



Dr. Chuck Chakrapani
Editor-in-Chief

THE STOIC

Journal of The Stoic Gym
Volume 2 Issue 11
November 2020
© The Stoic Gym, 2020

Published by TheStoicGym.com

Issued free online
Subscribe [here](#)

Follow us on
www.TheStoicGym.com
twitter [@thestoicgym](#)
Facebook: [The Stoic Gym](#)

BACK ISSUES

The Stoic Gym does not carry back issues of THE STOIC. They may, however, be obtained from Magzter.com:
<https://bit.ly/3aVVmeY>

LIVING A FOCUSED LIFE

Our time is short

How do I lead my best life? This dilemma is common to all humans, not just Stoics. When we ask ourselves this question, the first thing we need to realize is that our life is made up of time. When we waste our time, we waste our life. Yet time goes faster than we realize, as Seneca realized.

Just a moment ago that I sat as a young man in the school of the philosopher Sotion; just a moment ago that I began to plead in courts; just a moment ago that I lost the desire to plead; and, just a moment ago that I lost the ability. The flight of time is infinitely swift, as those see more clearly when looking back. (Seneca, Epistulae Morales, Letter 49)

Live intentionally

A Stoic life is intentional. Stoicism does not have any prohibition against committing suicide. So a Stoic does not live like a plant or an animal just because they are born and their time hasn't come to depart. A Stoic has chosen to live. So a Stoic asks herself this question: How do I live a life that is in accordance with my nature (which is reason) and in accordance with the world (which is life as presented to me)? How do I live not only intentionally but in way that is in accordance with nature? The ancient Stoics provided several guidelines to achieve this.

Focus on essentials

The main reason why we waste our lives is that we don't have a consistent vision of our lives. Our aims, our motives, and our desires

keep shifting constantly. They conflict with each other. Either we are immobilized or indulge in useless activities to distract ourselves.

To avoid this trap, develop a clear and consistent vision of your life. Try to understand why you do something rather than doing things on autopilot. Examine closely what you do. Keep what is essential and get rid of the superficial.

See clearly for yourself what is necessary and what is superfluous. (Seneca, Epistulae Morales, Letter 110)

Focus on today

When we look at our obligations we are overwhelmed. We start worrying about the future. This paralyzes us. But there is no reason to worry about the future.

Don't let the future worry you. You will meet it – if you have to – with reason, the same resource you use now to deal with life. (Marcus Aurelius, Meditations 7.8)

Instead of worrying about the future, if we just focus on what we need to do today, we don't have to worry about what future might bring.

Devote yourself to what should be done today, and you will not have to depend so much on tomorrow. (Seneca, Epistulae Morales I.13)

Focus on action, not activity

Filling our life with activities that lead us nowhere is destructive. They just make us agitated and restless.
(...Contd)

LIVING A FOCUSED LIFE

Continued from the previous page

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)

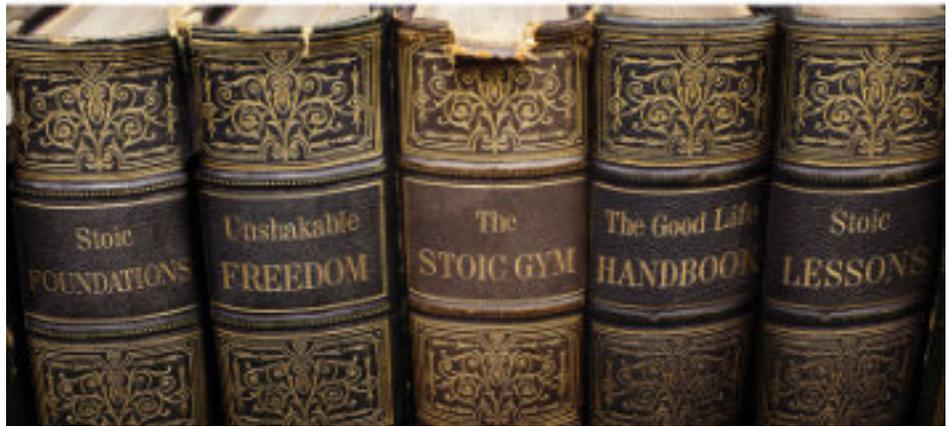
An intentional life is a focused life

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

THE STOIC GYM  FOR EVERYTHING STOIC



THE STOIC GYM

VISIT OUR NEW WEBSITE

<https://thestoicgym.com/>

For everything Stoic

Over the past several months, we have been redesigning our website in an effort to make it the single most useful website for Stoic practitioners. While the website does offer articles that relate to Stoic theory, our main emphasis is on practice: What can I do now to lead a better life?

We are not finished with the website yet, but we have progressed quite a bit. You can preview it now. (It will get even better soon!)

Read any article ever published

All the articles ever published in the THE STOIC magazine are on the site. You can read them in pdf or text form. You can print any article that you want to save.

Search any article by author or topic

All articles are in a searchable database. You can search the articles either by topic or by author. Save or bookmark anything that interests you for future reference.

Read ancient texts in modern English

You can find here the entire Discourses by Epictetus rendered into plain English.

You can also find other ancient Stoic writings.

Read our blog

Our blogs are mostly about how to use the Stoic principles to lead the good life. Most of our blogs are not about esoteric Stoic theories. They are about how you can use the Stoic principles right away to lead a better life.

Read book reviews

From time to time we review new books on Stoicism. They're here.

Get free books

You can get free books such as *The Good Life Handbook* (Epictetus Enchiridion) and *A Fortunate Storm* (history of ancient Stoicism).

Find a Stoic group

If you want to find a Stoic group that may be around where you live, you will find it on our website.

Find Stoic exercises

Many Stoics use mental exercises to practice Stoicism. We have many such exercises for you here.

Please visit <https://thestoicgym.com/> and let's know what you think.