
January 15th

PEACE IS IN STAYING THE COURSE

“Tranquility can’t be grasped except by those who have reached an unwavering and firm power of judgment—the rest constantly fall and rise in their decisions, wavering in a state of alternately rejecting and accepting things. What is the cause of this back and forth? It’s because nothing is clear and they rely on the most uncertain guide—common opinion.”

—SENECA, *MORAL LETTERS*, 95.57b–58a

In Seneca’s essay on tranquility, he uses the Greek word *euthymia*, which he defines as “believing in yourself and trusting that you are on the right path, and not being in doubt by following the myriad footpaths of those wandering in every direction.” It is this state of mind, he says, that produces tranquility.

Clarity of vision allows us to have this belief. That’s not to say we’re always going to be 100 percent certain of everything, or that we even should be. Rather, it’s that we can rest assured we’re heading generally in the right direction—that we don’t need to constantly compare ourselves with other people or change our mind every three seconds based on new information.

Instead, tranquility and peace are found in identifying *our* path and in sticking to it: staying the course—making adjustments here and there, naturally—but ignoring the distracting sirens who beckon us to turn toward the rocks.