

Life. Fun. Purpose.

With Purpose Coach Fawn Miller

Group Call #57 Workbook

THRIVING THROUGH STOICISM

*“Objective judgement, now at this very moment;
unselfish action, now at this very moment;
willing acceptance, now at this very moment – of all external events.
That’s all you need.”
– Marcus Aurelius*

INTRODUCTIONS

(20ish Mins, 2-3 mins each)

Fawn will lead intros

1. Name
 2. Location
 3. Gratitude
 4. A recent example of “choice” or “free will” in alignment with values
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FOCUS AREA SHARE

GROUP SHARE!

1–2 Mins Each, Popcorn

- Reflect on an area of your *self* or your *life* that you are either actively focusing on upgrading, OR an area of your life that you seem to repeatedly struggle with or get less than ideal results.
- Share what it is with the group
- Share – How does the ‘less than optimal’ version of this tend to play out?
- What triggers are associated with this way of being or behavior?
- What would it look like if you were operating in *Thrive Mode* in this area?

STOICISM

WHO

- Zeno – Shipwrecked merchant turned philosopher
- Marcus Aurelius – Roman Emperor
- Seneca – Playwright, political advisor, and philosopher; devoted to becoming a better person each day
- Epictetus – Slave turned teacher
- Aristotle – Astronomer, philosopher, “The Golden Mean”

FAMILIAR THEMES

- Principled alignment with reality
- Locus of Control – Internal or External?
- Letting go of ego, drama, attachment
- Know thyself – Journaling, reflection
- The “obstacle is the way” – Finding the *opportunity* in any given situation, esp setbacks, and noticing the opportunity for uniquely personal lessons, learning and growth (instead of staying fixed and focused on the external)
 - Life is happening // Life is happening *for* me (growth)
 - Inherent Neutrality – Nothing can be good or evil

STOICISM - A DEEPER UNDERSTANDING

Stoicism is an ancient Greco-Roman philosophy with an enormous impact on individuals, societies, and civilizations throughout hundreds of years, and yet is still incredibly relevant today.

This impactful and practical philosophical framework is the backbone of Self-Agency, and provides a straightforward set of principles and personal standards intended to help us become more resilient, virtuous, happy, content, and all-around badass from the *inside out*.

Stoicism is a tool in the pursuit of self-mastery, perseverance, and wisdom: something one uses to live a great life, ... it provides much needed strength, wisdom, and stamina for all of life's challenges. ([Daily Stoic](#))

THE THREE DISCIPLINES OF STOICISM

Stoic Agenda

To avoid unhappiness, frustration, and disappointment, we need to do two things: control those things that are within our power (namely our beliefs, judgments, desires, and attitudes) and be indifferent or apathetic to those things which are not in our power (namely, things external to us).
(William R. Connolly)

- **PERCEPTION:** How we see things (objective judgement)
- **ACTION:** What we do in and for the world (unselfish action)
- **WILL:** How we endure, bear, and accept the difficulties and challenges of life (willing acceptance)

THE FOUR VIRTUES OF STOICISM

COURAGE

TEMPERANCE

JUSTICE

WISDOM

Courage: Our roadblocks, trials, difficult situations, adversities are *essential*. If you never had the chance to experience opposition, you would never know what you are made of! These “problems” are not only opportunities to *choose* Self-Agency in the moment and take control of your experience, but also proof that *you can handle anything* regardless of the outcome.

Temperance: Temperance is about moderation and self-control, doing nothing in excess. Doing the right thing in the right amount in the right way. Because “We are what we repeatedly do,” Aristotle also said, “therefore excellence is not an act, but a habit.”

In other words: Virtue and excellence is a way of living. It’s foundational. It’s like an operating system and the code this system operates on is habit.

[As Epictetus would later say](#), “capability is confirmed and grows in its corresponding actions, walking by walking, and running by running… therefore, if you want to do something, make a habit of it.” So if we want to be happy, if we want to be successful, if we want to be great, we have to develop the capability, we have to develop the day-to-day habits that allow this to *ensue*.

Justice: Stoics hold “doing the right thing” in the highest esteem. Being brave. Finding the right balance. These are core Stoic virtues, but in their seriousness, they pale in comparison to what the Stoics worshipped most highly: Doing the right thing.

There is no Stoic virtue more important than justice, because it influences all the others. [Marcus Aurelius](#) himself said that justice is “the source of all the other virtues.” Activists and world leaders continue to turn to Stoicism for strength when it comes to the difficult challenges of change and impact in the world. “*A Stoic must deeply believe that an individual can make a difference.*”

A Stoic sees the world clearly...but also sees clearly what the world can be. And then they are brave, and strategic enough to help bring it into reality.

