



The Diary of a Magus by Paulo Coelho

Book Excerpts

When all is said and done, if we believe in God, we have to believe also that God is just.

~

The true path to wisdom can be identified by three things, first, it must involve Agape... Second, it has to have practical application in your life. Otherwise, wisdom becomes a useless thing and deteriorates, like a sword that has never used. And finally, it has to be a path that can be followed by anyone.

~

When you travel, you experience, in a very practical way, the act of rebirth. You confront completely new situations, the day passes more slowly, and on most journeys, you don't even understand the language that people speak. So, you're like a child just out of the womb. You begin to attach much more importance to things around you because your survival depends on them. You begin to be more accessible to others because they may be able to help you in difficult situations. And you accept any small favor from the gods with great delight, as if it were an episode you would remember the rest of your life... At the same time, since all new things are new, you see only the beauty in them, and you feel happy to be alive.

~

When you are moving towards an objective, it is very important to pay attention to the road. It is the road that teaches us the best way to get there, and the road enriches us as we walk its length... And it is the same thing when you have an objective in your life. It will turn out to be better or worse depending on the route you choose to reach it and the way you negotiate that route.

~

Changing the way you do routine things allows a new person to grow inside of you.

~

You believe that God exists, and so do I, so God exists for both of us. But if someone doesn't believe in him, that doesn't mean God ceases to exist. Nor does it mean that the non-believer is wrong.

~



Wherever it is that you want to see the face of God, there you will see it. And if you don't want to see it, that doesn't matter, so long as you're performing good works.

~

The journey, which prior to this was torture because all you wanted to do was get there, is now beginning to become a pleasure. It is a pleasure of searching and the pleasure of an adventure. You are nourishing something that's very important - your dreams.

~

Many times in our lives we see our dreams shattered and our desires frustrated, but we have to continue dreaming. If we don't, our soul dies, and Agape cannot reach it.

~

The good fight is the one that's fought in the name of our dreams. When we're young and our dreams first explode inside us with all their force, we are very courageous, but we haven't yet learned how to fight. With great effort, we learn how to fight, but by then we no longer have the courage to go into combat. So, we turn against ourselves and do battle within. We become our own worst enemy. We say that our dreams were childish, were too difficult to realize, or the result of our not having known enough about life. We kill our dreams because we are afraid to fight the good fight.

~

The second symptom of the death of our dreams lies in our certainties. Because we don't want to see life as a grand adventure, we begin to think of ourselves as wise and fair and correct in asking so little of life.

~

And, finally the third symptom of the passing of our dreams is peace. Life becomes a Sunday afternoon; we ask for nothing grand, and we cease to demand anything more than we're willing to give. In that state, we think of ourselves as being mature; we put aside the fantasies of our youth and we seek personal and professional achievement.

~

When we renounce our dreams and find peace, we go through a short period of tranquility. But the dead dreams begin to rot within us and to infect our entire being. We become cruel to those around us, and then we begin to direct this cruelty against ourselves.

~



... We always know which is the best road to follow, but we follow only the road that we have become accustomed to.

~

The only way we can rescue our dreams is by being generous with ourselves. Any attempt to inflict self-punishment—no matter how subtle it may be—should be dealt with rigorously. In order to know when we're being cruel to ourselves, we have to transform any attempt at causing spiritual pain—such as guilt, remorse, indecision, and cowardice—into physical pain. By transforming a spiritual pain into a physical one, we can learn what harm it can cause us.

~

We are only able to be kind to ourselves at the few times when we need severity.

~

Of all the ways we have found to hurt ourselves, the worst has been through love. We are always suffering because of someone who doesn't love us, or someone who has left us, or someone who won't leave us. If we are alone, it is because no one wants us; If we are married, we transform the marriage into slavery. What a terrible thing!

