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BACK ISSUES

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BETWEEN US

Looking at things from a Stoic perspective

Our reactions to events in our life

How do we react when unexpected things—such as a job loss or a health problem—happen to us?

How do we react to predictable daily events?

We often react to events in a way that causes more misery. Many people get depressed by the way they habitually react to things.

There's a better way

The Stoics show us a better way.

Epictetus wanted us to take care of *just one thing*. He admonishes us for not being able to do even that.

But instead of doing just this one thing which is in our power and devoting ourselves to it, we burden ourselves with many things.

Epictetus, *Discourses* 1.1

He assures us that if we do just one thing right, we can never be restrained or blocked, we won't groan, we won't find fault, and we won't flatter anyone.

What is this "one thing" that is so magical that it can achieve all this? What is this 'one thing' that is so important that we should devote our energies to it? Epictetus continues:

In a word, making proper use of impressions.

Epictetus, *Discourses* 1.1

We are in the predicament we are in because we misinterpret the world around us. We try to control what we cannot and fail to control what we can.

Even when we are exposed to the same world, we come to different conclusions about the things we are exposed to.

Depending on the way we view the world, we are happy or unhappy about it.

Our world is colored by our judgments

The basic conclusion of Stoicism is that the world around us—the externals—has nothing to do with our happiness or otherwise. It all depends on how we interpret the impressions.

People are not disturbed by things, but by the views which they take of things.

Epictetus, *Enchiridion* 5

Yet what is simple in theory is not so simple in practice. When we face a difficult situation, we are confused. We are not sure how to react. So it is always good to think about different challenges we may potentially face in our daily life and be prepared for them. It helps us to develop a Stoic perspective.

That's the focus of the current issue. Our contributing editors in this issue tackle a number of challenges:

- What is the Stoic art of living? (Jonas Salzgeber)
- How would a Stoic cope with life's challenges? (Marc Epsen)
- Can a Stoic be political? (Kai Whiting)
- Should a Stoic consider everything that comes their way useful? (Sharon Lebell)
- How do we deal with our children's frustrations the Stoic way? (Meredith Kunz)
- What is Stoic courage?
- How do we deal with our wavering mind? (Seneca)

The articles in this issue provide the Stoic perspective to get you started.