

# FOLLY

## *Fools, Ignorance and Nonsense*

### 1. ESSENCE

- 1615 Ignorance is the night of the mind,  
a night without moon or star.  
Confucius (B.C. 551-479)
- 1616 Not to understand what is good and bad,  
Not to remember a kindness one has received,  
Not to marvel at what one has clearly perceived -  
These are the characteristics of a foolish man.  
Saskya Pandita (1182-1251)
- 1617 Folly is wisdom spun too fine.  
Franklin (1706-1790)
- 1618 A fool may be known by six things:  
anger, without cause; speech, without profit;  
change, without progress; inquiry without object;  
putting trust in a stranger, and mistaking foes for friends.  
Arabian Proverb

### 2. OPPOSITES

- 1619 The fool is not always unfortunate, nor the wise man always  
successful; yet never has a fool thorough enjoyment; never  
was a wise man wholly unhappy.  
Akhenaton? (c. B.C. 1375)
- 1620 When a wise man is advised of his errors, he will reflect  
on and improve his conduct. When his misconduct is pointed  
out, a foolish man will not only disregard the advice but  
rather repeat the same error.  
Buddha (B.C. 568-488)
- 1621 If a fool be associated with a wise man even all his life,  
he will perceive the truth as little as a spoon perceives  
the taste of soup. If an intelligent man be associated for  
only one minute with a wise man, he will soon perceive the  
truth, as the tongue perceives the taste of soup.  
The Dhammapada (c. B.C. 300)
- 1622 Those who wish to appear wise among fools,  
among the wise seem foolish.  
Quintilian (35-90 A.D.)

- 1623 The foolish are like ripples on water,  
For whatsoever they do is quickly effaced;  
But the righteous are like carvings upon stone,  
For their smallest act is durable.  
Nagarjuna (c. 100-200 A.D.)
- 1624 Wise men have more to learn of fools than fools of wise men.  
Montaigne (1533-1592)
- 1625 Young men think old men are fools;  
but old men know young men are fools.  
George Chapman (1557-1634)
- 1626 The fool doth think he is wise,  
but the wise man knows himself to be a fool.  
Shakespeare (1564-1616)
- 1627 A learned fool is more foolish than an ignorant fool.  
Moliere (1622-1673)
- 1628 Folly enlarges men's desires  
while it lessens their capacities.  
Robert South (1634-1716)
- 1629 There are more fools than wise men; and even in wise  
men, more folly than wisdom.  
Chamfort (1741-1794)
- 1630 There is nothing in life so irrational, that good sense  
and chance may not set it to rights; nothing so rational,  
that folly and chance may not utterly confound it.  
Goethe (1749-1832)
- 1631 The wise man has his follies no less than the fool;  
but herein lies the difference -  
The follies of the fool are known to the world,  
but are hidden from himself;  
The follies of the wise man are known to himself,  
but hidden from the world.  
Colton (1780-1832)
- 1632 What the fool does in the end,  
the wise man does in the beginning.  
Spanish Proverb

### 3. INSIGHT

- 1633 Even a fool, when he holdeth his peace, is counted wise.  
Proverbs (B.C. 1000?-200?)

- 1634 There is a foolish corner even in the brain of the sage.  
Aristotle (B.C. 384-322)
- 1635 It is the characteristic of folly to discern the faults of  
others and forget its own.  
Cicero (B.C. 106-43)
- 1636 Who are a little wise the best fools be.  
John Donne (1572-1632)
- 1637 He who lives without committing any folly is not so  
wise as he thinks.  
La Rochefoucauld (1613-1680)
- 1638 A fool can ask more questions than the wisest can answer.  
Swift (1667-1745)
- 1639 Very often, say what you will, a knave is only a fool.  
Voltaire (1694-1778)
- 1640 The first degree of folly is to conceit one's self wise;  
the second to profess it; the third to despise counsel.  
Franklin (1706-1790)
- 1641 There is nothing by which men display their character so  
much as in what they consider ridiculous...Fools and  
sensible men are equally innocuous. It is in the half fools  
and the half wise that the great danger lies.  
Goethe (1749-1832)
- 1642 Prejudice is the child of ignorance.  
Hazlitt (1778-1830)
- 1643 Folly loves the martyrdom of Fame.  
Byron (1788-1824)
- 1644 There are many more fools in the world than there are  
knaves, otherwise the knaves could not exist.  
Bulwer-Lytton (1803-1873)
- 1645 The ultimate result of shielding men from the effects of  
folly is to fill the world with fools.  
Herbert Spencer (1820-1903)
- 1646 If fifty million people say a foolish thing,  
it is still a foolish thing.  
Anatole France (1844-1924)

