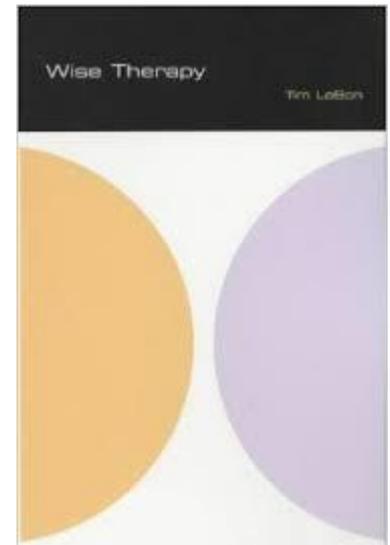
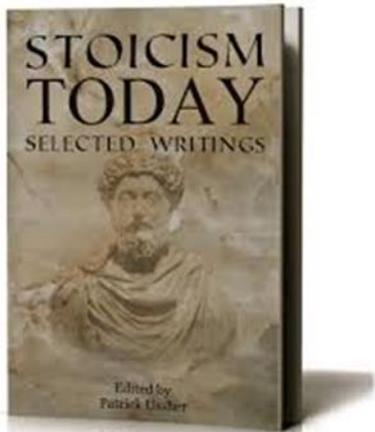
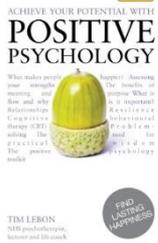


Stoic Life Coaching

Tim LeBon London 2019



About Tim LeBon



- I gained a first class degree in Philosophy, Politics and Economics at Trinity College, Oxford and an M.Phil in Philosophy at the University of London.
- I am a founder member of the Modern Stoicism Project Team and take a lead role in the scientific research.
- I am a qualified life coach, counsellor and psychotherapist in private practice and (2 days) CBT therapist in the NHS.
- I am the author of *Wise Therapy: Philosophy for Counsellors* (Sage, 2001) and *Achieve your Potential with Positive Psychology* (Hodder, 2014) .
- My web site is www.timlebon.com and e-mail address tim@timlebon.com. I'd love to hear from you.



What's
the
plan?

- Life Coaching & Stoic Life Coaching (5 mins)
- Stoicism Made Simple - A Simplified Modern Stoic Framework (10 mins)
- Demonstration (group or individual) (30 mins)
- Feedback (10 mins)

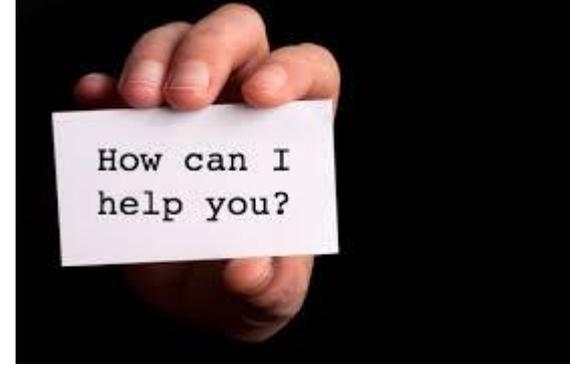
What is it?

Life Coaching

- Coaching to improve someone's personal or professional life (... executive coaching)
- Aims to move people from zero to +10 rather than from -10 to zero.
- Goal-oriented
- Action-oriented
- Client-centred (client's goals)
- To a large degree Socratic (guiding discovery as well as being didactic)

Life Coaching

- Anger & Irritation
- Managing Stress better
- Improving Relationships
- Reducing Procrastination
- Finding satisfying work
- Managing worry and anxiety better
- A decision you need to make
- Managing low mood & feeling demotivated
- Career performance
- Become happier and more fulfilled
- Achieve your Goals (e.g. for the next year)
- *Think of an issue you would like to work on today*



Life Coaching



- Using good Communication Skills (building rapport, summarising, body language etc.)
- Teaching relevant skills & knowledge in which coach has expertise e.g. Positive Psychology, CBT, goal-setting
- Using Socratic Questioning to guide discovery
- Experiments – testing out ideas and strategies
- Action Plans and between-session practice
- Structured sessions - TGROW
- Can be done in person, Skype 30-60 mins

TGROW

A popular way to structure
each coaching session





What is Stoic- or Stoicism- Informed Life Coaching?

