

# STOICISM

## THE PRACTICAL GUIDE TO A VIRTUOUS LIFE & UNSHAKABLE HAPPINESS



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HAPPINESS

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# Introduction

Welcome! First of all, thank you and congratulations for downloading this book “Stoicism: The Practical Guide to a Virtuous and Unshakeable Life”. I really appreciate you putting your time and trust in me. I am truly convinced that this book is able to provide you with the value and information you are looking for.

In this book you will find a revivment of the ancient wisdom hidden in the virtue of stoicism. The aim of this book is to provide you with practical knowledge about this notion which is not only an abstraction praised by philosophers in old times. This book is your short guide to stoicism and to various means of practicing it in your life. In the following pages, you will discover why even in modern, technology-dominated, and consume-oriented times like ours stoicism remains an important value.

Stoicism can be both a tool and a weapon. If you understand it in depth and know how to practice it, stoicism can be your key to strength and to happiness. Learning how to consciously value stoicism can make you tremendously independent and unshakeable in many situations you encounter in life. If you want to rediscover an old lesson in personal empowerment in a new light, read on and allow yourself to benefit from the potential of this unique virtue.

Thanks again for downloading this book, I hope you enjoy it!

# Chapter 1

## What Is Stoicism and Why Is It such a Precious Value?

First of all, let's face it: there may be a few preconceptions about stoicism nowadays. Some people may know it was a Greek school of thought, but the rest is probably more blurry. You sometimes hear this notion used in contexts that associate it with indifference, apathy, or total lack of emotions. Is this true? What makes it different from something like autism or psychopathy then? They all seem to verge on diminished emotionality somehow.

Stoicism is first and foremost about self-mastery. It's by no means a disorder and it implies no harm or poverty of experience. Stoicism comes down to a life philosophy meant to improve one's attitude in front of any kind of difficult situations as well as one's relationship with oneself. It's fair to say stoicism values control over emotions and it doesn't necessarily imply an emotional deficit. You could say with a significant degree of generalization that stoicism is the art of intelligently dealing with your emotions for the sake of higher achievement and satisfaction.

Stoicism starts from the premise that self-control is at the root of victory over weakness or excessive subjectivity. This mentality places an internal locus on control above everything else and this is achieved mainly through endurance in hardship and sovereignty over emotions. If you want to understand the essence of stoicism at lightning speed and in an error-free manner, just think of the words of Marcus Aurelius: 'If you are distressed by anything external, the pain is not due to the thing itself, but to your estimate of it; and this you have the power to revoke at any moment.'

Stoicism was a school of thought in ancient Greece that won a considerable number of followers, but also stirred a degree of controversy. It was founded in Athens by Zeno in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC. Its most important adepts were Marcus Aurelius, Cicero, Seneca, and Epictetus. This movement marked the Hellenistic period and attempted to propose a way of behavior in life that could free people from the risk of making judgment errors. Stoicism stands out because it is more than a philosophical direction. On a deeper level, it includes a code of ethics, an effective psychology, and even implicitly a few notions of masculinity. That's why it is so interesting and practical: can you really apply Cartesian philosophy as a way of life? Can you say you lead a life according to the principles of Phenomenology without appearing wrapped in your own consciousness and maybe detached from the objective world? Stoicism is more than philosophy: it is a value to cultivate in yourself and it has considerable practical benefit if you incorporate it in your mentality and behavior.

Stoics believed that emotions can lead to excessive subjectivity and misjudgment. They supported an attitude of calm and dispassionate control, since they thought emotions (especially negative ones like envy, anger, or fear) could blur one's mind, interfere with mental capacities, and estrange one from the truth. At the core of stoicism lies an appreciation for inner strength and solidity as well as a love for truth. The ideal self that such a life philosophy holds as a standard of thought and behavior is the wise person, the sage. It is an ideal of perseverance and maturity; it implies having internal resources

in front of hardship and relying on the self as a measure of everything. The inner self prevails over external factors that could influence the person in the stoic doctrine. This philosophy draws on a fascinating paradox: on the one hand, the internal emotional reality is treated with suspicion and questioned; on the other hand, external forces must also be resisted, since in stoic thought it is only your own self that you can rely on.