~

Over and above the physical forces that surround us and help us, there are basically two spiritual forces on our side: an Angel and a Devil. The Angel always protects us and it's a divine gift - you do not have to invoke him. The Devil is an Angel, too, but he is a free, rebellious force. I prefer to call him the messenger, since it is the main link between you and the world... His arena is only the material plane... When we let him loose, his tendency is to disperse himself. When we exorcise him, we lose all the good things that he has to teach us; he knows a great deal about the world and about human beings. When we become fascinated by his power, he owns us and keeps us from fighting the good fight. So, the only way to deal with our messenger is to accept him as a friend—by listening to his advice and asking for his help, when necessary, but never allowing him to dictate the rules of the game.

~

Whoever knows the name of your messenger can destroy you

~

If I had to use a metaphor, I would say that your Angel is your armor, and your Messenger is your sword. Armor protects you under any set of circumstances, but a sword can fall to the



ground in the midst of a battle, or can kill a friend, or be turned against its owner. A sword can be used for almost anything...

~

The guilty ones are always the others...

~

We are always trying to convert people to a belief in our own explanation of the universe. We think that the more people there are who believe as we do, the more certain it will be that what we believe is the truth. But it doesn't work out that way at all.

~

There is no religion that is capable of bringing all of the stars together, because if this were to happen, the universe would become a gigantic, empty space and would lose its reason for existence. Every star—and every person—has their own space and their own special characteristics... What appears from down here to be a huge number of bodies that are similar to each other are really a million different things, spread over a space that is beyond human comprehension.

~

Fans who lack faith can make a team lose a game it is already winning.

~

Today, you are seeking a manifestation of Eros, the feeling of love that exists between two people... Whether it's good or evil, the face of Eros is never the same for any two people. Just like the stars I was talking about half an hour ago. And no one can escape Eros. Everyone needs its presence, despite the fact that many times, Eros makes us feel apart from the world, trapped in our solitude.

~

Philos is love in the form of friendship... When a flame of Eros stops burning, it is Philos that keeps a couple together.

~

It is a good idea to always do something relaxing prior to making an important decision in your life.



~

Agape is total love. It is the love that consumes the person who experiences it. Whoever knows and experiences Agape learns that nothing else in the world is important - just love. This was the kind of love that Jesus felt for humanity, and it was so great that it shook the stars and changed the course of history.

Martin Luther King once said that when Christ spoke of loving one's enemies, he was referring to Agape. Because according to him, it was impossible to like our enemies, those who were cruel to us, those who tried to make our day-to-day suffering even worse. But Agape is much more than liking. It is a feeling that suffuses, that fills every space in us, and turns our aggression to dust.

~

Enthusiasm is Agape directed at a particular idea or a specific thing. We have all experienced it. When we love and believe from the bottom of our heart, we feel ourselves to be stronger than anyone in the world, and we feel a serenity that is based on the certainty that nothing can shake our faith. This unusual strength allows us always to make the right decision at the right time, and when we achieve our goal, we are amazed at our own capabilities. Because when we are involved in the good fight, nothing else is important; enthusiasm carries us towards our goal.

~

Enthusiasm normally manifests itself with all of its force during the first years of our lives. At that time, we still have strong links with the divinity...

~

We lose our enthusiasm because of the small and unavoidable defeats we suffer during the good fight. And since we don't realize that enthusiasm is a major strength, able to help us win the ultimate victory, we let it dribble through our fingers; we do this without recognizing that we are letting the true meaning of our life escape us.

~

Your confidence and your sense of mastery depend a great deal on how you react to threats made by others.

~



A threat leads to nothing if it is not accepted. In fighting the good fight, you should never forget that. Just as you should never forget that both the attacking and the fleeing are part of the fight. What isn't part of the fight is becoming paralyzed by fear.

~

Even knowing that their days are numbered and that everything will end when they least expect it, people make of their lives a battle that is worthy of being with eternal life. What people regard as vanity—leaving great works, having children, acting in such a way as to prevent one's name from being forgotten—I regard as the highest expression of human dignity.