- Coaching to improve someone's personal or professional life (... executive coaching)
- Aims to move people from zero to +10 rather than from -10 to zero.
- Goal-oriented
- Action-oriented
- Client-centred (client's goals)
- To a large degree Socratic (guiding discovery as well as being didactic)
- Stoic Coaching –based primarily on Stoic ideas - see <https://modernstoicism.com/stoic-therapy-for-anger-bytim-lebon-part-2/>
- Stoicism-Informed Coaching - A more eclectic approach where Stoicism is part of the package

Stoic Anger Management

A 6 Step Plan based on Seneca's *On Anger*



1. Assess your motivation for change and increase motivation drawing on Seneca's arguments that anger is a bad thing
2. Anger is a faulty attempt to control the uncontrollable (you need "willing acceptance of what you cannot change")
3. Understand Seneca's 3 stages of anger. Do you err by confusing which stages of anger we can and can't control?
4. Learn how to resist anger (rational judgement)
5. Explore how you can achieve what matters without resorting to anger (virtuous action)
6. Daily practice to reduce vulnerability to anger

Read on:

<https://modernstoicism.com/stoic-therapy-for-anger-bytim-lebon-part-1/>

<https://modernstoicism.com/stoic-therapy-for-anger-bytim-lebon-part-2/>

<https://blog.timlebon.com/2019/05/how-stoicism-can-help-you-manage-anger.html>

Stoicism-Informed Coaching: Relationships

- Can't control: Other people
- Can control: what you tell yourself, how you respond
- All the virtues are likely to be relevant

Some Wisdom Tips not necessarily known to the ancient Stoics

- Empathise – put self in shoes of others
- Be assertive – say what you want in a friendly, calm and clear way
- Listen – find out what is important to the other person
- Seek win/win agreements – Seek resolutions that satisfy what matters to both of you

To work in life coaching, Stoicism HAS to be

- Helpful - Evidence?
- Acceptable – Are the premises reasonable?
- Simple - Not over-complex



Stoicism Made Simple in 4 Sentences

“Rational judgement, now, at this very moment.

**“Virtuous action, now, at this very moment.
(Wisdom, Courage, Self-control, Justice)**

**Willing acceptance - now, at this very moment -
of what you can't change**

That's all you need.”

Adapted from Marcus Aurelius, Meditations, 9.6

DICHOTOMY OF CONTROL

What is directly under my control?
What is not directly under my control?

STOIC RATIONALITY, VIRTUE & ACTION

WISDOM, COURAGE, SELF-CONTROL & JUSTICE

What is the rational approach here?

What virtues do I need to use in this situation?

What do I need to do?

What do I need to accept?

STOICISM MADE SIMPLE



STOIC MINDFULNESS

Paying constant attention to my judgements
Using Stoic techniques in the moment
(e.g Stoic reframe of adversities)

STOIC PRACTICE

Morning Meditation (Mental Rehearsal)
Evening Meditation (Daily review)
Stoic Reading & Journalling

STOICISM

What Stoicism is Not

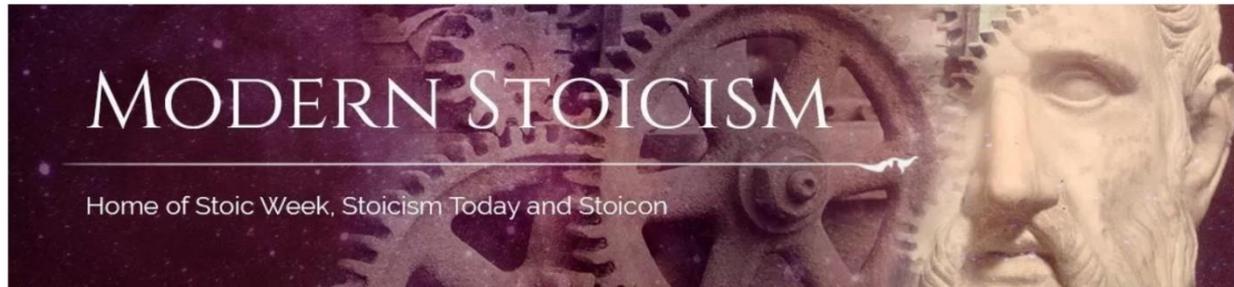
Fake News!

