

The Book of Inner Strength

The Book of Inner Strength Ian Muir

Quotations for
towering resilience

Ian Muir

Ian Muir

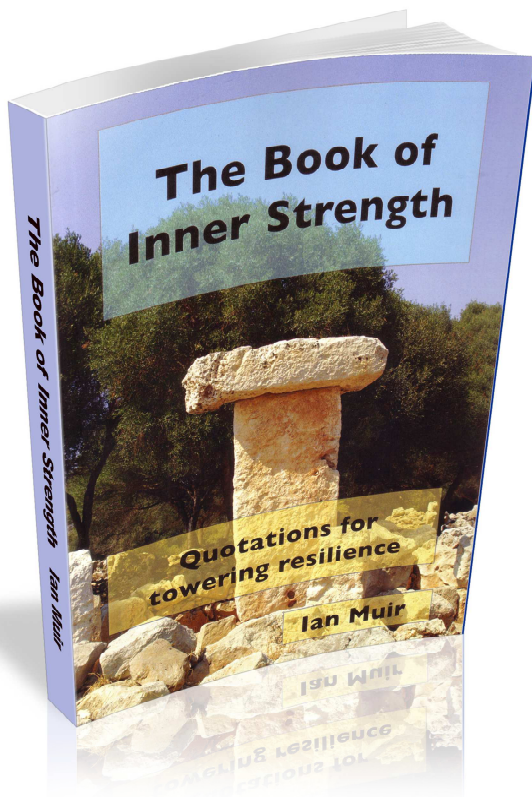
Quotations for
towering resilience

Ian Muir

presents

The Book of Inner Strength

Quotations for towering resilience



If you have ever wondered how certain people seem to have great personal resilience, this collection of quotations is for you. It succinctly provides and explains the guiding principles that people with inner strength seem to know intuitively. It will provoke and at the same time inspire. Suitable for anyone going through a transition in their life.

“In the end, the only people who fail are those who do not try”

“Challenges can be like stepping stones or stumbling blocks; it is a matter of how you view them”

“Life is no rehearsal. It’s the main event”

These are just some of the many quotes Ian Muir includes in his collection of quotations about getting the best out of life. The quotes have also been presented alongside a narrative discussing the quotations.

Ian Muir is a Chartered Fellow of the Institute of Personnel and Development .

“Many published books, while momentarily entertaining, are destined to end up forgotten on our bookshelves. Mr Muir has created a piece of work that will serve as a continuing inspiration and encouragement for those seeking to navigate many of life’s challenges and pitfalls.” Edward Lee Isler, Isler Dare Ray and Radcliffe, Virginia.

“The Book of Inner Strength - Quotations for towering resilience”
by Ian Muir

Published by Filament Publishing and distributed by
Gardners. ISBN 978-1-905493-14-2 £12.99
www.filamentpublishing.com



The Book of Inner Strength

Ian Muir

Copyright 2007



14, Croydon Road, Waddon,
Croydon, Surrey CR0 4PA
+44 (0)208 688 2598
Fax +44 (0)870 116 3530
sales@filamentpublishing.com

Copyright Ian Muir © 2007

Printed by Anthony Rowe Ltd, Eastbourne & Chippenham
Design & Layout Charlotte Mouncey
Cover Photographs Ian Muir

ISBN 1-905493-14-2

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by means of electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without prior permission of the publishers.

This Book is dedicated to my wife Ingrid and the many people I have met and worked with; the experiences they have given me; the lessons I have learned and so many things I have been lucky to observe.

It is also dedicated to the people of Menorca, who over centuries have endured waves of conquests and reconquests. And yet they remain predominantly proud, confident and strong.

The front cover photograph is of a Taula south of Maó, Menorca's capital. This stone structure is more than two thousand years old. Amid the rubble stands a pillar of strength, supporting an impossible weight. There are many of these structures across the island. For me, they symbolise the essence of inner strength: cool, calm, confident, supportive, visible and serene among the chaos.

The back cover shows the San Roc medieval gateway tower in Maó. Having stood for centuries, for me it epitomises towering resilience.

Praise for The Book of Inner Strength

Edward Lee Isler is the managing partner at Isler Dare Ray and Radcliffe, PC, a law firm, based at Tyson's Corner, Washington, Virginia, USA. His clients can face stressful legal matters. Eddie wrote: "Many published books, while momentarily entertaining, are destined to end up forgotten on our bookshelves. Mr. Muir has created a piece of work that will serve as a continuing inspiration and encouragement for those seeking to navigate many of life's challenges and pitfalls."

Mark Withers is a business and organizational transformation consultant in the United Kingdom. He works with organisations to improve their performance and confront difficult issues. He wrote: "This book makes you smile and it makes you think. It scans the complexities of modern living and brings into focus the things that really matter."

Stuart Lindenfield, an international authority on business networking, author and senior manager of Reed Consulting, is based in both the United Kingdom and Spain. Having read this book, he commented: "A real treasure trove of paradigm-shifting spirit-lifting aphorisms. Great for dipping into when the creative juices need a boost."

