

100 Proverbs and Their Meaning

1. All things must pass

This proverb suggests that no situation or feeling is permanent, and everything, both good and bad, eventually comes to an end. It encourages patience and resilience during tough times, reminding us that they will pass.

2. Every man has his price

This saying implies that everyone has a point at which they can be persuaded or corrupted, often through money or other incentives. It's a cynical view on human integrity and moral strength.

3. Keep your powder dry

Originally a military adage, this proverb advises staying prepared and vigilant for any future challenges or opportunities. It means to keep your resources ready for when they are needed.

4. Little pitchers have big ears

This phrase cautions that children are often listening and absorbing more information than adults realize. It's a reminder to be mindful of what is said around young people.

5. Put your best foot forward

This expression encourages starting something with a positive, determined approach. It suggests making a good impression and giving your best effort in any new endeavor.

6. Home is where the heart is

This proverb means that your true home is with the people or places you love most. It's not necessarily about a physical location, but rather where you feel most comfortable and cherished.

7. Let sleeping dogs lie

This means to avoid interfering in a situation that is currently causing no problems but might do so as a result of such interference. It's a warning against unnecessary provocation.

8. Count your blessings

This phrase advises focusing on the positive aspects of your life rather than dwelling on the negatives. It's a reminder to be grateful for what you have.

9. Money isn't everything

This proverb suggests that while money is important, it's not the most important thing in life. Other aspects like happiness, health, and relationships are equally or more valuable.

10. Beauty is only skin deep

This saying means that a person's character and qualities are more important than their physical appearance. It warns against judging people solely based on looks.

11. Let well alone

This phrase advises against unnecessary interference or change in situations that are already satisfactory. It suggests that sometimes, it's best to leave things as they are.

12. Bad news travels fast

This proverb means that negative or scandalous news spreads more quickly than good news. It highlights the human tendency to focus on and share negative information.

13. Pride comes before a fall

This saying warns that being overly confident or arrogant can lead to mistakes or failure. It's a reminder to remain humble and cautious.

14. Goes without saying

This phrase is used to indicate that something is so obvious or well-known that it doesn't need to be spoken or explained.

15. Virtue is its own reward

This proverb means that the satisfaction and honor of doing something good are a sufficient reward in themselves, without needing external recognition or reward.

16. No pain, no gain

This saying suggests that hard work and perseverance are necessary to achieve meaningful success or improvement. It's often used to motivate effort despite difficulties.

17. Devil looks after his own

This cynical phrase implies that unscrupulous or dishonest people often seem to prosper, suggesting that evil protects its own.

18. Strike while the iron is hot

This advises taking advantage of an opportunity as soon as it arises, suggesting that timing is crucial for success.

19. A miss is as good as a mile

This proverb means that failure, no matter how close to success, is still failure. It's often used to emphasize the importance of precision and accuracy.

20. Like father, like son

This phrase suggests that children often resemble their parents in terms of behavior, characteristics, or habits. It's used to highlight the influence of family traits.

21. There's safety in numbers

This saying means that being part of a group makes an individual less likely to be the victim of a mishap or mistake. It's often used to encourage collective action or solidarity.

22. Life is just a bowl of cherries

This proverb suggests that life is simple and pleasant. It's often used in a slightly ironic sense to contrast with life's complexities and challenges.

23. After a storm comes a calm

This phrase is used to reassure that difficult or chaotic times are often followed by a period of peace or normality. It's a reminder of the cyclical nature of life's experiences.

24. Bad money drives out good

This proverb, derived from Gresham's Law in economics, suggests that if two types of money are in circulation, the 'bad' (less valuable) one will drive out the 'good' (more valuable) one.

25. Talk is cheap

This saying means that it's easier to say you will do something than to actually do it. It emphasizes the importance of action rather than just words.

26. Do as I say, not as I do

This phrase is used to highlight a situation where someone advises others to do one thing, but does the opposite themselves. It's often seen as hypocritical.

27. It takes one to know one

This saying suggests that people are often best identified or understood by someone who shares their traits or behaviors.

28. Devil is in the details

This phrase means that even though something might seem simple at first, there can be hidden problems or difficulties when you look more closely.

29. No time like the present

This proverb encourages taking action now rather than delaying. It suggests that the current moment is the best time to do something.

30. Barking dog never bites

This saying means that people who make the most threats or noise are often the least likely to take action. It's used to suggest that loud threats are often harmless.

31. You are never too old to learn

This proverb emphasizes that learning is a lifelong process and age should not be a barrier to acquiring new knowledge or skills.

32. Feed a cold and starve a fever

An old piece of health advice suggesting different treatments for colds and fevers. Modern medicine, however, doesn't strictly support this method.

33. Many hands make light work

This saying means that tasks can be completed more easily and quickly if more people help. It emphasizes the benefits of teamwork and cooperation.