- Stoicism is not about having a “stiff upper lip”
- Not about repressing emotions
- Not about being passive or resigned
- Not about being isolated
- That is stoicism (small “s”) not Stoicism (big “s”)

Modern Stoicism

<http://www.modernstoicism.com>

[Home](#) [Learn Modern Stoicism](#) [Stoic Week](#) [SMRT](#) [Stoicon](#) [Stoicism Today](#) [Contact](#) [About](#)



Stoic Week 2017 Report (part 2) by Tim Lebon



A strong positive relationship between Stoicism and well-being has been documented in [previous Stoic Week reports](#). This year the emphasis has

Donate



Please consider donating an amount of your choosing to help support Stoic Week. Thank you!

A growing evidence base for practising Stoicism

Stoicism made Simple

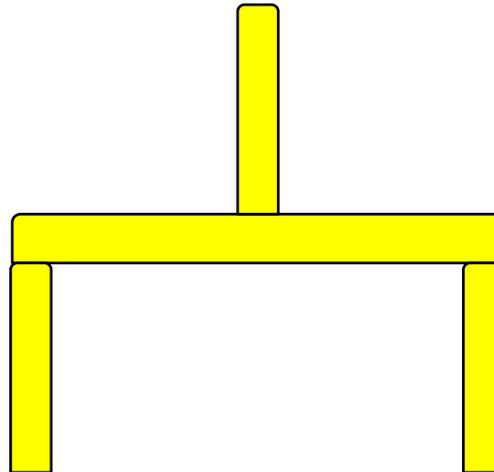
#1 Dichotomy of Control

In life, what is and what isn't under my control?

In this situation, what aspects are under my control?

Under my control

(My judgements,
My actions,
My emotions)



Not under my control

(The past,
Other people,
My reputation,
Fate)

Take Action

Accept

Result: Serenity

"There is only one
way to happiness
and that is to
cease worrying
about things which
are beyond the
power of our will. "

- Epictetus

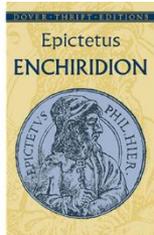
HappyLifeQuotes.com

*What, then, is to be done? To make the best of
what is in our power, and take the rest as it
naturally happens."*

Epictetus, [Discourses, 1.1.17](#)



“It isn’t events themselves that disturb people, but the judgements they make about them”



Epictetus



www.timlebon.com

Why Stoicism can help you become calmer

- As Epictetus says, emotions are the product of our judgements
- Change your judgements and you will change how you feel.
- This is a key principle in CBT (Cognitive Behavioural Therapy)
- Cognitive Therapy's pioneers, Beck and Ellis, took this idea from the Stoics!

Stoicism made Simple

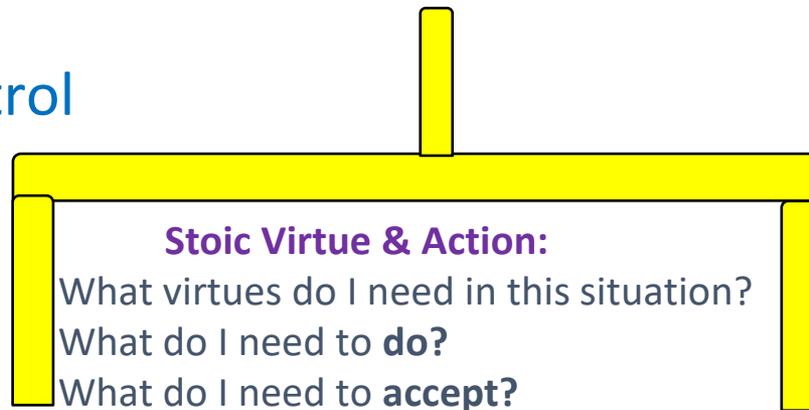
#2 Stoic Virtue

In life, what is and what isn't under my control?

In this situation, what aspects are under my control?

Under my control

(my judgements,
my actions,
my emotions)



Not under my
control

(the past, other people,
my reputation, fate)

Take Action

using Stoic virtues of
wisdom, courage &
justice

Accept

using Stoic virtues of
wisdom & self-control

Result: Appropriate Action

How to become a Virtuoso at living

Virtues are qualities which, given the human situation, enable us to live as excellent human beings.

Traditionally there are 4 cardinal virtues

- Self-control and Moderation (overcoming desire & unruly emotions) – patience, humility – what else might be in this family of qualities?
- Courage (overcoming fear & discomfort) – persistence, strength etc.
- Justice and concern for others (overcoming selfishness) – fairness, kindness, compassion, love ...
- Practical wisdom (overcoming short-term thinking and lack of insight) – *phronesis*, resourcefulness, judgement, wisdom about values, wisdom regarding dichotomy of control

Why do the Stoics think the Virtues are so Important?