Stoicism aimed at reaching a form of intellectual, moral, and psychological perfection. The person who practiced this virtue could face practically anything in life, any kind of misfortune or difficulty. Stoicism implies endurance and learned invulnerability. One might say stoicism contradicts positive psychology, since it signals that people undergo hardship and must face that sternly. It even encourages a form of awareness of potential negative scenarios that at first sight could verge on pessimism. In his book *A Guide to the Good Life*, William B. Irvine mentions that stoicism implied a form of negative visualization that was meant to keep the mind alert in front of things that could go wrong. Stoics believed that excessive optimism is also a delusion, just like other emotions, and as such it can cause harm to people. Blinding yourself to what could go wrong or to negative aspects of a situation and forcing yourself to see only the bright side is not strength. Stoicism can help people reach a form of immunity to hardship by facing it head-on and overcoming it.

William B. Irvine is not the only one who grasps the subtle contrast between the stoic mentality and the obsession with positive thinking that many people are absorbed in nowadays. Oliver Burkeman took a more radical stand against what he calls a contemporary 'cult of optimism'. In his book entitled *The Antidote: Happiness for People Who Can't Stand Positive Thinking*, he notes that modern psychology risks deluding people and teaching them to be irrational. The philosophy of unconditional optimism encourages a view of happiness based on what the author calls 'an excitable cheer'. As you can see, he signals the emotional basis of positive thinking in contrast to a rational one built on logical reasoning and deep-seated conviction. Thus, stoicism can be the perfect antidote to falling in the trap of 'doping' oneself with gleeful emotionality instead of actually processing the world and filtering it through an authentic system of values.

Although this book doesn't go that far to combat positive psychology, it certainly appreciates the value of stoicism as a means of balancing out a kind of artificial optimism that is not thought-out. While considering multiple outcomes is definitely recommendable in any context, practicing a form of forced, blind optimism can lead to severe disappointment when reality doesn't conform to expectations. There's a difference between striving for positive results and ignoring any flawed or tragic side of life. Stoicism is surely a more realistic psychology which equals happiness with a form of wise tranquility that arises from rational judgments instead of some irrational cheerfulness. Stoicism teaches us that good results and happiness are possible even through a calm and aware approach. You don't have to take endorphin supplements and give in to NLP to be truly happy!

As you can see, stoicism implies an acute sense of endurance that arises from a view of life as a struggle. According to stoics, you have to struggle with your own biases, with your emotions, and with people or other external factors that would make you question your worth or try to shake you. The human model praised by stoicism is that of a firm unshakeable inner core that can survive anything through mere endurance, independence of thought, and objectivity.

Two of the key concepts of stoicism are the will and a universal reason. The individual must strive to make sure that their will is in accordance with an order inherent in nature. At the same time, individual logic should seek to detach from entanglements of subjectivity and misjudgment in order to get close to a universal reason stoics believed in, namely the *logos*. By cultivating the virtue of freedom from the chains of emotions, you can reach happiness. As you can see, stoicism is not a doctrine that implies negativism, since pure happiness and wellbeing are its aims. It just doesn't ignore or overlook difficulties or problems. It proposes immunity to damaging emotions (such as envy, lust, fear, suspicion, hatred etc.) as a key to successful interpersonal relationships and a formula for internal strength. In the view of stoics, people who allow themselves to succumb to transitory, treacherous, and futile emotions are slaves, while the sage is the only one free.

Stoicism did meet some resistance when it emerged and rose and there were people who believed that it somewhat contradicts 'common sense' or goes against human nature, a nature which is also made of emotions and passions, not only reason and ethics. Is this true? What does common sense really tell us? While there's a grain of truth in the idea that feelings are part of our nature, stoicism does not actually challenge common sense. In a way, it supports common sense, since it holds up standards of strength and independence that can make one unbeatable.