Gisela Klinkhammer is a German senior public sector lawyer dealing with complex cross-border issues. Based near Cologne, she travels extensively in Europe and wrote: "This light hearted look at life is easy to follow but it contains immensely powerful advice."

Taro Ogawa is a human resources manager working for ADC Asia Pacific Abbott. He is based in Tokyo, Japan and after due consideration wrote: “Congratulations on finalizing such a valuable book in your life. It took me a while to get back to you because I wanted more time to read it completely since I would like to understand your real message in the book. This book has relevance to many different cultures and speaks to both East and West.”

Diane Smith works in Customer Operations for British Airways at London Heathrow Airport, United Kingdom. Having read *The Book of Inner Strength*, she said: “We all know how busy and stressful the world’s major airports can get. This helpful guide enables people to step back and take stock before facing the next challenge, renewed and refreshed. I can think of quite a few people who will get lasting pleasure from *The Book of Inner Strength*.”

Michael Winslow is a non executive director and business performance coach. Based in the United Kingdom, he works in both the UK and Europe helping senior business leaders achieve their goals. Michael said: “This book of inner strength will be extremely valuable to anyone who wants to significantly raise their game and improve their performance both personally and professionally. It will also be a useful resource to assist and support the individual during times of difficulty.”

Fiona Colquhoun is a Director at CEDR – the Centre for Effective Disputes Resolution. This highly respected and internationally renowned organisation specialises in mediation as an alternative to formal disputes. Almost all their successes are confidential, however their work

resolves complex commercial problems, sometimes involving tens of millions of pounds. Fiona wrote: "The reader will find his or her story in each quotation." She also added that a pessimist sees the difficulty in every opportunity whereas an optimist sees the opportunity in every difficulty.

Mark Perks is both a vineyard owner and viticulturalist in Tasmania, Australia. Mark commented "Despite the philosophical title, this book has practical value, and not just for burnt out business people!"

The author is grateful to all these contributors who have shown a remarkable consistency of view, whether they are from the Americas, Europe, the Far East or Australia. It seems this work has struck a chord with a diverse community.

Preface

This is a collection of quotations about getting the best out of life. Some people see them as the embodiment of a philosophy, while others see them as an eclectic mix of amusing anecdotes.

They were collected over more than fifteen years, from experience in corporate life, through the trials of family life, at home, through leisure pursuits and through simple observation and listening to others.

It is meant to be light hearted – so please don't take it too seriously! But if it strikes a chord and helps in some small way, then I have achieved what I set out: to help improve people's experience of life.

If you are expecting lots of full colour photographs and illustrations, you may be disappointed. However my hope is that you will get far better pictures in your mind as you think about what is written here. My hope is that the value of this book lies in the debate you have with your inner self.

The quotations are not attributed – mainly because I did not collect the authors' details but also because I want the reader to focus on the quote not who said it. If I have inadvertently used your quote or your company's slogan, please treat it as free advertising!

Contents

Preface	page 1
Contents	page 3
Introduction	page 5
About the author	page 7
The quotations	page 10
Afterthoughts	page 313
Index	page 315

Introduction

What? Another self-help or personal development book?

Not really; this is a set of quotations from those who have inner strength already. They know.

Some of the quotations are simple and literal. Others are more complex with hidden depth of meaning.

You might like to think a little longer.....

I have therefore arranged this book so that you can use it in several different ways:

Firstly, you may want to read the quotations on the right hand pages and reflect upon them.

Secondly, you may want to read the narrative on the left hand pages to add colour to your thoughts or discussions if you are discussing these concepts with others (great at dinner parties I am told).

Thirdly, and totally for fun – you might want to open the book at random for instant comment. At one dinner party, my nephew started asking random philosophical questions and then opened the book. He then read out the quotation and we had a great laugh on account of the surprising appropriateness. In any event it provoked lots of further fruitful debate.

Friends and relatives tell me that the value of this book comes from interrupting one's normal line of thinking. The quotations provide an uplifting challenge to our approach to everyday life. Friends also tell me that the quotations provoke real debate – enabling people to discuss topics that

frequently are missed in a fast moving, transient world of ritualistic but superficial conversations. A pause button in a fast-forward world.

You might ask whether following the advice contained in the quotations diminishes spontaneity, fun, or freedom to be unpredictable? I would argue to the contrary – it is precisely by being in greater control and through having inner strength, that one has the power to decide. It can be very liberating to be able to say with confidence: “for once, hang the cost, we can afford it...”

The source material came from over 15 years of collecting quotations. They reflect experience, observation, the media and literature. Most of them had particular relevance to me when I first came across them. All have been discussed with friends who have understood real meaning in them. Some have even been kind enough to say that these few words can change lives. This is because they act as an insider’s guide or “Indian Guide” to the trials and tests of life. From that point of view I regard them as small jewels in life’s rich tapestry.

I hope they provide a source of additional strength and help to pump up your optimistic, cheerful disposition.

Or as a fourteenth century Samuri warrior once said: “No fear; no surprise; no hesitation; no doubt.”

