

A guide to the good life - The Ancient Art of Stoic Joy

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This book goes over the basic principles pertaining to Stoicism. The foundational axiom in which a Stoic conducts themselves, is by prioritizing the two values of Tranquility and Virtue. In a stoic context virtue is about living a life that is aligned with your own set of values. Tranquility in the stoic sense is about ridding yourself of negative emotions. To be tranquil is to have near complete control of your emotions, also employing self control, by not becoming a slave to your negative emotions. The author also goes over a history of Stoicism within Rome and the vital part of life it played in Seneca's life. Also going over the different schools of philosophy in roman times and the various logical expressions such as *modus tollens* and *modus ponens*. Another foundational Stoic Axiom which the author goes over is that of negative visualization. This strategy is used based on the innate human psychology pertaining to hedonic adaptation. This is where we adapt to novel stimulus such as increased material possessions. The stoic approach to get out of this hedonic treadmill is to practice Negative Visualization. Negative visualization consists of imagining that the things and people you take for granted would suddenly vanish and be gone forever. This will give you a short period of time away from grief but in the long run it will give you invaluable amounts of appreciation for

the aforementioned things. This has parallels to the via negativa antifragility approach of Nassim Taleb. If you are getting stronger/happier without anything too sensitive your hedonic adaptation. Another fundamental axiom which the author covers pertaining to Stoicism is that of, being ok with things that are outside your control, and to internalize goals for things that aren't in your control. You should put most of your effort into things that ~~you can~~ are directly in your control, i.e. discipline, tranquility, effort, actions towards others. If something is somewhat in your control you should internalize your goals. Instead of hoping to win a game or get an A focus on delivering your best performance and effort. This will undoubtedly help you perform better but will also give you peace if you do not attain your goal because you know you gave it your all. Overall this book gives a good basis for the foundational axioms within philosophy for which you can take immediate actionable changes within many facets of your life. These axioms take very little effort and are not very invasive to implement within daily life, but will not take too much personal investment. These principles can greatly improve the outlook and quality of life. Essentially creating a baseline level of tranquility and whenever something good happens it's a bonus.