

Aphorism

An aphorism is a concise statement containing a general truth or principle about the world.

- The literal definition of aphorism is “definition” or “distinction.”
- The term was first used by Hippocrates' *Aphorisms*.
- Collections of aphorisms are sometimes known as wisdom literature.
- The statements expressing these truths are both short and memorable.
- The term can be applied to moral, literary, and philosophical principles.

Aphoristic statements come in all different forms, such as proverbs, maxims, adages and clichés

- Proverbs: A proverb is a condensed statement of truth based on humanity's experience and wisdom.
- Maxims: a brief statement of a general, apparent truth that describes a basic code of conduct
- Adages: a short, memorable aphorism that has gained credibility and believed to be true by many people
- Clichés: an expression that has been overused so much that it has mostly lost its original meaning

Examples

- “When you have nothing to say, say nothing.” – Charles Caleb Colton
- “The man who removes a mountain begins by carrying away small stones.” – William Faulkner
- “Life's tragedy is that we get old too soon and wise too late.” – Benjamin Franklin
- “No one can make you feel inferior without your consent.” – Eleanor Roosevelt
- “Never mistake knowledge for wisdom. One helps you make a living; the other helps you make a life.” – Sandra Carey

Helpful Link

<http://literarydevices.net/aphorism/>