Wisdom: Courage. Temperance. Justice. These are the critical virtues of life. But what situations call for courage? What is the right amount? What is the right thing? This is where the final and essential virtue comes in: Wisdom. The *knowing*. The *learning*. The *experience* required to navigate the world.

The goal is not just to acquire information, but the right kind of information.

Wisdom also embodies the discernment to filter the noise. We are bombarded with messages and marketing and images that tell us what we “should” look like, be like, and act like. Our minds are inundated with a river of thoughts and beliefs. Wisdom is the ability to select the messages you receive and the thoughts you choose to believe.

It’s key that we study, that we keep our minds open always. *You cannot learn that which you think you already know*, Epictetus said. It’s true.

Which is why we need to not only be humble students but also seek out great teachers. It’s why we should always be reading. It’s why we cannot stop training. It’s why we have to be diligent in filtering out the signal from the noise.

HOW CAN YOU BE A STOIC?

SELF-STUDY + PRACTICE

Now that you have a basis of Stoicism, its foundations, and key principles, it's time to put them into action and try it for yourself!

- 1. The Dichotomy of Control:** One of the most essential Stoic practices is the recognition of what we can and can't control. Stoics understand that there's no point dwelling on what we can't change and every reason to focus on what we can. Ask yourself this question daily, and focus on things that are within your control. This practice cultivates peace and calm in our lives and offers a distinct advantage in the application of Self-Agency. (Much more than the screaming passenger creating a scene because their flight has been cancelled due to bad weather, for example.)
- 2. Journal:** Hey *Life. Fun. Purpose.* 101! Examining your day, your gratitudes, your challenges, *yourSELF* is a key practice of Stoicism. Preparation and reflection is practice and routine for the Stoic, as is the philosophy itself. You already know from the onset of your LFP that journaling is an essential part of your journey, a connection to your inner wisdom and higher energy. The Stoics agree. Stoicism – and your *Hell YES! Life* – is a lifelong pursuit and the reflection and documentation of that pursuit is the best way to internalize learning and evolution.
- 3. Practice Misfortune:** Seneca suggested that we set aside time to forgo our worldly pleasures and not just think about, but live in “poverty.” Essentially, this time without our comforts, often taken for granted, is an opportunity facing our fears and strengthening ourselves for a circumstance where our lives looked totally different. Likely on our quests to success, we're going to experience failure. This practice allows us to face the fear of failure head on so when it becomes reality, we won't be afraid.

4. **Train Perceptions:** Stoics also called this “Turning the Obstacle Upside Down.” For example, if you’ve ever found yourself in a situation where a person or outcome wasn’t what you expected, this exercise in perception allows you to spotlight the good. Reframe your thinking into, *This situation is teaching me patience, empathy, courage, self-compassion, etc., etc.* There is no good or bad, there is only the perception of experience.
5. **Remember – It’s all Ephemeral:** Think of a past experience you once thought was so important, so serious or life-changing – perhaps an embarrassing moment or mistake you once made or the dissolution of a relationship that wasn’t meant to be. What impact that does that situation have on your life today? The answer is probably none. There are some experiences that we assign a crazy amount of meaning to, when in the greater scheme of things, they are just a blip on the timeline of our lives. If we can recall this *in the present* we have the power to take a different perspective on our experiences that results in less stress and anxiety and more self-compassion.
6. **Take the View from Above:** Step back. Zoom out. Take a look at the bigger picture. Again, changing our perspective is equally and incredibly helpful when it comes to the great challenges and day-to-day life. It’s not only helpful to view our lives, or our problems, in the grand scheme things, but taking a step back allows us to put our concerns on the back burner and focus on the needs of others – one of the key principles of Stoicism.
7. **Memento Mori (Meditate On Your Mortality):** Seneca recommended, *“Let us prepare our minds as if we’d come to the very end of life.”* Stoics found this practice to be invigorating and humbling. You will recognize this concept from the exercise in Module TK, where you visualized your TK birthday and envisioned the people around you, what they might be saying about you, and the legacy you created. This practice is beneficial in envisioning the eventual meaning of our lives, what we stood for, and how we lived. It’s also a reminder that life is short, and we were created to *thrive* and not to waste a moment of it.

8. **Premeditatio Malorum (The Premeditation of Evils):** Stoics prepare for “life’s inevitable setbacks.” They are prepared for success or failure, victory or defeat, and essentially the ability to thrive through all of it. Understanding and preparing for what could go wrong, is another practice in overcoming fear. It is examining possible outcomes and understanding we can handle it, whatever “it” may be. It’s important to be open to these setbacks. Just take Zeno, the original Stoic, for example. A (surely unplanned) shipwreck left him with nothing, yet led him to a place where he would discover philosophy, begin the teaching of Stoicism, and end up with more value and legacy than he could have ever imagined.
9. **Amor Fati (A Love of Fate):** This Stoic mindset is the philosophical version of when life gives you lemons, make lemonade. Marcus Aurelius sums it up in this simple quote, “To love only what happens, what was destined. No greater harmony.” Fate is what happens, it’s beyond our control. And there is no greater peace and contentment than not only accepting fate, but loving it:)

“Our life is what our thoughts make it.”

