

ENCHIRIDION

Lemma 1 (1,2,7,14,16,19,25,27,31,32,48). *Some things are in our control, others are not. If you can keep them straight, ignore the things out of your control, avoid only things within your control, and (for now) suppress desire, you will live a peaceful life.*

You should not become too distracted from, nor wander too far from, your proverbial anchored ship. It is your responsibility to play the role assigned to you. You should regard (The) God(s) as existing and governing the universe justly and well. Do so by ignoring things out of your control. Do not bring desire nor aversion to the diviner: things not in our own control cannot be good or evil. As a mark is not set up for the sake of missing the aim, so neither does the nature of evil exist in the world.

Pay the price for which things are worth. If you do not receive something you gain something in exchange. If someone else is fortunate, be happy for them; if someone is unfortunate, do not be grieved it was not you.

An uninstructed person blames others, a philosopher blames themselves, and a proficient philosopher blames neither. They watch themselves as an enemy, and one in ambush.

Lemma 2 (3-5,8,9,10,11,12,16,18,20,21,26,28,29,30,32,33,38,42,43,44,45,49). *It is not accidents that distress us, but rather the judgements made about them. As such, you should remind yourself that all things you love are ephemeral, and that nothing is lost, but rather returned. In general, you should not demand things to happen as you wish, but rather wish that they happen as they do. Obstacles are hindrances to something, but never yourself, so if you make proper use of them, over time, things will not hurry you along with them. When faced with someone speaking ill of you, answer “It seemed so to him. He does not know my other faults, else he would have mentioned them as well”. Remember that if they have judged wrong, they are the ones hurt. For if anyone should suppose a true proposition to be false, the proposition is not hurt, but rather the person deceived. Letting things go is paying the price for a peaceful mind. Keep your mind in a peaceful state in the same way you are cautious of harming your body. You should go about things with realistic expectations such that you may be successful and keep a peaceful mind. Once you pause and give yourself time, you will more easily control yourself. Everything has two handles, one by which it may be carried, one by which it cannot.*

The will of nature may be learned from things upon which we are all agreed. React to distressing events as if it was happening to someone else.

Riches and eloquence reflect property and style. Not worth. Unless you perfectly know the principle by which anyone acts, you do not know if they act ill. Be cautious of over-confidence in ability to interpret another’s work. Their vanity may be caused by obscurity of the work. You should be interested in understanding nature and following her, and as such your value should come from understanding and making use of the instructions rather than simply interpretation.

Lemma 3 (6,13,15,22,23,24,33,34,35,36,37,38,40,41,46,47,50). *Be modest, and only proud of personal accomplishments. You should patiently accept your own share of anything with moderation. You should never concern yourself with reputation. Be content with being a philosopher; if you wish to be thought of as such by others, appear so to yourself and it will suffice you. If you exaggerate your own ability, you have both made yourself seem untrustworthy, and given up any credit for your true ability. The body measures its contents as a shoe measures the foot. But if you go beyond this, by embellishing the shoe, it is endless. Don’t discuss how one should eat. Eat how one should eat. Sheep don’t throw up the grass to show the shepherds how much they have eaten, rather they produce wool and milk.*

Prescribe to yourself a form of conduct in private and public life. Abide by them as if they were law. Be terse, avoid intense laughter and vulgarities. When faced by pleasure, consider the cost. Once you pause and give yourself time, you will more easily control yourself. Remember not only the value to yourself, but the value of proper behavior in the presence of your host. Applaud yourself if you abstain.

Lemma 4 (51,52). *Begin today. Live as one desirous of becoming a Socrates. Live the fundamental theorems of philosophy (e.g. be truthful), rather than focusing on higher order questions (e.g. what is truth).*