

## The Doctrine of Mesotes – Aristotle [Nicomachean Ethics]

### **Mesotes**

Moral virtue lies between extremes and the virtuous path is the intermediate or moderate position between deficiency and excess. In other words, it advocates finding the right balance in all actions and emotions.

*The Golden Mean* emphasizes the importance of reason and rational thinking in determining the morally right course of action. Virtue, according to Aristotle, is not about following strict rules or guidelines but about using practical wisdom (phronesis) to make decisions that are appropriate for a particular context.

*One particular virtue always stands within the poles of two vices.*

- ⇒ Individuals have to find the golden middle way
- ⇒ There is a *pole of excess* and a *pole of deficiency*

### **Deficiency**

### **Mesotes**

### **Excess**

self-doubt

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self-confidence

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overconfidence

By seeking *The Golden Mean*, individuals can achieve balance in their actions and emotions, leading to a virtuous and flourishing life. It's important to note that the exact middle point can vary from person to person and situation to situation, and finding the Golden Mean requires careful consideration of the specific circumstances involved.

- ⇒ The reasonable, rational and sound individual (ancient Greek; *zoon logon echon*) is able to detect the specific mean.

<b>Aristotle's Concept of the Golden Mean</b>		
<b>Deficiency (-)</b>	<b>BALANCE</b>	<b>Excess (+)</b>
cowardice	COURAGE	rashness
stinginess/miserliness	GENEROSITY	extravagance
sloth	AMBITION	greed
humility	MODESTY	pride
secrecy	HONESTY	loquacity
moroseness	GOOD HUMOR	absurdity
quarrelsomeness	FRIENDSHIP	flattery
self-indulgence	TEMPERANCE	insensibility
apathy	COMPOSURE	irritability
indecisiveness	SELF CONTROL	impulsiveness