
January 7th

SEVEN CLEAR FUNCTIONS OF THE MIND

“The proper work of the mind is the exercise of choice, refusal, yearning, repulsion, preparation, purpose, and assent. What then can pollute and clog the mind’s proper functioning? Nothing but its own corrupt decisions.”

—EPICTETUS, *DISCOURSES*, 4.11.6–7

Let’s break down each one of those tasks:

Choice—to do and think right

Refusal—of temptation

Yearning—to be better

Repulsion—of negativity, of bad influences, of what isn’t true

Preparation—for what lies ahead or whatever may happen

Purpose—our guiding principle and highest priority

Assent—to be free of deception about what’s inside and outside our control (and be ready to accept the latter)

This is what the mind is here to do. We must make sure that it does—and see everything else as pollution or a corruption.