Mao, New Year’s Day 2007

About the author

Ian Muir has had a business career for more than 25 years. Since graduating from Bath University he has been an avid student of successful and fulfilled people, whose inner strength has been an inspiration to others. He is also an alumnus of INSEAD, the European Business School.

In his professional life he has interviewed and coached people at all levels. He has also been involved in leadership development, training of managers and coaching in the skills of influencing with integrity.

His European wife is an international linguist and interpreter who has provided invaluable insights regarding alternative perspectives on common issues. Cultural differences, once identified can bring deep understanding to different norms. One of her favourite anecdotes is: "You English have table manners; we continentals have food."

Ian's observations are not confined to the business world. This collection of quotations comes from all walks of life, including people who are young, old, highly educated or just street-wise, employed and unemployed. The common characteristic is that the collected wisdom is from people who have all displayed inner strength, presence and calmness. Many have displayed inner strength to overcome considerable adversity.

Similarly, the quotations and aphorisms have been discussed with people young and old alike – many of whom have derived great value from the same quotation but for different reasons, in differing ways depending on where they are in life's journey.

These discoveries led Ian to explore the hidden rules of enjoying life. There are tacit and sometimes arcane behavioural codes but there are also unwritten rules of attitude and approach that help some people lead more fulfilled lives. The coaching value of this quotation collection has therefore been helpful to those wanting a different and better perspective on life. You may find the quotations are somewhat repetitive in nature. However, those that may appear similar can have subtly different nuances and lead discussion in different directions. Many are systemically linked to each other and should not be viewed in isolation. They are part of a wide canvas. The author's purpose is therefore simple: to help others achieve a more cheerful, optimistic disposition, founded on inner strength.

Ian and his wife Ingrid divide their time between England, Germany and the Balearic Islands.

Remember that not getting what you want
is sometimes a wonderful stroke of luck

In a fast-paced world with relatively easy credit, many people take a rather transactional approach to life, consumer goods, status and fun. Time is short and so immediate gratification becomes a priority. When having what you want is relatively straightforward, not getting what you want is a source of frustration. After all, in a fast-paced world “I want it now” is the new mantra. Gone are the days when my father said “Of course you can have that attractive toy in the toyshop window. All we have to do is work out how many weeks pocket money it costs, you save up and after the required number of weeks – it’s yours!” The value of this test of my resolve was that if while saving, I subsequently had second thoughts or found something better, I had not wasted my money

My sister-in-law has an “iron law” regarding house purchase. It is this: everyone she has ever known, who has had a house purchase fall through – for whatever reason, has always ended up with a better one. I tested this but after some thought and checking, I think she is right. “Better” does not necessarily mean cheaper or higher quality – it means more appropriate.

So the danger of too much spontaneity is that it clouds our objectivity, prevents a more reasoned approach and stops us questioning whether we need something at all. Not getting what one wants can teach us a lesson, which ultimately opens up all kinds of hitherto unforeseen possibilities. The apparent adversity strengthens decision-making and broadens one’s outlook.

Remember that
not getting
what you want
is sometimes
a wonderful
stroke of luck

Chinese proverb says
cow in field may not be all it seems

On initial inspection, this probably strikes you as pretty obvious. So you may think of “look before you leap” or “make sure everything is as it appears – don’t be tricked.”

To my mind, the bucolic agricultural context is interesting. Often, what can trip people up is not recognising something because it seemed so innocuous, so inconsequential. After all, what could be simpler or more obvious than a cow?

But in a busy life, it is the obvious that gets overlooked. So without becoming overly suspicious, it pays to check that things are as they appear – especially if they appear innocuous. That way, there is no doubt or hesitation – which means far fewer surprises.

Fewer surprises often reflect better planning and organisation as well as far fewer “Ah-ha” moments where some simple learnings can have great impact. Fewer surprises also reduce the stress of embarrassment on account of overlooking what with hindsight, now appears so obvious.

Being prepared prevents problems. Expect the unexpected. And don’t forget cows can also kick and stampede! If you do “put your foot in it” remember too that cows produce something less pleasant than milk.

Chinese proverb says
cow in field
may not be
all it seems

The glass is always half full, never half empty

This is one of the most well known debating points. However another twist on the concept came from someone who was shown an image of a half full glass and he was asked what it was. He replied “It is a glass that is twice as big as it needs to be.” I find that interesting because it assumes that with a correctly proportioned glass, the contents would fill it completely. In a single statement, the idea has shifted from the ambiguity of half empty/half full to completely full – in an appropriately sized glass.

Now that is a positive outlook!

For me, the concept is about valuing what one has and then appreciating it. I have heard many people complain about share prices or the alleged value of possessions. I have often caused them to reflect silently by interrupting them and saying “well that’s better than....” and then quoting a share price one penny less or a house price one pound less than the price they said.

My observation is that we tend to think things should only increase. “More is good.” However the danger is that the great can become the enemy of the good. How many people have you met who are delighted with their car only to despise it when their friends turn up in something bigger, more expensive, more sporty or prestigious?

If one’s resources are diminished – i.e. the glass is now only half full, think about the value of that – it remains better than a quarter full.

The glass is
always half full,
never half empty