~

Still, being fragile creatures, humans always try to hide from themselves the certainty that they will die. They do not see that it is death itself that motivates them to do their best things in their lives. They're afraid to step into the dark, afraid of the unknown, and their only way of conquering that fear is to ignore the fact that their days are numbered. They do not see that with an awareness of death, they would be able to be even more daring, to go further in their daily conquest, because they would have nothing to lose - for death is inevitable.

~

The Absolute shows each of us who we really are; it is an enormous web of cause and effect, where every small gesture made by one person affects the life of someone else.

~

Why be fearful of saying no to someone or leaving something undone when the most important thing of all was to enjoy life fully?

~

Have pity on those who pity themselves and who see themselves as good people treated unfairly by life—who feel that they do not deserve what has befallen them. Such people will never be able to fight the good fight.

~

Be ye therefore as wise as the serpents and as harmless as the doves.

~

For there is nothing covered that will not be revealed, nor hidden that will not be known.



~

If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true.

~

Pity those who reduce the cosmos to an explanation, God to a magic potion, and humanity to beings with basic needs that must be satisfied, because they never hear the music of the spheres.

~

On the road to Santiago and in life itself, wisdom has value only if it helps us to overcome some obstacle... A hammer would make no sense in the world if there were no nails to be driven.

~

Teaching is only demonstrating that it is possible. Learning is making it possible for yourself.

~

On the road of our lives, we always run into problems that are hard to solve - like, for example, passing through a waterfall without letting it make us fall. So you have to allow the creative imagination to do its work. But there are problems in our lives that require us to choose between one way and another. Everyday problems like a business decision, the breakup of a relationship, a social obligation. Each of these small decisions we have to make, throughout our lives, might represent a choice between life and death. When you leave the house in the morning on your way to work, you might choose one means of transportation that will drop you off safe and sound or another that is going to crash and kill its passengers. This is a radical example of how a simple decision may affect us for the rest of our lives.

~

The only way to make the right decision is to know what the wrong decision is... you have to examine the other path, without fear without being morbid, and then decide.

~

Our enemy joins the battle only because he knows that he can hurt us -and hurt us in exactly a spot where a pride tells us that we are most invincible. During the fight, we always try to protect our weak spot, so the enemy strikes at the unguarded side—the side in which we have the most confidence. And we wind up defeated because we allow what should never be allowed: we let the enemy choose how the battle will be waged.



Our enemy is part of Agape, there to test our grip, or will, and our handling of the sword. He was placed in our lives—and we in his—with a purpose. And that purpose has to be met. So to flee from battle is the worst thing that could happen. It is worse than losing the fight because we can always learn something from defeat; if we flee, all we do is declare that our enemy has one.

~

... The enemy rarely represents evil. He is in everyday presence, and it is he that keeps our sword from rusting in its scabbard.

~

Everything is contained in sounds - the past, the present, and the future. The person who does not know how to listen will never hear the advice that life offers us all the time. And only the person who listens to the sounds of the moment is able to make the right decisions.

The wrong answer will indicate the right one.

~

... People who consider themselves to be wise are often indecisive when command is called for and rebellious when they are called upon to obey. They are ashamed to give orders and consider it dishonorable to receive them. Don't ever be that way!

~

You can learn only through teaching.

~

By taking on the role of guide, I was able to find my own true path.

~

“He that ploweth should plow in hope. He that thresheth in hope should be a partaker of his hope.” - St. Paul

~

People do have a tendency to fantasize about things that do not even exist, while they fail to learn the lessons that are before their very eyes.



~

... I had not understood that when we want something, we have to have a clear purpose in mind for the thing that we want. The only reason for seeking a reward is to know what to do with that reward.

~

... The search for happiness is a personal search and not a model we can pass on to others.

~

Few can accept the burden of their own victory: most give up their dreams when they see that they can be realized. They refuse to fight the good fight because they do not know what to do with their own happiness; they're imprisoned by the things of the world.

~

... Trample the lion and the serpent, the lion cub and the dragon will make shoes for your feet.

~

... I guess it is true that people always arrive at the right moment at the place where someone awaits them.