The unique charm and value of stoicism that make it so important and easy to practice even nowadays is its accessibility and its applicability. Stoic philosophy doesn't imply a body of knowledge or a system of abstractions that are disconnected from everyday life. Stoicism is not only *pour les connaisseurs*. It is a way of life and a kind of practice meant to make any person happy and empowered. What makes it extremely valuable even nowadays is the fact that it is a form of psychological discipline. It aims at self-transformation and self-mastery through a code of behavior and ethics.

Let's not forget that stoicism is meant to secure happiness. Epicureans aimed at doing the same thing and sought the most effective methods to reach this goal. In their view a life full of pleasure and hedonism was the guarantee of happiness. Stoicism has prominent ethical grounds. They start from the premise that emotions and visceral passions or reactions are at the root of many life dramas and tragedies. What is essential to keep in mind is that the real virtue of stoicism has acquired slightly different connotations today. Nowadays many people use the term 'stoic' to refer to someone unemotional or dull and dry. This is not true when we look into the life philosophy practiced by Greeks. Stoicism understood that emotions are human, but they refused to see them as the ultimate reality. They aimed at transforming and transcending them as a form of liberation from unnecessary pain and bondage to other people, to lack of substance etc.

Stoics placed more trust in reason as a path to clear judgment and consequently to happiness and an effective life. Just think of the words of Marcus Aurelius if you want to understand how significant the notion of happiness was for stoics: 'If you work at that which is before you, following right reason seriously, vigorously, calmly, without allowing anything else to distract you, but keeping your divine part pure, as if you were bound to give it back immediately; if you hold to this, expecting nothing, but satisfied to live now according to nature, speaking heroic truth in every word that you utter, you will live happy. And there is no man able to prevent this.'

As you can see, perseverance, focus, and resistance to distractions (which are often emotional) is the recipe of happiness. It's important to notice that living in harmony with the laws of nature and in line with truth also guarantee you a victorious ability in front of anyone. Such virtues can ensure infallibility and invincibility.

One of the main goals of stoicism was liberation from suffering and endurance when faced with life's highs and lows. Stoics had a rather complex way of dealing with ethics as well as emotions. Their system of values referenced precise qualities to be cultivated. Their lessons in practical psychology and discipline discussed and approached a variety of emotions (the so-called 'stoic passions') in an attempt to liberate the person from their influence. They considered the major 'enemies' of wisdom and objectivity to be distress, lust, fear, and delight. These passions, if left unchecked and experienced irrationally or chaotically, were thought to impair judgment. At the same time, stoics believed that four main virtues could lead to success and happiness in life: courage, temperance, justice, and wisdom. Practicing these virtues as a moral foundation in many situations could guarantee happiness, self-satisfaction, and serenity.

## Chapter 2

### How to Stoically Deal with Anger

When you think of ways of dealing with anger and ways of eliminating it from your system and your accepted emotions, you can't help considering Buddhist philosophy. After all Buddha tried to convince everyone that inner peace and detachment from mundane matters are the path to Nirvana. Well, stoicism is more than that. Maybe it has something in common with Buddhism in its approach to anger in the sense that stoics believed anger to be highly damaging and self-subversive. For this reason, they thought it should be totally discouraged. Remember Buddha's words: 'Holding on to anger is like grasping a hot coal with the intent of throwing it at someone else; you are the one who gets burned.'

First and foremost, this approach to anger is supported by stoicism. Stoics considered anger similar to an admission of defeat in front of another person or life circumstances. Anger is an intense emotion that signals a person was insulted or their boundaries were violated. Anger also implies a previous emotional attachment to an idea or outcome. When things don't go as planned, you experience anger. It is also what many people feel when they have to face someone else's hurtful or intolerable behavior. Anger is part of what you feel when you are insulted. As such, anger is an emotion that goes hand in hand with the fight-or-flight response and many people express it when they want to settle things or retaliate for an offense.