- The Stoics argue that being virtuous mattered more than anything else – everything else was a “preferable indifferent” or “nice-to-have”). Virtue always “trumps” other values (such as feeling good)
- “Virtue [is] a skill or expertise in living or a knowledge of how to live properly. If you have this expertise, you will make proper use of all such experiences and of all ‘indifferents’ (preferable or not) but if you don’t have it you will not be able to use any of them properly. You will ‘foul up’ and make a mess of your life – including what seem to be the nice bits” (Prof. Chris Gill)
- See <http://modernstoicism.com/a-stoic-values-clarification-dialogue-and-workshop-by-christopher-gill-and-tim-lebon/>
- Link with serenity: you won’t get upset about lots of things (money, status, what other people think) once you recognise that they aren’t nearly as important as doing the best you can to be a good human being

Stoicism is about doing the best you can.
We can't control the outcome of our efforts, and
we are all “works in progress”



The best way to approach life, the Stoics suggest, is to think of oneself as an archer who does his or her best to fire the arrow well but accepts that once it has flown it may be blown off course and miss the target. Our intentions are like preparing to fire the arrow, but the outcome of our actions, like hitting the target, is beyond our control and partly the result of external events.

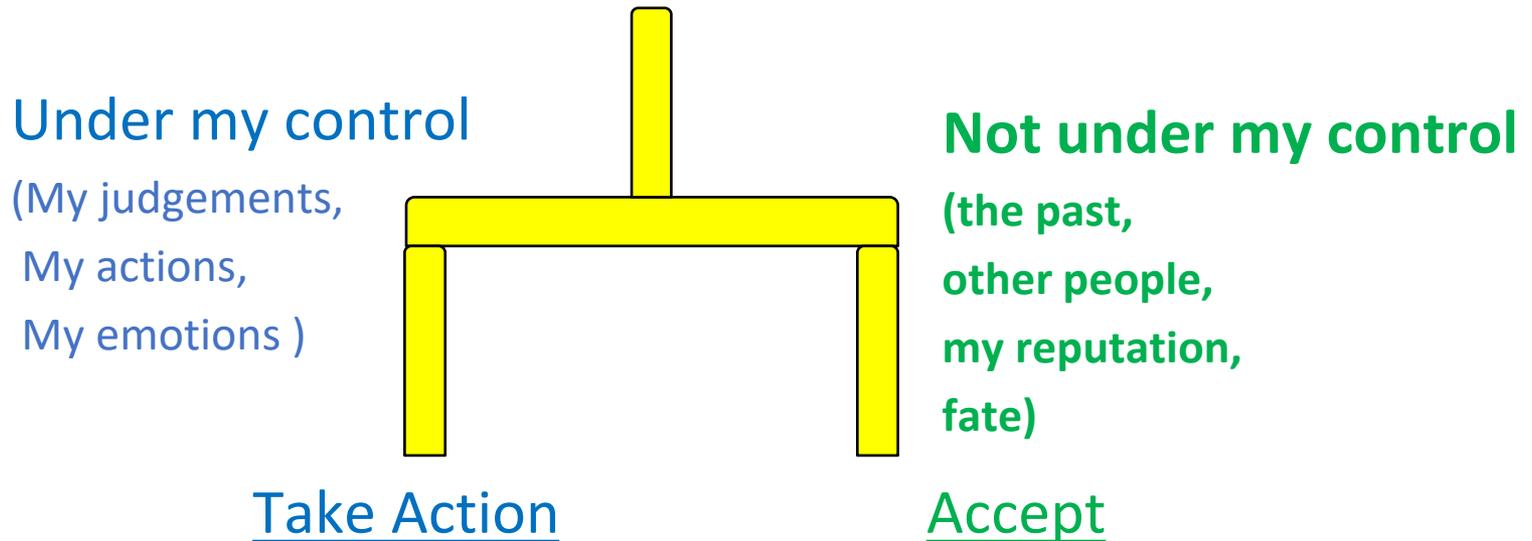
In addition, the Stoic sage was said to be as rare as the Egyptian Phoenix – we are all works in progress, doing the best we can.

Stoicism made Simple

#3 Stoic Mindfulness & Daily Practice

Dichotomy of Control : What is and what isn't under my control?

Stoic Mindfulness : Paying constant attention to my judgements & making them more rational & ethical. Implementing Stoic methods in the moment.