**4. POSITIVE**

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- 1647 It's a good thing to be foolishly gay once in a while.  
Horace (B.C. 65-8)
- 1648 The folly of one man is the fortune of another;  
for no man prospers so suddenly as by others' errors.  
Bacon (1561-1626)
- 1649 Silence is the wit of fools.  
La Bruyere (1645-1696)
- 1650 The fool is happy that he knows no more.  
Pope (1688-1744)
- 1651 The fool is like those people who think themselves  
rich with little.  
Vauvenargues(1715-1747)
- 1652 Thou Graybeard, old Wisdom, mayst boast of thy treasures;  
Give me with young Folly to live;  
I grant thee thy calm-blooded, time-settled pleasures;  
But Folly has raptures to give.  
Robert Burns (1759-1796)
- 1653 Let us be thankful for the fools. But for them the rest  
of us could not succeed.  
Mark Twain (1835-1910)

**5. NEGATIVE**

- 1654 Greed, lust, fear, anger, misfortune, unhappiness, all  
are derived from foolishness. Thus, foolishness is the  
greatest of poisons.  
Buddha (B.C. 568-488)
- 1655 Ignorance, the product of darkness, stupefies the senses in  
all embodied beings, binding them by the chains of folly,  
indolence and lethargy.  
Bhagavad Gita (c. B.C. 400)
- 1656 A fool contributes nothing worth hearing and takes offense  
at everything.  
Aristotle (B.C. 384-322)
- 1657 The fool who knows his foolishness, is wise at least so  
far. But a fool who thinks himself wise, he is called a  
fool indeed.  
The Dhammapada (c. B.C. 300)

- 1658 To stumble twice against the same stone,  
is a proverbial disgrace.  
Cicero (B.C. 106-43)
- 1659 In other living creatures ignorance of self is nature;  
in man it is vice.  
Boethius (480?-524)
- 1660 Alas! we see that the small have always suffered  
for the follies of the great.  
La Fontaine (1621-1695)
- 1661 Want and sorrow are the wages that folly earns for  
itself, and they are generally paid.  
Christian Schubart (1739-1791)
- 1662 Of all thieves fools are the worst;  
they rob you of time and temper.  
Goethe (1749-1832)
- 1663 The greatest of faults, I should say, is to be conscious of  
none.  
Carlyle (1795-1881)
- 1664 None but a fool is always right.  
Hare & Charles (c. 1830)
- 1665 No folly is more costly than the folly of intolerant  
idealism.  
Winston Churchill (1874-1965)
- 1666 Those who identify themselves with the body and have no  
soul-consciousness, are utterly ignorant, though they may  
possess University degrees. Man speaks of his glory and  
achievements. It is all vanity. At the bottom of it all  
are sex, food, indolence and ignorance.  
Sivananda (born 1887)
- 1667 Any fool can criticize, condemn and complain -  
and most fools do.  
Dale Carnegie (1888-1955)

## 6. ADVICE

- 1668 He's a Fool that cannot conceal his Wisdom.  
Franklin (1706-1790)
- 1669 I am always afraid of a fool; one cannot be sure he is  
not a knave.  
Hazlitt (1778-1830)

- 1670 It is a great piece of folly to sacrifice the inner for the  
outer man.  
Schopenhauer (1788-1860) 6 of 7
- 1671 No man really becomes a fool until he stops asking questions  
Charles P. Steinmetz (1865-1923)
- 1672 The greatest lesson in life is to know that even fools are  
right sometimes.  
Winston Churchill (1874-1965)

## 7. POTPOURRI

- 1673 He who through the error of attachment loves his body,  
abides wandering in darkness, sensible and suffering the  
things of death, but he who realizes that the body is but  
the tomb of his soul, rises to immortality.  
The Divine Pymander (BC 2500?-200 AD?)
- 1674 What lies beyond life shines not to those who are childish,  
or careless, or deluded by wealth. "This is the only world:  
there is no other," they say; and thus they go from death  
to death.  
Upanishads (c. B.C. 800)
- 1675 "These sons belong to me, and this wealth belongs to me";  
with such thoughts a fool is tormented. He himself does  
not belong to himself; how much less sons and wealth?  
The Dhammapada (c. B.C. 300)
- 1676 For take thy balance if thou be so wise,  
And weigh the wind that under heaven doth blow;  
Or weigh the light that in the east doth rise;  
Or weigh the thought that from man's mind doth flow.  
Edmund Spenser (1552-1599)
- 1677 What can be more foolish than to think that all this rare  
fabric of heaven and earth could come by chance,  
when all the skill of art is not able to make an oyster!  
Jeremy Taylor (1613-1667)
- 1678 A fool always finds some greater fool to admire him.  
Nicholas Boileau (1636-1711)
- 1679 Exactness is the sublimity of fools.  
Fontenelle (1657-1757)
- 1680 A fool and his words are soon parted;  
a man of genius and his money.  
William Shenstone (1714-1763)

1681 What a fool he must be who thinks that his El Dorado is  
anywhere but where he lives.

Thoreau (1817-1862)

1682 Young people tell what they are doing,  
old people what they have done  
and fools what they wish to do.

French Proverb