Stoicism teaches you getting angry means allowing yourself to be filled by negative emotions, which you shouldn't accept. Being stoic doesn't necessarily mean repressing anger or not feeling anything at all in case your boundaries are violated. A stoic approach to anger is actually a method of effective anger management. What does this mean exactly? It doesn't imply pretending you didn't perceive any transgression of boundaries. It is a way of controlling your anger and containing it instead of allowing it to take over your judgment and attitude. Stoics believed emotions can be classified as impressions and passions. Impressions are emotions that happened to you, namely something stirred by outside events or other factors. Passions are emotions that derive from your own judgments or your ideas about right and wrong and as such they are easier to transform. The key to dealing with the first category is restraint and control as opposed to unhinged expression full of pathos.

As you may know, pathos is a word that lies at the root of both 'pathetic' and 'pathological'. The Greek word *pathos* meant both feeling and disease. As such the English term 'pathos' doesn't have very strong pejorative connotations. However, for stoics pathos was both ridiculous and pitiful. It meant unnecessary drama and vulnerability, since immediate, raw expression of emotions (especially negative ones) basically places you at the hands of someone else. This is especially true when it comes to an emotion like anger. When you feel insulted, expressing anger directly equals an act of claiming something from the offender. Such a thing places you in a position of inferiority. Isn't it understood that someone who offends you is not willing to show you due respect? What is the point of actually letting them know they managed to insult you?

A stoic attitude towards anger means the management of this emotion inside yourself without allowing your offender to gain one more advantage over you. How should you practically deal with your anger? The key is not reacting impulsively to things, but taking time to process feelings internally and understand the part you are actually playing in your own anger. Epictetus said that it's not enough to be hit or harmed – you must also believe that you are being harmed. First of all, people may do it on purpose: angering you can be such a pleasant goal! So if you actually get angry, it means someone succeeded in provoking you. Epictetus also draws attention to your own complicity in this process. If you are angered, someone managed to hit their target and you actually agree with being angry. *Angered* is a word that has both passive and active connotations – one the one hand, someone does things to anger you; on the other hand, you are the subject who's getting angry.

It's essential to remember that you actually play the most important part in your own anger. If you allow yourself to get angry and you show it, you are actually giving away your power. It was also Epictetus who emphasized that 'man is disturbed not by things, but by the views he takes of them.' If you want to get rid of anger, you should first and foremost examine your opinions and understand why you are disappointed or enraged. It might mean the beliefs you hold aren't valid. For instance, if you are angry at someone's betrayal, it is your expectations of them that might be responsible for everything. After all, you thought too high of that person and you didn't penetrate through their character well enough! This perspective allows you more independence on the long run, once you understand the part you play in your own anger.

Stoics used to view anger as a very base feeling that should be avoided. Seneca believed it is worthless and reflects a limited spirit. Getting angry somehow suggests an inability to understand things objectively or to practice big-picture thinking. Some people get angry about small details instead of seeking to hear the entire story or to see things from different perspective. Controlling your own anger shows maturity, detachment, and independence from trivial matters.

## Chapter 3 Using Stoicism to Push through Your Grief

First of all, it should be clear that stoicism doesn't mean utter lack of emotions. For stoics indifference was a state to aspire to. Many of them stressed that stoicism doesn't mean insensitivity. It is a philosophy of appropriate action that can free you from unnecessary emotions. Many feelings have undermining effects over the one who experiences them. Once you understand that stoics didn't preach cruelty or cold-heartedness, it's far easier to practice it with full respect and trust in its power.

When it comes to such a perfectly human emotion like grief, the attitude of the stoic is one of transformation. Of course, there are many situations in life in which experiencing grief is inevitable. How can you stay impassible and totally indifferent if you lose someone dear, for instance? How could you not care at all when you feel unrequited love? Stoics were well aware of the variety of human emotions – all too aware! That was one of the reasons why they strived so hard to keep them under wraps so as not to be controlled by them.

