



Act on what's in your power

Now that you have found this message in a bottle, I invite you to open your mind to a new way of looking at the world: through the perspective of Stoic philosophy. Stoic approaches can help you get through many challenges in life while cultivating your character.

Whether you are stranded on a desert island, or stuck in a teeming skyscraper, these ideas can help you not just survive, but thrive.

Here is Stoic thinking in a nutshell:

Remember what you can and can't control. Don't stop there: Take the time to discern the difference, and then, act on what is within your power

Not being able to control an outcome doesn't mean you can't do something about a problem.

For example, if you do not like the policies of your government, and you live in a democratic state, the answer isn't to just give up and say "I'm just one person and I'm not in charge of politics, so why vote, why care?"

Instead, you could do important things that are in your power: Vote. Encourage others to vote! Donate time or money or volunteer hours to causes or candidates who will do better. Speak out or write about your proposed solutions or candidates online, in print, or in your community.

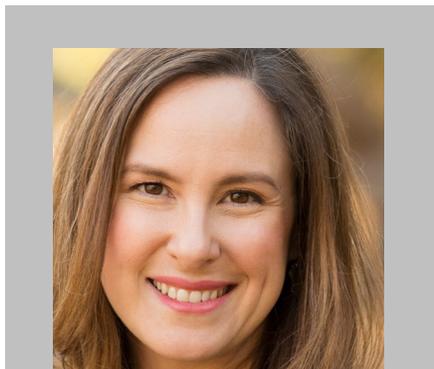
This is your life, and doing what's within your power is the key to making it an excellent one.

You won't be able to control the outcome yourself, but if everyone did this,

things could change. Many situations are like this. So, go full speed on what is within your control, even if it may seem impossible to create change. And just forget about the rest: the fear, anger, guilt, frustration, put-downs from others. This is your life, and doing what's within your power is the key to making it an excellent one.

Question your impressions and, above all, focus on making good moral judgments.

We all have knee-jerk responses to what we experience in this world. It's



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what we do with those reactions that determines our future. If we could stop and think, and tap into our inner spark of reason, we could make better choices—decisions free from anger, hate, fear, anxiety—and feel a sense of freedom knowing our own worth. At every step, with everything you're about to say or do, question it. Does it meet the standards of the four Stoic virtues: Is it wise? Is it just? Is it brave? Does it demonstrate moderation/self-control?

Access your connection to your own nature, the nature of other humans, and the nature of the world.

Living in sync with the reality of what is, rather than constantly pining for what we wish it would be, is central to our tranquility. This doesn't mean accepting unjust or unwise actions as morally good. You can notice that other people are separated from their reason and from human excellence, recognize their common humanity, try to be a good role model, and keep doing what you can to make things better.

Make peace with mortality.

This is difficult in a society that worships youth and hides death. But once we acknowledge and accept this reality, we can live in the moment with less anxiety about our trajectory through life and its eventual end.

These are my Stoic principles to live by. I hope you'll also find a copy of Epictetus' handbook and Marcus Aurelius' *Meditations*, too: Those would serve you as both education and inspiration.