34. The Devil take the hindmost

This phrase suggests a lack of concern for those who cannot keep up in a situation, implying a survival of the fittest mentality.

35. No smoke without fire

This proverb suggests that if there are rumors or signs of something, then it is likely to be true or have some basis in fact.

36. The truth will out

This saying means that the truth will eventually be discovered or become known, regardless of efforts to conceal it.

37. A good man is hard to find

This proverb suggests that it's difficult to find a truly good person, often used in the context of searching for a romantic partner.

38. Many a mickle makes a muckle

This Scottish saying means that a lot of small amounts accumulate to make a large amount. It emphasizes the importance of small contributions or savings.

39. You can't win them all

This phrase is used to console or rationalize after a failure or loss, suggesting that it's impossible to be successful in every endeavor.

40. Hard cases make bad law

This legal adage suggests that extreme or unusual cases are not a good basis for general laws, as they can lead to unjust or impractical legislation.

41. Opposites attract

This saying suggests that people with different characteristics, personalities, or views are often drawn to each other.

42. Ignorance is bliss

This proverb means that not knowing about a problem or a situation means you don't have to worry about it. It suggests that lack of awareness can be a source of happiness.

43. Every cloud has a silver lining

This proverb suggests that there is something good in every bad situation. It encourages optimism by implying that even the most difficult times have a positive aspect.

44. The boy is father to the man

This phrase means that a person's personality and characteristics in childhood are an indication of the kind of person they will grow up to be.

45. Seeing is believing

This saying means that only physical or concrete evidence is convincing, emphasizing the importance of direct observation in establishing truth.

46. When in Rome, do as the Romans do

This saying advises adapting to the customs and behavior of the people in a place where you are visiting or living. It emphasizes the importance of respecting and following local traditions and norms.

47. Fight fire with fire

This saying suggests that a similar method or tactic should be used to counter an attack or challenge. It's often used in the context of competition or conflict.

48. Customer is always right

A popular phrase in business, suggesting that customer preferences and complaints should be treated seriously and their satisfaction prioritized.

49. Once bitten, twice shy

This means that a bad experience will make someone wary of going through the same thing again. It's about learning from one's mistakes.

50. The law is an ass

This proverb criticizes the legal system or laws that are seen as nonsensical or unjust. It suggests that sometimes laws can be foolish or inappropriate.

51. Live and learn

This saying means that gaining wisdom or knowledge is a continuous process throughout life, often through experiences or mistakes.

52. A stitch in time saves nine

This proverb means that it's better to deal with a problem right away, to prevent it from becoming much bigger. The idea is that a small, timely effort will prevent more extensive work later.

53. Cheats never prosper

This proverb suggests that dishonesty or cheating doesn't lead to long-term success. It's often used to promote honesty and integrity.

54. Manners maketh man

This saying suggests that politeness and good manners are essential to making a favorable impression and being considered a civilized person. It emphasizes the importance of etiquette and social conduct.

55. An apple a day keeps the doctor away

This old saying promotes the idea that eating healthy foods, particularly apples, can help maintain good health and thus avoid frequent visits to a doctor. It emphasizes the importance of a healthy diet.

56. You reap what you sow

This proverb means that actions have consequences and people will eventually face the results of their actions, whether good or bad. It's often used to encourage responsible behavior.

57. Forgive and forget

This saying advises to not only forgive someone for a wrongdoing but also to completely forget the offense. It promotes moving past grudges and conflicts for personal peace and harmony.

58. Walls have ears

This phrase means that private conversations might be overheard. It's a caution to be careful about what is said in what might seem like secure environments.

59. Third time lucky

This saying expresses the hope or belief that the third attempt at something will be successful after two failures. It's a comment on perseverance and optimism.

60. Life begins at forty

This proverb suggests that life becomes better or more enjoyable at the age of forty, implying that this age brings a new, positive phase of life.

61. The wages of sin is death

Originating from the Bible, this proverb suggests that the ultimate consequence of sinful behavior is spiritual or moral death. It serves as a warning against immorality.

62. Nature abhors a vacuum

This phrase, originating from physics, is used metaphorically to imply that empty or unfilled spaces are unnatural as they will always be filled. It's often applied to social or emotional contexts.

63. Practice what you preach

This saying means that one should live according to the principles or advice they give others. It's a call for consistency and integrity between words and actions.

64. Misery loves company

This proverb suggests that people who are unhappy may get some consolation from knowing that others are unhappy too. It's often used to describe those who bring others down with them.

65. Child is father to the man

Similar to "The boy is father to the man," this phrase implies that a person's early years shape their future character and behavior.

66. Give the Devil his due

This saying suggests acknowledging the good qualities or achievements of even the

67. Patience is a virtue

This proverb emphasizes the importance of being patient. It suggests that the ability to wait for something without getting angry or upset is a valuable and admirable quality.

68. It's all grist to the mill

This phrase means that everything can be made useful or can be exploited for personal advantage. It's often used in the context of making the best out of any situation.

