

Unnecessary Assumptions

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1 Intro

This was inspired by *Meditations* IV (24). Here, Aurelius quotes (an unknown source, saying) “ ‘If you seek tranquility, do less,’ ” explained to mean doing less, better. To focus on the essentials that agree with the *logos* of life, and to ignore the “unnecessary” or not “essential” things. This seems fairly intuitive in the realm of real action: do nothing superfluous so that you can focus on the important things, making your life uncomplicated and unhurried.

Almost as an afterthought, the last sentences state that we need to eliminate unnecessary assumptions, thereby eliminating unnecessary actions brought by those assumptions. I’ve been wrestling with what is meant by unnecessary assumptions. Is it, by way of the parallel, avoiding excessive thoughts or over-complicated thoughts? Especially with the stoic inspirations of *Meditations*, I am inclined to interpret it as reducing assumptions of value or worth in things that don’t truly hold value (in the stoic estimation). Stoic thought (and *Mediations* not less so) is generally somewhat skeptical of the value of strenuous thought beyond some point, that life needs to be lived and too much theoretical consideration is of little value.

It’s of course necessary to recognize the context, where the imperative to eliminate unnecessary assumptions is explicitly for the purpose of eliminating unnecessary actions, so the simplest interpretation is to avoid unnecessary assignment of values or self- or socially-imposed constraints. Simplify what you value, thereby simplifying the process of understanding your world and your decisions in it, consequentially simplifying your actions.