Seneca emphasized that the sage does know what affection, friendship, or sorrow mean. Stoics didn't idealize a dehumanized figure by any means! Their standard was not 'the hardness of a rock or of iron', which would imply utter insensitivity. Their ideal was a matter of strength and focus of energy and effort towards noble pursuits. Stoicism means getting rid of excess feeling that doesn't do you any good. A stoic approach to an emotion like grief means acknowledging what you feel, but taking it for a subjective issue that you should seek liberation from. Marcus Aurelius suggested that the best method to do this is getting rid of your own judgment: once you free yourself from 'I am hurt', you will get rid of the hurt itself. That said stoicism asks you to own your feelings and strive to overcome them. Grief may be absolutely natural under certain circumstances. Being stuck in it is harmful both to yourself and to others. Stoicism means looking for the cause of your grief inside yourself instead of blaming external reality. It is the duration and scope of your own grief that you can control and you should take responsibility for.

Grief is a rather complex emotion that arises as a response to loss. A stoic approach to grief would equal a realization of the futility of prolonging suffering. Rationally speaking there's nothing you can do after you lost someone or something: your feelings won't bring it back. Being stoic in the face of grief means accepting pain and loss as facts of life and then moving on. The stoic model of behavior in such a context is one of resilience and survival. You should not let your grief take control of you! Suffer in silence, grit your teeth if you have to, and replace your pain with a determination to survive and move on with your life.

Keep in mind stoics weren't cynics. We're talking about very distinct philosophies and attitude towards life here! Actually, it's fair to say stoicism starts from the premise that life is so complex, that you must face much hardship and passion. If people didn't feel anything, what would a stoic attitude be useful for? Strong emotions as well as the fear of being disempowered are inherent in stoicism. There are many feelings you have to overcome, that's why virtues such as courage and self-discipline are so important for stoics.

Nassim Taleb puts it very beautifully when he underlines that a stoic is someone who can change fear into prudence, pain into an ability to transform, mistakes into initiation, and desire into undertaking. As you can see, the existence of complex feeling is actually a precondition of stoicism. The fundamental virtue of such practical philosophy is the ability to endure painful feelings and rise above them. There is also a deep love for the world and other people that stoics were aware of and attuned to: they knew well what the loss of someone dear can feel like and mean. However, they believed that excessive attachment makes you dependent and weak. Thus, their ideal was accepting human love, but not completely identifying with your bonds or the objects of your affection. Only this way can you maintain a core of invulnerability if you happen to lose them.

## Chapter 4 Your Shield against Fear

Fear is an emotion produced by a threat and an impression that you have no control over it. Entering 'fear mode' already means you feel a 'fight' response wouldn't be appropriate – maybe you don't feel strong enough and well-prepared or maybe the threat is unfamiliar and overpowering.

The stoic attitude to fear or, better said, a way of combating fear is focusing on things that are within your control. Simply put, you should eliminate from your life anything that you cannot have a good grip of. Fear derives from a feeling of impotence in front of an external reality more often than not. Of course, you can also fear your own passions, for instance. Nevertheless, stoicism centers on detachment from outer factors or events that could shake you. In order to get rid of fear, you shouldn't place your trust in things that you don't have enough knowledge of. Similarly, people can only make you feel fear if you are ignorant and powerless in front of them. A rational approach will help you master the world through logic and method. Letting yourself go with the flow of feelings without asking your reason to examine and take hold of people or things in your life is likely to encourage anxiety, suspicion, insecurity etc.

At the same time, you should manage your own perceptions of things around you or people you allow in your life. Epictetus said that what really frightens and dismays us is actually the way we think about external events rather than the events themselves. It is our interpretations and the meaning we attach to things that have the ability to inspire fear in us rather than the things themselves. To help you get a better picture of the power of your own perceptions and thoughts, think of Nietzsche's famous saying: 'Beware that, when fighting monsters, you yourself do not become a monster. For when you gaze long into the abyss, the abyss also gazes into you.' There are several meanings that this quote opens up; however one refers to people's special ability to create and expand their own fear by proliferating obsessions with things that are obscure, hard to penetrate, ambiguous, or simply terrifying. It would be easier to switch your attention from what you cannot control or know!

