

## I Am A Rock

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What the superior man seeks is in himself. What the mean man seeks is in others.

- Confucius (551 BCE - 479 BCE)

Not so popular during his lifetime, Confucius's sayings were collected after his death and became the basis for Confucianism. They emphasize love for humanity, with special attention given to learning, devotion to family (including ancestors), peace and justice. They greatly influenced the traditional culture of China and continue today as guidelines for life in the Far East and elsewhere.

Confucius provided markers for the superior man because he believed that the purpose for life on this earth was to strive for a higher level of being. His words can be seen mingled into the works of other Asian religions. What Christians call The Golden Rule and several of the Ten Commandments were among the sayings of Confucius five centuries before Jesus was born. He may have been a contemporary of Moses.

Always one to be concise, Confucius said in this quote that the mean man (what we might call a low-life or person of few qualities today) looks for satisfaction, gratification or someone to blame for the state of his life in others. He measures himself by how others treat him and judges the world by the quality of life that fate has cast upon him.

The superior man, on the other hand, looks to himself as the primary means to become what he wants to be. He also judges himself by his own standards, caring little for the corrupt and perverse standards of those around him.

In one sense, the superior man is a role model for others who know him. In another sense, he is a role model for himself because he compares himself only to the standards he has set for himself.

While the superior man works to help others who want to be helped, teaching the secrets of life to those who want to learn them and adopt them, he sees himself as an example and as a teacher. He will teach all those who want to learn, but force no one because that would be a mark of a mean man.

It would be easy for us to look around us today and see many that Confucius would deem mean men. However, that would be wrong too. That would be comparing others to himself, giving value to the standards of others, in which he has no interest.

Confucius sees a worthy man as one from whom the qualities and values of life flow outward, as a stream of knowledge. In today's terms, he is a giver, not a taker. He gives and offers to give to those who seek to improve themselves, without judging those who have no interest in his advice or his way of life.

He won't judge others because that would require him to accept input he does not value. Life is enhanced by giving to others that which they need, not by taking anything from them. An exception would be learning from others, a marker for a wiser person.

Without using the word happiness (a nebulous concept to a philosopher anyway), he gives us the means to reach our own goals today by setting standards for ourselves and working toward them conscientiously. We are responsible for our own goals and our own behaviours, thus we are responsible for whether we achieve happiness or not.

We can all be superior if we look up and strive to better ourselves by living toward our goals. The superior man does not look down to see if the streets are paved with gold or rubble.

Bill Allin

***Turning It Around: Causes and Cures for Today's Epidemic Social Problems***, a book about how to establish a sound life foundation so that you can set and work toward your superior goals.

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