69. Age of miracles is past

This saying suggests that the time when extraordinary events could happen has ended, often used to imply that one should be realistic and not expect miraculous solutions.

70. Time flies

This proverb means that time seems to pass very quickly, especially when one is engaged in something enjoyable. It's a reminder of the swift passage of time.

71. Bigger, the better

This phrase suggests that larger things are superior or more desirable. It's often used to imply that more is better, whether it's size, quantity, or extent.

72. Do as you would be done by

Also known as the Golden Rule, this saying advises treating others as one would like to be treated oneself. It's a principle of empathy and mutual respect.

73. The early bird catches the worm

This proverb suggests that people who wake up early or start things early are more likely to succeed. It is often used to encourage promptness and proactivity.

74. Might is right

This saying means that those who are powerful or strong can impose their will and are justified in doing so, regardless of fairness or morality. It's often used to criticize abuses of power.

75. Less is more

This proverb suggests that simplicity and clarity lead to better outcomes than complexity and extravagance. It's often used in artistic and design contexts.

76. Comparisons are odious

This phrase means that comparing things (especially people) is unhelpful and can be harmful because it can lead to jealousy or resentment.

77. Don't count your chickens before they hatch

This saying warns against assuming success or counting on something before it is certain. It advises against making plans based on expectations or assumptions that may not come to fruition. The proverb emphasizes the importance of waiting for actual results before celebrating or making decisions based on anticipated outcomes.

78. First things first

This proverb advises to prioritize the most important tasks or issues before dealing with less critical ones. It's a call for prioritizing and organizing.

79. Waste not want not

This saying means that if you use a commodity or resource carefully and without extravagance, you will never be in need. It promotes frugality and efficient use of resources.

80. Slow but sure

This phrase suggests that a steady and persistent approach is often better than a quick and hasty one. It's a reminder of the value of consistency and reliability.

81. Keep your chin up

This saying is used to encourage someone to stay strong and positive despite difficulties. It's a reminder to remain optimistic in challenging times.

82. Crime doesn't pay

This proverb warns that engaging in criminal activities will not provide long-term benefits and will likely lead to negative consequences. It's a deterrent against illegal actions.

83. It never rains but it pours

This phrase means that when one bad thing happens, often many more bad things happen at the same time. It's used to describe an accumulation of negative events.

84. Haste makes waste

This saying warns that doing something too quickly can result in mistakes and wasted effort. It advises taking the necessary time to do things right.

85. Seek and you shall find

Originating from the Bible, this proverb suggests that if you look hard enough for something, you will find it. It encourages persistence in pursuit of goals or knowledge.

86. All that glitters is not gold

This phrase warns that something looking valuable on the outside may not be actually valuable or genuine. It's a caution against judging by appearances.

87. All's well that ends well

This saying means that if the outcome of a situation is happy, this compensates for any previous difficulty or uncertainty. It focuses on the end result rather than the process.

88. The more the merrier

This proverb suggests that social gatherings or activities are more enjoyable when there are more people present. It's an invitation for inclusivity and shared joy.

89. The fat is in the fire

This phrase means that something has been done that will cause trouble, typically a point of no return. It's often used to describe a situation that has suddenly become serious or problematic.

90. No names, no pack-drill

This military saying means that if people do not mention offenders by name, then they can avoid punishment or consequences. It's a way of maintaining anonymity to prevent trouble.

91. More haste, less speed

Similar to "Haste makes waste," this proverb means that trying to do things quickly can result in more time being needed because of mistakes that require correction.

92. Honour among thieves

This phrase suggests that even among groups of people (like thieves) who are engaged in illegal or immoral activities, there are still codes of conduct or loyalty.

93. No place like home

Similar to "Home is where the heart is," this saying means that one's own home is the most comfortable and pleasant place to be. It emphasizes the value of the home environment.

94. Out of sight, out of mind

This proverb suggests that people tend to forget about things or people they do not see. It's often used to describe the transient nature of human memory or attention.

95. Paddle your own canoe

This saying advises independence and self-reliance, suggesting that one should control their own destiny and not rely on others.

96. Cold hands, warm heart

This proverb means that a person who has cold hands, typically due to poor circulation, has a warm and loving personality. It's a whimsical way to describe someone's character.

97. Don't upset the apple-cart

This phrase means to avoid causing problems or disturbances in a stable situation. It's a warning against unnecessary interference that could cause chaos or trouble.

98. It's never too late

This proverb encourages that it's always possible to do something or make a change, regardless of age or past inaction. It's a message of hope and possibility.

99. All roads lead to Rome

This saying suggests that there are many different ways to reach the same goal or conclusion. It's often used to imply that there's no single correct path in life or decision-making.

100. A rising tide lifts all boats

This proverb, often used in economics, suggests that improvements in an economy will benefit all participants in that economy. It's used to justify policies that are believed to improve general economic conditions.