Stoicism also protects you from fear by teaching you how to manage your expectations. Stoics had very high standards they held themselves up to, but they were by no means idealistic. They discouraged far-fetched expectations and dreams about the world or other people, since they knew how damaging they can be. Being stoic means being attuned to the grim reality and that diminishes your irrational fears. You see, high expectations act in a subversive way on you: you think of all that could go perfectly in a conscious way, but at the same time, the higher you dream, the more fear you allow for on a subconscious level.

Stoics encouraged a realistic attitude in front of life by digging first into what could go wrong without getting stuck on worst case scenarios. Their goal was pure knowledge – only by staying aware of all possible outcomes can you remain in control. The stoic philosophy implies an attitude along the lines of 'hope for the best, but be prepared for the worst'. Such a balanced view of life can help you be successful and find methods to deal with things others wouldn't even predict. The point is avoiding surprises by managing your own expectations ...since that's what you can control best.

There is also a harsher way of dealing with fear that some stoics engaged in. Marcus Aurelius, for instance, claimed that starting a day with a pessimistic attitude is paradoxically a good way of managing your fears. How come? In his view, there's hardly anything that can take you by surprise and thus stir your feelings if you expect the worst. In his own words: 'Begin each day by telling to yourself: today I shall be meeting with interference, ingratitude, insolence, disloyalty, ill-will, and selfishness – all of them due to the offenders' ignorance of what is good and evil'. Does it sound scary? Well, this was meant to be an antidote to futile hopes and unjustified trust in people. You see, stoics knew well that people were ignorant and capable of many evils out of lack of discernment and solid values. Pessimism allowed them to protect themselves from the unnecessary suffering and sadness that could come from excessive trust or noble expectations. So if you want to manage your irrational fears the hard way, cultivate a form of detached pessimism that will make you face the worst that could happen to you during a day. In case it doesn't, you can consider yourself lucky and you'll be happy. You see ... it sounds like a method that may well challenge positive psychology!

## Chapter 5 Stoicism and Indifference

First of all, there is an overgeneralized preconception that stoicism is blandness, dryness, and even something close to frigidity. This couldn't be farther from the truth. Essentially being stoic means aspiring to a calm, unshakeable attitude in front of negative feelings and destructive passions. Stoics don't really praise indifference for its own sake. That would equal a poverty of human experience, inner emptiness, and impaired interpersonal relationships. A stoic attitude welcomes positive emotions and an ability to enjoy happiness or experience joy for very good reasons. However, stoics knew well life is not always so bright and they wanted to have control over bad things and aspects of life as well as over themselves.

Actually, stoicism holds happiness as its primary goal. That's what it promises and can deliver – if you know how to wisely incorporate it in your life. Thus, indifference is only a path to happiness, not a goal in itself. Indifference to malice, misfortune, insults etc. is a sure way of staying happy and in control. Stoicism doesn't advocate a grim, passive, or sterile life. On the contrary, it aims at sparing you all the harmful and consuming feelings that may engulf you unless you deliberately practice a psychology of indifference. Remember that indifference is something a stoic aspires to. They don't start from such an inner reality. The stoic model is one that targets self-control rather than a barren life. In fact, the stoic experiences a feeling of elation each time they manage to control a dangerous emotion or an unwanted external influence through cultivating indifference. As such, indifference can be a path to more pleasant and useful feelings. Keep in mind that stoicism comes down to learned indifference.

Indifference is meant to ensure a desirable state of tranquility that is absolutely necessary for an efficient and successful life regardless of the century people live in. That's why stoicism remains such a valid and valuable life philosophy. It is not necessarily indifference that is a stoic virtue. Indifference is only a means to an end. The real virtues are strength, serenity, and a rational, objective way of perceiving the world as well as the self.

Another important aspect are the ethical implications of stoicism. Let's not forget this philosophy has a very prominent ethical focus. It centered on commitment to truth, grim endurance of opposition or hardship for the sake of one's ideas of right and wrong, and an avoidance of 'bad' emotions and passions (such as envy, greed, rage, hatred, vengefulness etc.). However, it's interesting to notice that stoicism didn't necessarily invoke an external authority (such as a deity) to deal with moral issues. Its point was that people should practice such things for the sake of other important virtues whose effects have clear ethical implications. It was out of genuine commitment to values and belief in what is right that you should do certain things, not because you fear some divine punishment. In this case ...how could stoicism really mean indifference?

