Socrates

Selected Quotes

Socrates (c 470-399 BCE) is regarded as the founder of western philosophy and rational inquiry. Socrates was initially a sculptor, married with children. There was nothing exceptional about his life until a friend asked the Oracle at Delphi if there lived anyone wiser than Socrates. The oracle replied, "None," Socrates, unwilling to accept this, began questioning those who were thought to be wise by their fellow citizens.

Socrates found that *the men who had a reputation for wisdom were the most lacking of it, while others who were looked down on as common people were much more intelligent.* He concluded that he was a wise man because he did not claim to be wise.

1. **True wisdom comes to each of us when we realize how little we understand about life, ourselves, and the world around us.**

2. I know that I am intelligent, because I know that I know nothing

His inquiries attracted young Athenians, who enjoyed watching him ask their elders questions they were not able to answer. Among them were Xenophon and Plato who recorded his words and dialogues and wrote about his philosophy and his trial.

3. **He who is not contented with what he has, would not be contented with what he would like to have**

4. **He is the richest who is content with the least**

5. **The secret of happiness, you see, is not found in seeking more, but in developing the capacity to enjoy less.**

6. **Your mind is your predicament. It wants to be free of change, but change is law and no amount of pretending will alter that reality**

7. **Beware the barrenness of a busy life**

8. **Do not do to others what angers you if done to you by others**

9. **Sometimes you have to let go to see if there was anything worth holding onto**

10. **To find yourself, think for yourself**

11. **To believe without evidence and demonstration is an act of ignorance and folly**

In 399 BCE, the elders of Athens, tired of being made fools of, accused Socrates of impiety, which was a capital crime. He was tried, found guilty and executed.

12. **The unexamined life is not worth living**