DAILY STOIC PRACTICE

Morning Meditation (Mental Rehearsal)

Evening Meditation (Review of day)

Stoic Journalling & Reading

What is Stoic Mindfulness?

- The SABS (Stoic Attitudes and Behaviour Scale) measures how Stoic you are.
- These items give a good idea of what is meant by Stoic Mindfulness

| SABS Item | Correlation Coefficients: | Average well-being |
|--|---------------------------|--------------------|
| I make an effort to pay continual attention to the nature of my judgments and actions. | | 0.28 |
| When an upsetting thought enters my mind the first thing I do is remind myself it's just an impression in my mind and not the thing it claims to represent | | 0.37 |

- In our research it's turned out to be one of the key active ingredients in Stoicism.

How to Develop Stoic Mindfulness

- Not the same as Buddhist Mindfulness so need specific methods to develop it
- Morning Stoic Meditation
 - Aim being to cultivate a sense of being observed. Imagining your thoughts are public. Doing everything as if a wise teacher were watching
 - Reflecting on the dichotomy of control
 - Using self-monitoring record sheet
 - Watching for early warning sign of emotions like anger
 - Reminding self of important Stoic principles perhaps using post-it notes or Stoic reminders or even illustrated quotations on your phone, tablet or PC
- Evening Stoic Meditation



“Say to yourself in the early morning: I shall meet today ungrateful, violent, treacherous, envious, uncharitable men. All of these things have come upon them through ignorance of real good and ill... I can neither be harmed by any of them, for no man will involve me in wrong, nor can I be angry with my kinsman or hate him; for we have come into the world to work together...”



Marcus Aurelius

THE STOIC EVENING MEDITATION

Mentally review the whole of the preceding day three times from beginning to end, and even the days before if necessary.

1.1. What done amiss? Ask yourself what mistakes you made and condemn (not yourself but) what actions you did badly; do so in a moderate and rational manner.

1.2. What done? Ask yourself what virtue, i.e., what strength or wisdom you showed and sincerely praise yourself for what you did well.

1.3. What left undone? Ask yourself what could be done better, i.e., what you should do instead next time if a similar situation occurs.

STOIC SELF-MONITORING RECORD SHEET

Use this sheet to record your thoughts, actions, and feelings in challenging situations. As soon as you notice troubling emotions or desires arising (called “passions” in Stoicism), pause and take a step back from the initial “impression” (or thought) underlying them. Then ask yourself whether the thing you’re becoming upset about is actually under your control (“up to you”) or not. Also try to record your actions, their consequences, and whether they were actually beneficial or not.

| Date/Time And briefly describe the situation. | Feelings (Passions) Include early-warning signs. | Thoughts (Impressions) Particularly those causing feelings. | Control Is this “up to you” or not? | Actions Were they beneficial? |
|---|--|---|---|---|
| 1. | | | | |
| 2. | | | | |
| 3. | | | | |
| 4. | | | | |
| 5. | | | | |
| 6. | | | | |
| 7. | | | | |

DICHOTOMY OF CONTROL

What is directly under my control?
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What do I need to accept?

STOICISM MADE SIMPLE



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Paying constant attention to my judgements
Using Stoic techniques in the moment
(e.g. Stoic reframe of adversities)

STOIC PRACTICE

Morning Meditation/Mental Rehearsal
Evening Meditation/Review
Stoic Journalling & Reading

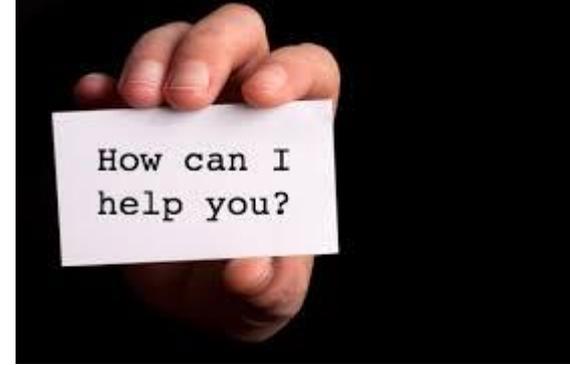
A white sticky note is pinned to a surface with a red pushpin. The note has the handwritten text "What's the plan?" in black ink. The note is slightly curled at the bottom right corner.

What's
the
plan?