An ethical stance is the opposite of indifference. Stoicism doesn't mean permitting evil or not caring about what is right and wrong. Quite the opposite: stoicism highlights the concept of virtue which has prominent ethical implications. However, the ethical content of this doctrine is a highly personalized and interesting take. The bottom line is avoiding dangerous passions, negative emotionality, and

entanglements that could bring you under the control of other people. It's as if all other moral values derived from such basic principles. And that is not insignificant at all.

## Chapter 6 A Code of Masculinity

We live in a time when people are more and more enlightened about gender. Nowadays there is enough open-mindedness and awareness of the fact that this cultural category is constructed through ingrained beliefs and habitual practices. That said the goal of this chapter is not limiting stoicism as a doctrine and as a practice only to men. Stoicism implies universal virtues that can be adopted by both men and women.

However, in the form it was conceived and developed in ancient Greece, stoicism had a prominent masculine side to it. What does this mean exactly? The values it aims at cultivating and promoting imply a psychology of gritty endurance, lack of transparency, and invulnerability to emotions that could be associated with notions and ideals of masculinity. The bottom line is stoicism offers a specific approach to masculinity. Needless to say, in the ancient world you could also find other notions of masculinity e.g. political power, sexual prowess, Dionysian frenzy, Apollonian rationality and balance etc. Even the sage or the philosopher himself was a specific model of masculinity.

What is extremely interesting and appealing about stoicism is the fact that it goes far beyond a conception of manhood as a territory of rational thought and knowledge. Stoicism has more sophisticated and alluring gender connotations. This practice starts from the premise that masculinity should equal strength. However, it is not political or social power that stoicism promotes as markers of masculinity, but rather a profoundly internal brand of power. It is a matter of strength and control nonetheless! Through its ideals of control over emotions, perseverance, and unshakeable endurance, stoicism is in many ways more honest and complex than many other concepts that aimed at defining manhood far more directly. Stoicism doesn't claim emotions are 'female content' or 'female lingo'. It actually quite openly admits men experience emotions ... and these emotions and passions can be quite powerful. For this reason, stoicism proposes control over the self as well as the outer world (destiny included) by means of resistance to the temptation posed by such feelings.

The stoic view of masculinity doesn't necessarily imply physical force or might in combat. There were other ancient models to take care of those aspects. Stoicism proposes a code of masculinity based on exquisite mental strength. The stoic can be invincible through perfect self-control and fortitude. What is striking and powerfully manly about stoicism is the idea that in a way you shouldn't fear hardship and challenge. On the contrary, one could say stoics welcome a test of strength that could enable them to exert their own notions of control and wisdom.

Stoicism didn't directly aim at gaining power over others. However, through the ideas and attitudes it supported, a form of male dominance was not really hard to reach. Keep in mind this was only a byproduct of values such as endurance and independence, albeit an effective one! You could say that stoicism combines notions of masculinity that are present in many areas in life: battle, politics, philosophy, social space etc. Stoicism implies victory over any kind of enemies or opposition through perfect self-governance, determination, and invulnerability. If you control your own

emotions and you face the world in a calm, indifferent way, nobody can have power over you! This sums up stoicism quite nicely when it comes to its implicit conception of power. At the core of stoicism lies the view of the world as a struggle and as constant challenge to which you must respond with grace and complete trust in your ability to be victorious over any hardship. Stoicism is after all a philosophy of survival under any circumstances. There is a belief in an immense potential of people to gain control over themselves and the world around them.

