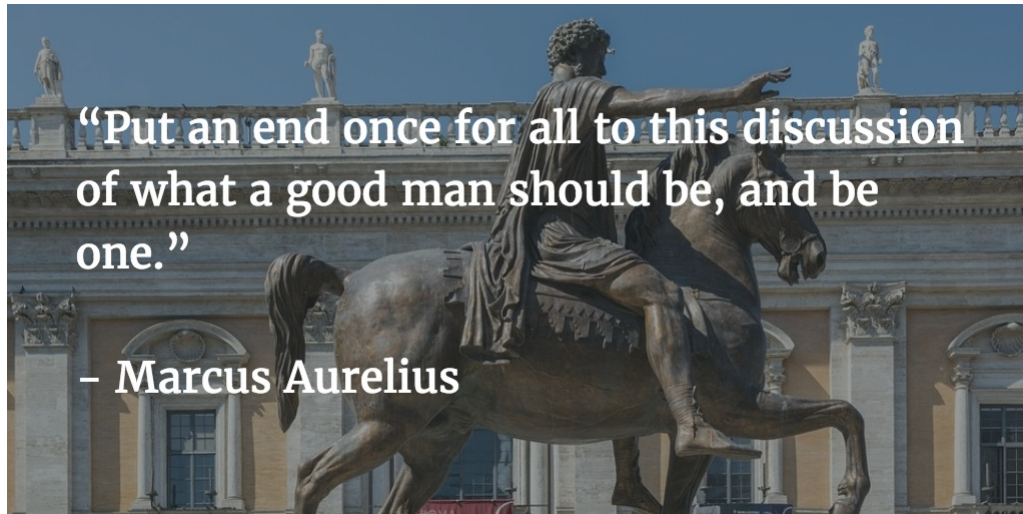


**1-Sentence-Summary:** *Meditations* is a collection of 12 books written by Roman emperor Marcus Aurelius, who'll introduce you to Stoic philosophy, the concept of logic, self-discipline and give you faith that the course the world runs is a good one.

**Read in:** 4 minutes

**Favorite quote from the author:**



If you've ever wondered what Bill Clinton's favorite book is, now you know. *Meditations* by Roman emperor Marcus Aurelius was probably never meant to be published, but in 1558 someone at Heidelberg University in Germany decided that these 12 books full of wisdom were too valuable to remain hidden from the world – and printed them.

I'm a dreamer. A head-in-the-clouds kind of guy, always planning far ahead, making up grand schemes, not fretting much about what goes wrong today, always sure that things will play out well in the long run.

If you're like me, then some ancient Greek stoicism, which Marcus Aurelius bases his writings on, will speak to you as well. Opposite to the Epicureans, who sought as much pleasure as they could in the here and now, for tomorrow they could die, the Stoics believed in the goodness of things, no matter how bad they were at any given time.

Here are 3 lessons from one of the greatest men who ever lived:

1. Logic doesn't always make sense, but everything happens for a reason.
2. Life is too short to complain.
3. The only pain you suffer is the one you create yourself.

Excited about stoicism? Let's begin your training, young philosopher!

## Lesson 1: Logic doesn't always make sense, but everything happens for a reason.

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The word logic as we use it today originally stems from ancient Greek. The word “logos” means “reason” and to the stoics, it was the force of life.

Logos gives everything its form and its order. It flows through every plant, every tree, every building and every human being. **It is the essence of all life and the underlying master plan for everything that happens in the world.** Therefore, every single thing that happens, whether good or bad, happens for a reason.

Things are exactly right as they are, which includes terrible things like terrorism, death and disease just as much as it includes wonderful things like rainbows, sunny days and long, fulfilled lives.

We've long deviated from this concept. To us, logic has become a much more mathematical concept.

$1+1 = 2$ . That's logic to us. But when a close family member unexpectedly dies, we don't think that's logical. It doesn't make sense to us. It's unfair, we get angry, we cry and resent the world.

Marcus Aurelius believed that everything happens for a reason. Always. Even in the worst of times, he took comfort in the fact that everything is exactly as it's supposed to be.

Can you?

## Lesson 2: Life is too short to waste even a second complaining.

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If everything is exactly right the way it is, **complaining becomes utterly useless then**, doesn't it?

There's a saying I like:

“For every minute you are angry you lose sixty seconds of happiness.” — Ralph Waldo Emerson

You could've spent those 60 seconds laughing. Talking. Breathing. Living. But you chose to complain to the person next to you in line at the cashier how hard life is. How much waiting at the grocery store sucks. And how stupid that employee is for making a mistake.

You never know how long you have. No one knows. You could get hit by a bus tomorrow, or never even wake up the next day. Your time on earth is limited. Incredibly limited. So don't waste it.

Marcus Aurelius hated holding court, but he knew he shouldn't spend even a second regretting his duties. Instead, he trusted in the grand scheme of things, knowing that logos had a plan for him, and right now his part in that plan was to let people waste his

time with superficial arguments and small talk in court.

Complaining wastes your time and makes everyone that has to listen to it feel bad. So how about making it today's mission to stop complaining?

Here's some inspiration.

## Lesson 3: The only pain you suffer is the one you inflict upon yourself.

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Being an emperor in ancient Rome was a dangerous job. People tried to kill you, abduct you, stab you in the back and poison you at least once a week.

Marcus Aurelius believed that physical pain was part of logos's big plan as well. He also suffered a lot of psychological pain in his lifetime. Out of his 13 children, 8 died before him, including his wife, who died at a very young age.

But he was convinced that all these things happen for good reason, trusted in the purpose, and thus remained calm even in the worst of times. After all, these deaths were external events that Marcus Aurelius had no hand in whatsoever.

He believed that **any harm done to a person from an external source was beyond their control and therefore, couldn't truly harm them**. The suffering only starts if you allow it to, because you start blaming yourself, questioning why things happen, or complaining about how unfair everything is.

Whatever pain you're facing, you have a choice. You can accept it and move on without complaining. Always.

So don't make yourself suffer, it's really all in your head.

## Meditations Review

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Wow. For some of you this might all feel very abstract, but I can't remember the last time I learned so much from a summary that's this short (just 5 blinks). For books like these a Blinkist summary is the perfect intro, because it describes everything in plain words. As you can imagine, the original text is quite complicated.

Meditations is available for free online, but usually, professional translations by a publisher in paperback format will help you engage with the book more and digest its ideas better. I recommend the Dover Thrift Edition. I also tend to do better with heavier topics, like life, death, thinking, etc., when I have something in my hand that I can mark, leave comments on in pen, and so on.

If you're new to stoicism, this summary is a must-read.

[Read full summary on Blinkist](#)

[Get the book on Amazon](#)

[Learn more about the author](#)

## **What else can you learn from the blinks?**

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- At which time Marcus ruled Rome
- Stoic thoughts about death and what to do when you feel overwhelmed by it
- How others suffer when you fret
- Why you shouldn't feel bad for a second if your house burns down
- How emotions can cloud your mind and keep you from seeing the truth that logos is
- Why being fair and kind is the best piece of actionable advice you can take

## **Who would I recommend the Meditations summary to?**

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The 20 year old with a YOLO-attitude, who's trying to make every day perfect without worrying about the future, the 79 year old who's gotten a bit grumpy over the years and complains a lot, and anyone who spends a lot of time beating themselves up in their own head.