- Life Coaching & Stoic Life Coaching (5 mins)
- Stoicism Made Simple - A Simplified Modern Stoic Framework (10 mins)
- **Demonstration (group or individual) (30 mins)**
- Feedback (10 mins)

Stoic Life Coaching

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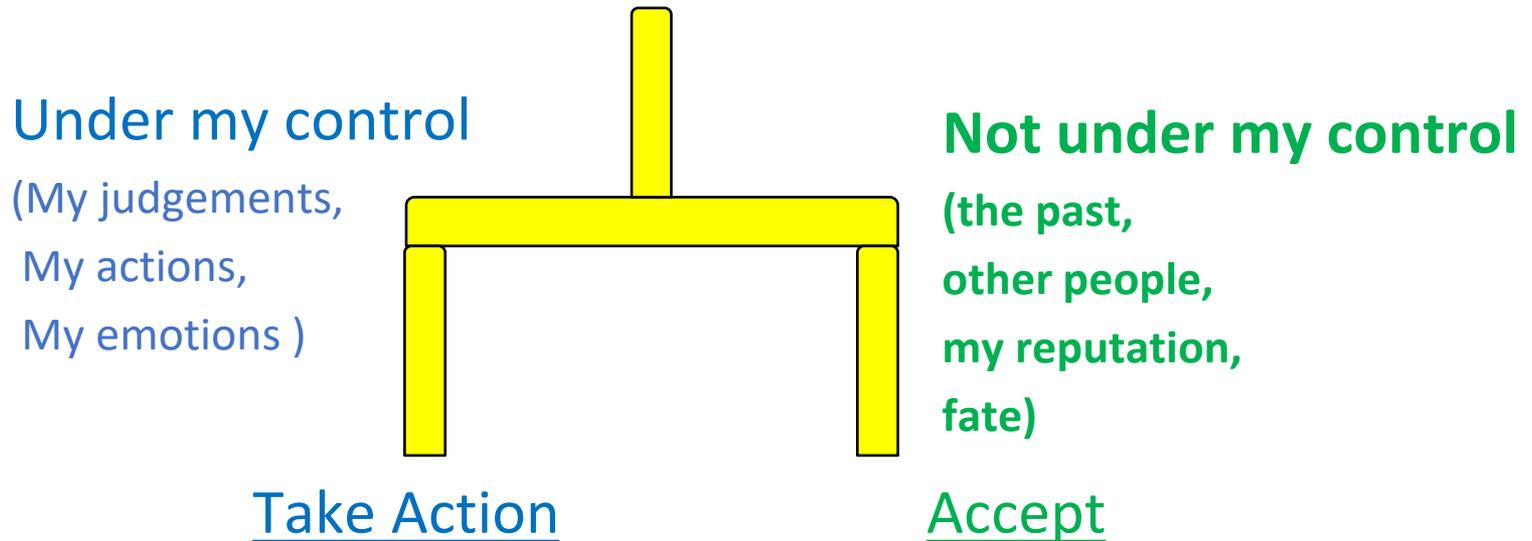


Stoicism made Simple

#3 Stoic Mindfulness & Daily Practice

Dichotomy of Control : In life, what is and what isn't under my control?

Stoic Mindfulness : Paying constant attention to my judgements & making them more rational & ethical. Implementing Stoic methods in the moment.



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Morning Meditation (Mental Rehearsal)

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Stoic Journalling & Reading

Worked Example: Finding a job.

Chris is aged 50 has been made redundant. Chris is quite low in mood and hasn't really started looking for work yet. Chris feels stuck and is worrying ("will I work again?") and ruminating ("why did it happen?")

| What I cannot control | What I can control |
|---|--------------------------------|
| That I lost my job | What I do now |
| That I have wasted a few months already | How I think about my situation |
| Whether I get a specific job | How many jobs I apply for |

| Virtue | How to use |
|--------------|---|
| Wisdom | Focus on what I can control. Don't base my value on whether I have a job but on me doing my best. |
| Courage | Feel the fear and apply for jobs anyway & ask friends for support |
| Self-control | Ban worry and rumination |
| Justice | It's not fair to my family if I don't make an effort to find work |

Action Plan (Practical Wisdom): As above – focus on the future and the virtues. Get expert help, ask friends, apply for jobs despite anxiety.

Your Example:.

| What I cannot control | What I can control |
|-----------------------|--------------------|
| | |
| | |
| | |

| Virtue | How to use |
|--------|---|
| Wisdom | Focus on what I can control. Remember doing my best (virtues) matters most. |
| | |
| | |
| | |

Action Plan (Practical Wisdom):

HAS this model of passed the test?

