

# The Mind of Napoleon

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# The Mind of Napoleon

*A Selection from His Written  
and Spoken Words*

*Edited and Translated by*  
**J. Christopher Herold**



Published in 1955

300 pages of Napoleon's own words

Guaranteed to increase your ambition

29 notes from the book:

1. Imagination rules the world.
2. Destiny must be fulfilled— that is my chief doctrine.
3. The simplest moves are the best.
4. All great events hang by a single thread. The clever man takes advantage of everything, neglects nothing that may give him some added opportunity; the less clever man, by neglecting one thing, sometimes misses everything.
5. What the people wants is almost never the same as what the people says.
6. The great majority of men attend to what is necessary only when they feel a need for it —the precise time when it is too late.
7. A consecutive series of great actions never is the result of chance and luck; it always is a product of planning and genius.
8. Hesitation is fatal; once an action is begun, it must be followed through with the utmost exertion of the will.
9. It is better to eat than be eaten.
10. If I have any ambition, it is so natural to me, so innate, so intimately linked with my existence that it is like the blood that circulates in my veins, like the air I breathe.
11. To have lived without leaving a trace of one's existence is not to have lived at all.
12. The greatest improvisation of the human mind is that which gives existence to the nonexistent.
13. Most sentiments are traditions. We experience them because they have preceded us.
14. The truth is that everything around us is miracle.
15. Everything on earth is soon forgotten except the opinion we leave imprinted on history.
16. Men of genius are meteors destined to be consumed in lighting up their century.
17. We are born for the enjoyment of life. Happiness is merely the enjoyment of life in the manner

that conforms best to our nature.

18. Men are strange. It is easier to impress them and strike their imagination with tomfooleries than with sound ideas.

19. A man must know himself. Until then, all endeavors are in vain, all schemes collapse.

20. What I am I owe to strength of will, character, application, and daring.

21. A revolution can be neither made nor stopped.

22. Avoid everything that might give false ideas of the truth.

23. Without talent, without knowledge, there is no equality but the equality of misery and servitude.

24. An acute but short pain is preferable to prolonged suffering.

25. Death is nothing; but to live defeated and without glory is to die every day.

26. There are no precise, determinate rules: everything depends on the character that nature has bestowed on the general.

27. Once I have made up my mind, everything is forgotten except what leads to success.

28. From triumph to fall there is but one step.

29. In war, men are nothing, one man is everything.

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