What distinguishes stoicism from others codes of masculinity (whether overt, or not) is the fact that it includes notions of ethics and happiness. It is not only strength and invincibility that are important. Stoicism opens up to a more humanized view by incorporating standards of healthy living and successful practices meant to cultivate virtue and guarantee wellbeing. Thus, stoicism starts from the idea that life implies struggle and hardship, but its goal is reaching is state of serenity and bliss by becoming unattached to futile and harmful things and by advocating liberation from irrational passions and vices. Stoicism is thus a very rational and mental practice of masculinity that excludes stereotypical notions of aggression, impulsivity, or dominance.

# Conclusion

This book provided you with an introduction to stoicism and with several ways of integrating this philosophy in your life. It's important to remember that stoicism already had a very practical side even as a doctrine that spread in ancient Greece. It was a way of living rather than an abstract system of thought with very little applicability.

In this short guide to stoicism, you discovered why this model of thought and behavior is still highly valuable and how it you can practice it even nowadays. Keep in mind you don't have to actually start reading piles of books written by stoic philosophers in order to understand it and assimilate it into your life. You can practice stoicism in many situations and contexts in your life, from business or your profession to your romantic life. The bottom line is that stoicism implies an awareness of the fact that negative emotions are counterproductive. Its goal is teaching you how to maintain control over many aspects of your life by learning how to gain inner strength and independence from futile feelings and endeavors.

This book taught you how you can use a stoic attitude when you have to face several concrete emotions as well as why stoicism is not actually a philosophy of indifference, but one of power. Practicing stoicism will help you gain more control over your life, stay perseverant and resistant under unfortunate or difficult circumstances, and keep unwanted emotions at bay. Stoicism is also the perfect shield against people who could otherwise disturb you through their attitude or deeds.

Learn the secret, but immense value of stoicism and empower yourself!

**Thank you again for downloading this book!**

I hope it was able to help you understand what stoicism is about beyond preconceptions and how you can effectively practice it in your life to your own benefit.

The next step is to implement what you have learnt. You should start by trusting its fundamental ideas and finding ways of testing the power of a stoic attitude in several concrete situations. You will see for yourself in an immediate way how valuable stoicism is and why it should be one of your guiding principles in life.



Finally, if you enjoyed this book, would you be kind enough to leave a review for this book on Amazon?

**Thank you and good luck!**

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# FREE BONUS

## **Meditation Music with integrated Binaural Beat (Brain Frequencies)**

In order to increase your quality of life, be more successful and be more grounded you'll need to meditate, period. There is no way around this. There is so much science out there surrounding this topic, it's ridiculous. Every self-development book out there talks about meditation and there is a reason for it. It helps with pretty much everything in life, from stress, health, well-being, up to cancer prevention, weight loss, and ADHD, etc.

However, for many people it is hard to meditate because they are too restless or they have some kind of reluctance towards it. I provide you here with 2 meditation music pieces that will help you with getting into a relaxed state quicker. Also, this is not only music, it also contains what is called "Binaural Beats".

### **What are Binaural Beats?**

A Binaural beat consists essentially of two different frequencies. Basically, one frequency comes from one side or one earbud, the other frequency - which slightly differs from the first frequency - comes from the other side or the other earbud (of the headphones). Our brain then creates a new frequency which is the difference between those two initial frequencies. For example, a frequency of 205 Hertz that comes through the left earbud and a frequency of 200 Hertz that comes through the right earbud would make the brain create a frequency of 5 Hertz ( $205-200=5$ ), makes sense?

By doing this, we are able to create infrasounds, which are sounds that our ears do not perceive but our brain can. Now, our brain uses infrasound frequencies itself depending on in which state it is (awake, relaxed, sleep, dream etc.). Through inducing different frequencies artificially we are able to bring ourselves for example into a state of relaxation or even dream-like state and alter our consciousness and general perception that way. This helps tremendously with meditation.

### **Instructions:**

1. Follow the link
2. Put in earphones or put on headphones
  - [Note: If you listen to it through a speaker, the binaural beat becomes a "monaural beat" which is still effective but actually lessens the potency of the effect]
3. Listen

Here are the links, I hope you enjoy:

[Meditation Music #1 @ Youtube](#)

[Meditation Music #2 @ Youtube](#)