- Helpful - Evidence – Stoic Week research.
- Acceptable - Do the premises sound reasonable?
- Simple - Not over-complex?

Please fill in the feedback at

www.menti.com and enter code 18 98 12

Presentation available at

www.timlebon.com/StoicLifeCoachingLeBon.pdf

STOIC GOAL SETTING

- **Outcome Goals**

- E.g. “Get the job I’ve applied for”
- Least control over – The Stoic sets outcome goals lightly – remember the archer metaphor and that many outcome goals may be preferable indifferents.
- **Set outcome goals with caution.**

- **Performance Goals**

- E.g. “Give a good account for myself in the interview”
- More control over – These goals set the intention of doing your best.
- **Set performance goals, connecting them with the virtues and Stoic ideas** (e.g. remembering the archer analogy may help me be less nervous at interview)

- **Process Goals**

- E.g. “Spend an hour a day this work working on my CV and rehearsing for interview”
- Most control over.
- **Set process goals to include activities that build virtues (e.g. Stoic Meditations) and use virtues (e.g. be self-controlled so I don’t spend time watching TV instead)**

How to Develop Stoic Wisdom

- **Reflect on what is and is not under our control**
- **Reflect on which virtues are useful in this case**
- **Understand that being a virtuoso at living matters more than “preferrable indifferents”**
- **Mental rehearsal of day ahead and other challenges (e.g. Morning Meditation)**
- **Reflect on what an ideal Stoic role model would do - “Sage on your shoulder”**
- **Stoic mindfulness, moment by moment**
- **Reframing adversities as a “Stoic Test”**
- **Daily review of day (Evening Meditation)**
- **Read ancient and modern Stoic literature**
- **Write down and read favourite Stoic maxims daily**
- **Discuss Stoicism with others**
- **See a Stoic Life Coach**



Stoic Ideas to Develop Courage & Self-Control

TIP

MANAGE FEAR & DESIRE

Fear: Remind self that you cannot really be harmed. The things we are often afraid of (other's opinions of ourselves, feeling uncomfortable) are merely "preferable indifferents"

Desire: Remind self that what people typically want to control (money, status, food, drink, sex) are merely "preferable indifferents" and not really than important.

Acting virtuously matters more.

Use the "Stoic test" reframe

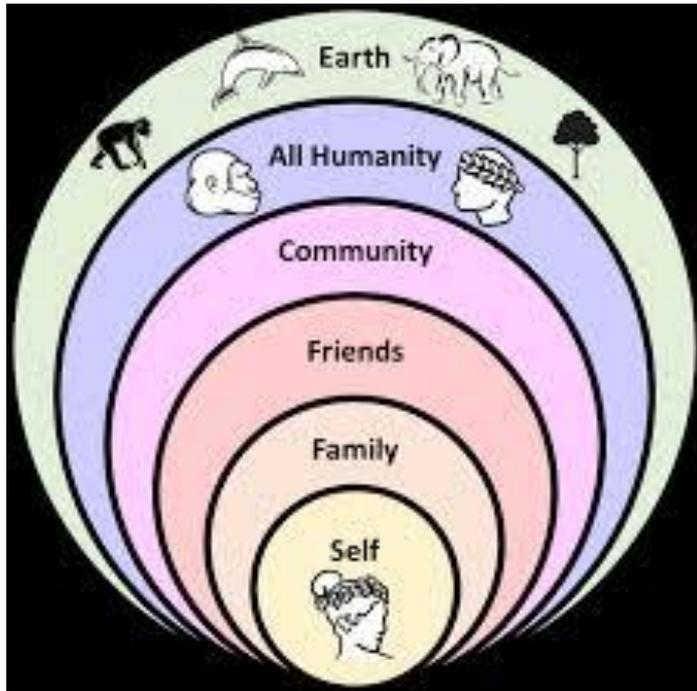
INCREASE COMMITMENT TO ACT

Think big picture. Focus on the positive outcome, the benefits for you and others in the long-term. Focus on the relative importance of acting virtuously.

Imagine you had the Stoic ideal "sage on your shoulder" giving you advice

Becoming More Compassionate

Circles of Hierocles Meditation



Picture a **circle of light surrounding your body**. Take a few moments to imagine that it symbolises a growing sense of affection toward yourself

2. Now imagine that **circle expands to include those closest to you** – members of your family and very close friends. Notice your feelings of affection and care expand to include them.

3. Next, imagine that circle of light expanding to **encompass people you encounter** everyday, co-workers, neighbours, acquaintances. See if you can project feelings of care and affection towards them too.

