Aristotle, *The Politics*, Book One, Chapter 1

EVERY city [*polis*] is a community [*or partnership*] of some kind, and every community is established with a view to some good; for mankind always act in order to obtain that which they think good. But, if all communities aim at some good, the city or political community, which is the highest of all, and which embraces all the rest, aims at good in a greater degree than any other, and at the highest good…

Aristotle, *The Politics*, Book One, Chapter 2

He who thus considers things in their first growth and origin, whether a state or anything else, will obtain the clearest view of them. In the first place there must be a union of those who cannot exist without each other; on the one hand, of male and female, for the sake of reproduction (and this is a union which is formed, not of deliberate purpose, but because, in common with other animals and with plants, mankind have a natural desire to leave behind them another like themselves), and on the other hand, of natural ruler and subject, that both may be preserved. For that which can foresee by the exercise of the mind is by nature intended to be ruler and master, and that which can with its body give effect to such foresight is by nature ruled and a slave; hence the same thing is advantageous for the master and slave. Now nature has distinguished between the female and the slave. For nature makes each thing for a single use, and every instrument is best made when intended for one and not for many uses. But among barbarians no distinction is made between women and slaves, because they have no naturally ruling element: they are a community of slaves, male and female…

When several villages are united in a single complete community, large enough to be nearly or quite self-sufficient, the city [*polis*] comes into existence, originating from the bare needs of life, but continuing to exist for the sake of living well. And therefore, if the earlier forms of society are natural, so is the city, for it is the end of them, and the nature of a thing is its end. For what each thing is when fully developed, we call its nature, whether we are speaking of a human being, a horse, or a family. Besides, the final cause [*that for the sake of which a thing exists*] and end of a thing is the best, and to be self-sufficient is an end and what is best.

Hence it is evident that the city belongs among the things that exist by nature, and that man is by nature a political animal. And he who by nature and not by mere accident is without a city, is either a bad man or superior to mankind…

Now, that man is more of a political animal than bees or any other herd animals is evident. Nature, as we often say, makes nothing in vain, and man is the only animal whom she has endowed with the gift of speech. Mere voice is but an indication of pleasure or pain, and is therefore found in other animals (for their nature allows them perception of pleasure and pain and the indication of them to each other, and no further). But the power of speech is intended to
set forth the advantageous and the harmful, and therefore likewise the just and the unjust. And it is a characteristic of man that he alone has any sense of good and bad, of just and unjust, and the like, and the association of living beings who have this sense makes a family [*household*] and a city.

Further, the city is by nature clearly prior to the household and to the individual, since the whole is of necessity prior to the part; for example, if the whole body be destroyed, there will be no foot or hand…or at least the thing itself would be defective. Things are defined by their task and power…The proof that the city is a creation of nature and prior to the individual is that the individual, when isolated, is not self-sufficient; and therefore he is like a part in relation to the whole. One who is unable to participate in society, or who has no need because he is sufficient for himself, must be either a beast or a god: he is no part of a city.

An impulse toward living in this sort of partnership is implanted in all human beings by nature, and yet he who first founded the city was the greatest of benefactors. For man, when completed, is the best of animals, but, when separated from law and justice, he is the worst of all; since injustice is the more dangerous when furnished with arms, and man is born naturally possessing arms, meant to be used by prudence and virtue, which he may nevertheless use for the worst ends. This is why, without virtue, he is the most unholy and the most savage of animals, and the worst with regard to sex and food. But justice is the bond of human beings in cities, and the administration of justice, which is the adjudication of what is just, is the first principle of the arrangement of the political society.

**Aristotle, The Nicomachean Ethics, Book One, Chapter 7**

To say that happiness is the chief good seems is something undisputed, yet it is still necessary to say what happiness is in a clearer way. This might perhaps be given, if we could first ascertain the function [*work or activity*] of a human being. …What then can this be? Living seems to be common even to plants, but we are seeking what is peculiar to man. Let us exclude, therefore, the life of nutrition and growth. Next there would be a life of perception, but it also seems to be common even to the horse, the ox, and every animal. What remains, then, is some sort of life that puts into action that in us that has articulate speech [*logos*]; of this capacity, one aspect is what is able to be persuaded by reason, while the other is what has reason and thinks things through…Now if the work of a human being is an activity of soul in accord with reason, or not without reason… – If this is the case, and we assert the work of a human being to be a certain kind of life, and this to be actions or activity of the soul in accordance with reason, and the function of a serious man to perform these well and nobly [*beautifully*], and any action is well performed when it is performed in accordance with the appropriate excellence [*virtue*]: if this is the case, the human Good turns out to be activity of soul in accordance with virtue, and if
there are more than one virtue, in accordance with the best and most complete…