— Marcus Aurelius

*“There is nothing the busy man is less busied with than living;
there is nothing harder to learn.”*

— Seneca

*“First say to yourself what you would be;
and then do what you have to do.”*

— Epictetus

GROUP ACTIVITY

Round Robin Circle

Circling back to your original share / focus point: *Which of the 3 key Disciplines or 4 Stoic Virtues can you implement to shift you closer to Thrive Mode?*

- What do you need to do, change, or adjust?
- What do you need to let go of?

3 DISCIPLINES:

PERCEPTION

ACTION

WILL

4 STOIC VIRTUES

COURAGE

JUSTICE

TEMPERANCE

WISDOM

THIS WEEK: STOICISM EXPERIMENT!

Practice 1 or more of the Stoic principles for the next week, set reminders to check in with it each day, reflect at end of day, measure progress or changes/insights/observations. Then share with the fb group next Thurs!

RESOURCES

<https://dailystoic.com/what-is-stoicism-a-definition-3-stoic-exercises-to-get-you-started/>

<https://www.thoughtco.com/stoic-strategies-for-becoming-happier-3988010>

Ryan Holiday:

- “The Daily Stoic” Podcast
- Book: “The Obstacle Is the Way” ← really insightful and actionable

What Are The Best Books On Stoicism?

[*Meditations*](#) by [Marcus Aurelius](#)

[*Meditations*](#) is perhaps the only document of its kind ever made. It is the private thoughts of the world’s most powerful man giving advice to himself on how to make good on the responsibilities and obligations of his positions. [Marcus](#) stopped almost every night to practice a series of spiritual exercises—reminders designed to make him humble, patient, empathetic, generous, and strong in the face of whatever he was dealing with. You cannot read this book and not come away with a phrase or a line that will be helpful to you next time you are in trouble. Read it, it is practical philosophy embodied.

[*Letters From A Stoic*](#) by [Seneca](#)

While [Marcus](#) wrote mainly for himself, [Seneca](#) had no trouble advising and aiding others. In fact, that was his job—he was Nero’s tutor, tasked with reducing the terrible impulses of a terrible man. His advice on grief, on wealth, on power, on religion, and on life are always there when you need them. [Seneca’s letters](#) are the best place to start, but the essays in *On the Shortness of Life* are excellent as well.

[*Discourses*](#) by [Epictetus](#)

[That Epictetus' teachings survive](#) to us is remarkable. It is only thanks to a student named Arrian, who's credited with transcribing the lessons he learned in Epictetus' classroom at the beginning of the second century AD. Arrian wrote in a letter prior to the [Discourses'](#) publishing, "whatever I used to hear him say I wrote down, word for word, as best I could, as a record for later use of his thought and frank expression." Arrian would use those lessons to achieve renown throughout Rome as a political advisor, military commander, and prolific author. Interestingly, in the first book of [Meditations](#), titled "Debts and Lessons," [Marcus](#) thanks one of his philosophy teachers, Rusticus, "for introducing me to Epictetus's lectures – and loaning me his own copy."

[The Daily Stoic](#) by Ryan Holiday and Stephen Hanselman

[The Daily Stoic: 366 Meditations on Wisdom, Perseverance, and the Art of Living](#) features not only 366 all-new translations of brilliant stoic passages but 366 exciting stories, examples and explanations of the stoic principles from [Marcus Aurelius](#), [Seneca](#) and [Epictetus](#) but also some of the lesser known but equally wise stoics from Zeno to Cleanthes to Chrysippus. The book takes the reader on a daily journey through practical, pragmatic philosophy. Each day offers a new stoic insight and exercise. By following these teachings, you'll find the serenity, self-knowledge and resilience you need to live well.

[The Obstacle Is the Way](#) by Ryan Holiday

Inspired by Stoicism and the maxim from [Marcus Aurelius](#)—"The impediment to action advances action. What stands in the way becomes the way"—[The Obstacle Is The Way](#) is a primer of the key principles for thriving under pressure. Through historical examples of great men and women, it teaches us how to overcome adversity and difficulties, [turn obstacles upside down](#), and shows us how to love our fate, no matter what it might bring. The book has become a cult classic with coaches and athletes alike and has been featured in prominent outlets [like Sports Illustrated](#) and [ESPN](#).