4. Now let the circle expand further to include **all humanity**, imagining that your feelings of affection are spreading to them also. They like you and deserve your care.

5. Finally imagine the circle now growing to **envelop the entire world**, allowing your feelings of affection to spread out to every creature on earth and the earth itself.

Stoic Anger Management

A 6 Step Plan based on Seneca's *On Anger*



1. Assess your motivation for change and increase motivation drawing on Seneca's arguments that anger is a bad thing
2. Anger is a faulty attempt to control the uncontrollable (you need "willing acceptance of what you cannot change")
3. Understand Seneca's 3 stages of anger. Do you err by confusing which stages of anger we can and can't control?
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Read on:

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<https://blog.timlebon.com/2019/05/how-stoicism-can-help-you-manage-anger.html>

Notice that you are worrying or ruminating

Ask yourself "Is there any aspect of the thing I am thinking about that is under my control? Remember, according to the Stoics, the main things under my control are my thoughts & deeds"

"No"

"Yes"

Ask: "What do I need to do to act in a virtuous – i.e. wise, self-controlled, caring, fair and courageous way? Can I do it now?"

"Yes, Now"

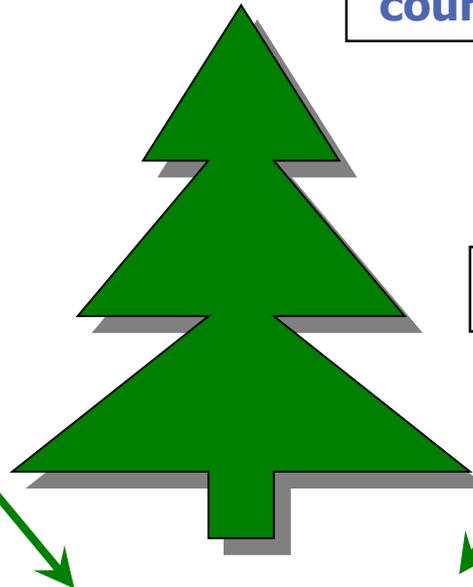
"No, Later"

Do it

Schedule it

Neglect the Worry

Park the Worry



Stoicism-Informed Coaching: Anxiety

- Can't control: Initial feelings of anxiety, impulse to escape
- Can control: what you tell yourself, whether you do escape
- All the virtues are likely to be relevant

Clinical wisdom not necessarily known to the ancient Stoics

- Social anxiety – important to focus externally not internally
- Panic – important to understand that you are not really at risk
- Phobias – understand that anxiety comes down with exposure
- Stress – helpful to be assertive, delegate, prioritise relaxation

Stoicism-Informed Coaching: Relationships

- Can't control: Other people
- Can control: what you tell yourself, how you respond
- All the virtues are likely to be relevant

Some Wisdom Tips not necessarily known to the ancient Stoics

- Empathise – put self in shoes of others
- Be assertive – say what you want in a friendly, calm and clear way
- Listen – find out what is important to the other person
- Seek win/win agreements – Seek resolutions that satisfy what matters to both of you

Stoicism-Informed Coaching: Procrastination

- Can't control: How you feel
- Can control: what you tell yourself, how you respond
- All the virtues are likely to be relevant

Some Wisdom Tips not necessarily known to the ancient Stoics

- Identify pros and cons of procrastination
- Break big tasks down into small steps
- Act on goals not on how you feel
- Set specific goals
- Remove distractions (such as phones and social media)
- Reward success

Stoicism-Informed Coaching: Reduce drinking

- Can't control: Urge to drink
- Can control: what you tell yourself, how you respond
- All the virtues are likely to be relevant

Some Wisdom Tips not necessarily known to the ancient Stoics

- Identify pros and cons of drinking
- Use Prochaska's Stages of Change model to help identify appropriate intervention (pre-contemplation, contemplation, preparing for action ...)
- Break big tasks down into small steps
- Act on goals not on how you feel
- Set specific goals
- Remove temptations (be aware of seemingly irrelevant decisions)
- Get social support (tell others)
- Reward success

Stoicism-Informed Coaching: Low Mood

- Can't control: The Past
- Can control: what you tell yourself, how you respond
- All the virtues are likely to be relevant

Some Wisdom Tips not necessarily known to the ancient Stoics

- Be active
- Break big tasks down into small steps
- Act on goals not on how you feel
- Socialise, even when you don't feel like it
- Seek support

Thank You