

*(Nineteen Eighty-Four, 1949)*





24

"Who controls the past  
controls the future. Who  
controls the present  
controls the past."

***George Orwell***

*(Nineteen Eighty-Four, 1949)*





25

“I swear by my life and my love of it that I will never live for the sake of another man, nor ask another man to live for mine.”

***Ayn Rand***

*(Atlas Shrugged, 1957 - Galt's oath)*





26

"Do not let your fire go out, spark by irreplaceable spark, in the hopeless swamps of the approximate, the not-quite, the not-yet, the not-at-all."

***Ayn Rand***

*(Atlas Shrugged, 1957  
- Galt's speech)*





27

"If you don't want a man unhappy politically, don't give him two sides to a question to worry him; give him one. Better yet, give him none."

***Ray Bradbury***

*(Fahrenheit 451, 1953)*





28

"Stuff your eyes with wonder. Live as if you'd drop dead in ten seconds. See the world. It's more fantastic than any dream made or paid for in factories."

***Ray Bradbury***

*(Fahrenheit 451, 1953)*





29

“If there is no struggle, there is no progress.”

***Frederick Douglass***

*(West India Emancipation speech,  
Canandaigua, NY, August 3, 1857)*





30

"Liberty is meaningless where the right to utter one's thoughts and opinions has ceased to exist. That, of all rights, is the dread of tyrants."

***Frederick Douglass***

*(A Plea for Free Speech in Boston,  
December 1860)*





31

"The mass of men lead lives of quiet desperation. What is called resignation is confirmed desperation."

***Henry David Thoreau***

*(Walden, 1854)*





32

"Whenever you find yourself on the side of the majority, it is time to pause and reflect."

**Mark Twain**

*(Mark Twain's Notebook, 1904)*





33

"Doubt is not a pleasant condition. But certainty is an absurd one."

**Voltaire**

*(Letter to Frederick William, Prince of Prussia, November 28, 1770)*





34

"Those who can make you believe absurdities can make you commit atrocities."

**Voltaire**

*(Questions sur les Miracles,  
Letter XI, 1765)*





35

"Common sense is not so common."

**Voltaire**

*(Dictionnaire Philosophique, article  
"Sens Commun")*





36

"The opinion of 10,000 men is of no value if none of them know anything about the subject."

***Marcus Aurelius***

*(Meditations, Book III)*





37

"There is no better teacher than history in determining the future. There are answers worth billions of dollars in a \$30 history book."

***Charlie Munger***





38

"There is only one difference between a bad economist and a good one: the bad economist confines himself to the visible effect; the good economist takes into account both the effect that can be seen and those effects that must be foreseen."

***Frédéric Bastiat***

*(That Which Is Seen and That Which Is Not Seen, 1850)*





39

"Most people want security in this world, not liberty."

***H.L. Mencken***

*(Minority Report: H.L. Mencken's Notebooks, 1956)*





40

"In individuals, insanity is rare; but in groups, parties, nations and epochs, it is the rule."

***Friedrich Nietzsche***

*(Beyond Good and Evil, 1886,  
Aphorism 156)*





41

"Don't join an easy crowd; you won't grow. Go where the expectations and the demands to perform are high."

***Jim Rohn***





42

"It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena."

**Theodore Roosevelt**

*(Citizenship in a Republic,  
Sorbonne, April 23, 1910)*





43

"Nothing in the world is worth having or worth doing unless it means effort, pain, difficulty."

***Theodore Roosevelt***

*(The Strenuous Life, 1900)*





44

"Unless a man is master of his soul, all other kinds of mastery amount to little."

***Theodore Roosevelt***





45

"Whatever is begun in anger, ends in shame."

***Benjamin Franklin***

*(Poor Richard's Almanack, 1734)*





46

"Well done is better than well said."

***Benjamin Franklin***

*(Poor Richard's Almanack, 1737)*





47

"Determine never to be idle. No person will have occasion to complain of the want of time, who never loses any. It is wonderful how much may be done if we are always doing."

***Thomas Jefferson***

*(Letter to Martha Jefferson)*





48

"Until you make the unconscious conscious, it will direct your life and you will call it fate."

**Carl Jung**

*(Aion: Researches into the Phenomenology of the Self, 1951)*





49

"Dignity does not consist in possessing honors, but in deserving them."

***Aristotle***





50

"Everyone must leave something behind when he dies, my grandfather said. A child or a book or a painting or a house or a wall built or a pair of shoes made. Or a garden planted."

***Ray Bradbury***

*(Fahrenheit 451, 1953)*

