

LIVING A FOCUSED LIFE

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We are always busy, but we have nothing to show for it. Focusing on actions that are consistent with our vision as opposed to activities that keep us busy will avoid this problems.

A love of ceaseless activity is not diligence. It is just the restlessness of a driven mind. (Seneca, Epistulae Morales, 3)

Focus on being flexible

Even when we have a consistent vision, we should avoid becoming rigid about it. When circumstances change, we should change our actions accordingly. If we have decided to act in one way, but find that we are on the wrong track we should not continue on the same path for the sake of being 'consistent.'

A student says to Epictetus:

We must stick with our decision.

Epictetus responds

That applies only to a sound decision, not to any decision. (Epictetus, Discourses 2.15)

We should not be fickle and constantly change our minds either. We should act consistently with our vision, and be prepared to change our course when circumstances change or when we notice that we are not on the right path. At the same time, we should guard ourselves against becoming indecisive and fickle.

We should not be afraid to change either our purpose or our position — as long as we don't let that flexibility become fickleness. (Seneca, Moral Essays 2.267, Tr. J.M. Basore)

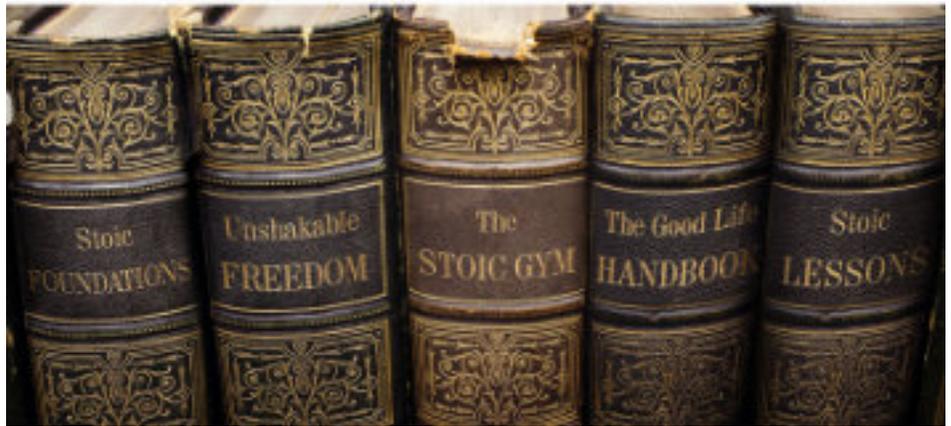
An intentional life is a focused life

The focus of a Stoic arises out of his intention. Because a Stoic is not obligated to keep on living, as long as he lives, he chooses his path and lives intentionally.

Because a Stoic lives intentionally, he focuses on his intention or his vision of living. It is a life that is in tune with his nature and with the nature of the world. It is a life that "flows well," as Zeno put it.

Chuck Chakrapani

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