

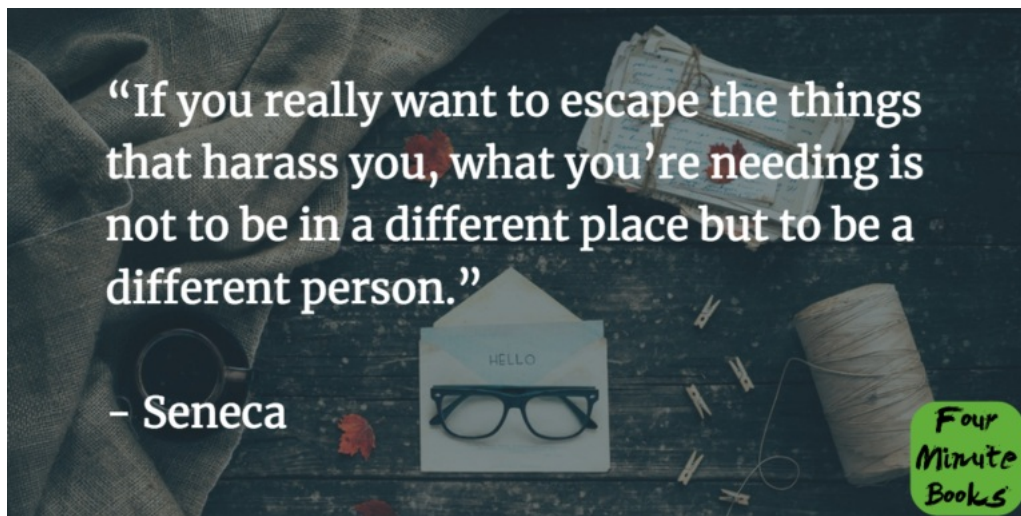
# Letters From A Stoic Summary

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**1-Sentence-Summary:** *Letters From A Stoic* is a collection of moral epistles famous Roman Stoic and philosopher Seneca sent to his friend Lucilius, in order to help him become less emotional, more disciplined, and find the good life.

**Read in:** 4 minutes

**Favorite quote from the author:**



Science has repeatedly found evidence that optimists are healthier and tend to live longer. Intuitively, it also makes sense. If you're happier and rather positive, your body doesn't have to parse as much stress. You grind your teeth less, your heartbeat is calmer, blood pressure doesn't rise as much, and so on. Though not hard science, a great way to verify this idea is to look at the outliers of history.

2,000 years ago, average life expectancy was 20-30 years. Seneca the Younger, however, lived to 69. And the only reason he died then is that his emperor, Nero, forced him to commit suicide, believing he had been part of a conspiracy. While his death was tragic and unnecessary, I like to think his philosophy contributed to his remarkably long life. Lucky for us, he shared much of it in *Letters From A Stoic*, a series of moral reminders addressed to his friend Lucilius, the procurator of Sicily.

There's no way to tell if Seneca really sent those letters or wrote them as fiction, but their lessons about the good life are invaluable regardless, like the following 3:

1. The goal of attaining wisdom is to live in harmony with nature.
2. Your most valuable possession is your mind.
3. A wise man doesn't need friends, but he chooses to make them anyway.

Are you ready to learn more about what may be the most suitable philosophy for the modern

world? Let's get to it!

## Lesson 1: We should strive to gain wisdom in order to live a simple, natural life.

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Astrophysicist Neil deGrasse Tyson has a great idea of the most astonishing fact about the universe:

*"When I look up at the night sky, I know that yes, we are part of this universe, we are in this universe, but perhaps more important than both of those facts is that the universe is in us."*

Ancient Stoics believed the same. There are the gods, the divine, and then, there's us, but our souls are divine too. Unlike our minds, however, we don't control our souls. Seneca trusted that our capability for rational thought is what makes us truly unique among all creatures in the universe. Thus, we should exercise this ability as best as we can.

If we do so, the result is wisdom, which makes attaining it not just a logical goal for us to have, but also what'll allow us to live more in tune with nature than any other species. Of course the definition of "in tune with nature" changes from generation to generation, but the Stoics thought we should live simply, refrain from excessive pleasures, like food, alcohol, or sex, and not desire fame and fortune.

**Stoicism is all about being a good person, living truthfully and truly living, doing our work while we're here, and one day letting go without attachment when it's our time to die.**

## Lesson 2: The single most valuable thing you own is your mind.

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Looking at life through the Stoic model of the world, the logic consequence is that your mind is your most valuable possession. Since your thoughts are the only thing you *really* control, Stoicism is mainly concerned with studying, training, and practicing your perception, action, and will. In one of his letters, Seneca compares the healthy mind to a well-loaded ship: everything is secured and fastened in its right place, so regardless of how rough the sea gets, the view is always clear.

**The most important feature of a healthy mind is calmness; the Stoics called it tranquility.** When you have inner peace and serenity, you will be able to endure all problems, carry success with humility, and make hard decisions without hesitating.

Today we have many forms of escapism that make it hard to achieve and maintain this state. We want to travel everywhere, rushing around to check places off lists, we exercise and obsess about shaping our body to perfection, or indulge endlessly in TV shows, various drugs, and material pleasures and luxuries.

In reality, however, all we need to find true peace is turn inward and take care of our mind.

## Lesson 3: Wise people don't need friends, but they surround themselves with a few loyal ones regardless.

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One of the many ways a calm mind helps you build a good life is by allowing you on only surrounding yourself with true friends. How? First, a wise man or woman who's at peace with herself will be happy from inside. He or she won't need friends to fill some void in their life. Instead, they can build friendships from abundance and giving, which is exactly what makes *them* a good friend.

Second, because they can wait for the right people to come around, Stoics truly trust the few friends they've carefully selected, which, in turn, makes their friends trust them. Trust is the best foundation of any relationship, but it's hard to give and hard to get. That's why you should be slow to open up to people, but if you do, fully let them in.

**Stoics would choose no friends over fair-weather-friends, but because of their self-sufficiency and ability to trust, they make the few loyal friends everyone should have easily.**

### Letters From A Stoic Review

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You can never have enough Stoicism in your life. You can read the letters for free here, but Penguin Classics does a great job of coming up with modern translations and helpful context. So if you want to learn more now, don't sleep on *Letters From A Stoic*.

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

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- How philosophy helps us live in accordance with nature
- What kind of books you should read
- Why living well is similar to your dreams
- How you can prepare for the worst
- What you can learn about death from Pacuvius's lavish parties

### Who would I recommend the Letters From A Stoic summary to?

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The 15 year old pupil, who's in danger of getting sucked into social media addiction, the 35 year old entrepreneur, who's so deep into the hustle he's forgotten what he's hustling for, and anyone who's suffered a tragic loss in the past year.