**Aristotle, The Nicomachean Ethics, Book Two, Chapter 1**

Virtue, then, being of two kinds, one pertaining to thinking [*intellectual virtue*] and another to character [*moral virtue*], intellectual virtue in the main owes both its birth and its growth to teaching (for which reason it requires experience and time), while moral virtue comes about as a result of habit, whence also its name [*ethike*] is one that is formed by a slight variation from the word *ethos* [*habit*] … But the virtues we get by first exercising them, as also happens in the case of the arts as well…So too we become just by doing just acts, temperate by doing temperate acts, courageous by doing courageous acts. … By doing the acts that we do in our transactions with other men we become just or unjust, and by doing the acts that we do in the presence of danger, and being habituated to feel fear or confidence, we become courageous or cowardly. … Thus, in a word, states of character arise out of like activities…It makes no small difference, then, to be habituated in this way or that from our very youth; it makes a very great difference, or rather all the difference.

**Aristotle, The Nicomachean Ethics, Book Two, Chapter 7**

[Here Aristotle describes the moral virtues, or virtues of character] With regard to feelings of fear and confidence, *courage* is the mean; he who exceeds in fearlessness has no name (many of the conditions have no name), while the man who exceeds in confidence is rash, and he who exceeds in fear and falls short in confidence is a coward.

With regard to pleasures and pains, the mean is *temperance*, the excess self-indulgence [*dissipation*]. Persons deficient with regard to the pleasures are not often found; hence such persons also have received no name. But let us call them 'insensible'.

With regard to giving and taking of money the mean is *liberality* [*generosity*], the excess and the defect prodigality [*wastefulness*] and meaness [*stinginess*].

With regard to money there are also other dispositions – the mean being *magnificence* (for the magnificent man differs from the liberal man: the former deals with large sums, the latter with small ones), the excess is tastelessness [*gaudiness*] and vulgarity, and the deficiency is niggardliness [*chintziness or cheapness*]…

With regard to honour and dishonour the mean is *proper pride* [*magnanimity or greatness of soul*], the excess is known as a sort of empty vanity, and the deficiency is pusillanimity [*undue humility*]…

With regard to anger also there is an excess, a deficiency, and a mean. Although they can scarcely be said to have names, yet since we call the intermediate person *good-tempered* [*gentle*] let us call the mean good temper [*gentleness*]; of the persons at the extremes let the one
who exceeds be called irascible [irritable], and his vice irascibility [irritability], and the man who falls short an inirascible [slow to anger] sort of person, and the deficiency inirascibility.

There are also three other means, which have a certain likeness to one another, but differ from one another: for they are all concerned with intercourse in words and actions, but differ in that one is concerned with truth in this sphere, the other two with pleasantness; and of this one kind is exhibited in giving amusement, the other in all the circumstances of life. We must therefore speak of these too, that we may the better see that in all things the mean is praiseworthy, and the extremes neither praiseworthy nor right, but worthy of blame.

With regard to truth, then, the intermediate is a truthful sort of person and the mean may be called truthfulness, while the pretence which exaggerates is boastfulness [bragging] and the person characterized by it a boaster [braggart], and that which understates is mock modesty [irony] and the person characterized by it mock-modest [ironic].

With regard to pleasantness in the giving of amusement the intermediate person is ready-witted [charming] and the disposition ready wit [charm], the excess is buffoonery and the person characterized by it a buffoon, while the man who falls short is a sort of boor and his state is boorishness.

With regard to the remaining kind of pleasantness, that which is exhibited in life in general, the man who is pleasant in the right way is friendly and the mean is friendliness, while the man who exceeds is an obsequious person if he has no end in view, a flatterer if he is aiming at his own advantage, and the man who falls short and is unpleasant in all circumstances is a quarrelsome and surly [contrary] sort of person.

There are also means in the passions and concerned with the passions; since shame is not a virtue, and yet praise is extended to the modest man. For even in these matters one man is said to be intermediate, and another to exceed, as for instance the bashful man who is ashamed of everything; while he who falls short or is not ashamed of anything at all is shameless, and the intermediate person is modest.

Righteous indignation is a mean between joy at the misfortunes of others [spite] and envy, and these states are concerned with the pain and pleasure that are felt at the fortunes of our neighbours; the man who is characterized by righteous indignation is pained at undeserved good fortune in others, while the envious man, going beyond him, is pained at all good fortune, and the spiteful man falls so far short of being pained that he even rejoices…