



## Welcome to a Deeper Conversation

Use this reflective guide yourself or with a group. Don't feel you need to explore every idea on every page. Use what draws you into reflection and conversation.

The happiness of your life depends upon the quality of your thoughts.

Marcus Aurelius

quoteancy

## Reflect and Discuss

The stoics often summarized important elements of life through short and powerful thoughts. Think of these thoughts as *appetizers for life*.

Take time to reflect on the quote above. Do you agree with the quote? Think of examples of how this applies to your life and what you do to increase the quality of your thoughts.

## It's About The Everyday

### Reflect and Discuss

**Early in the conversation, Massimo conveyed this idea:**

**It's not enough to understand how to use the machines at they gym. You then have to consistently use them to experience the benefit. The same is true in life. Epictetus said to his students that it's one thing to come to my classroom and talk about life. But the important thing is what you do when you leave and get out in the world.**

### Reflect and Discuss

Ideas that don't lead to action, grow stale. It's the practice of, not just the talking about, wisdom that leads to a well-lived life.

Reflect and discuss how you turn ideas into daily action. Are you living wisdom or talking about it? How would you know if you're living a life of wisdom? What do you do to increase wisdom in your daily life?

## Live According To Nature Through the Four Virtues and Three Disciplines

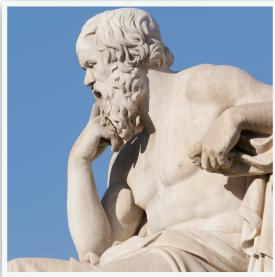
Massimo described one of the core stoic mottos: *We should live according to our nature. The stoics described then two fundamental attributes of humans.*

- First we have the ability to apply reason our way through situations (Remember: reason for the Stoics includes sound emotional engagement not just thinking)
- Second, we have the ability apply a pro-social, cooperative approach to our relationships

*To walk the Stoic path then is to develop and utilize my mind (reason and emotional engagement) to act in ways that are cooperative and collaborative with others to make the world a better place for all beings.*

That sounds pretty good; but how do we do this?

According to various Stoics, one way we do this is by practicing four core virtues.



**Wisdom is the ability to discern what is truly good (and not good) for the living of a well lived life.** For example, cooperation with others is truly good for you. But lots of money in a bank account is neither good nor bad. We may prefer the money, but it is not what leads to a virtuous life. Wisdom is knowing the difference between what leads to a good life and focusing energy on developing those things.



**Courage is ability to gather your energy and action and focus it on doing the right thing in any moment - which is discerned by wisdom.** For example, It takes courage to speak kindly when we'd rather be harsh. It takes courage to

avoid a destructive vice when the temptation arises.



**Justice is the ability to determine what it means to treat others with equity, respect, and reciprocity.** This requires us to discern (wisdom) what is needed in any given relationship and then act (courage) to make that a reality.



**Temperance is the ability to act with right measure - not doing too much or too little of important activities.** For example, temperance enables us to enjoy a meal but not fall into gluttony. Temperance enables us to restrain ourselves for

### Reflect and Discuss

Reflect on and discuss the four virtues.

*Here are some questions you could use for reflection/discussion. Choose questions you want to explore or simply discuss the four virtues.*

How do you see these four virtues at work in your own life?

How do you practice the four virtues?

Describe a situation where you used all four virtues and what was the result?

Describe a circumstance you're currently facing where one or more of the four virtues could make a positive difference. Which virtue do you need more of in that circumstance and how could you bring that virtue to bear?

Do you agree that life is better lived when we intentionally focus on the four virtues?

What do you think keeps us from a more consistent expression of the four virtues?

over-talking or over-sharing.

## Digging Deeper - What Can I Control? - After-Cast

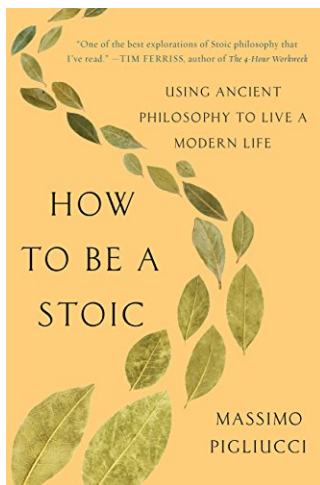
In the After-Cast, Massimo and Dave talk about the Stoics view on control. What can we, and what can't we, control in life. If you listen to the After-cast, take time to reflect on the nature of control. Do you agree with the Stoics view of control? Do you get stuck trying to control circumstances that are beyond your reach? If so, how could you change your focus?

## Digging Deeper - Exploring More about Stoicism

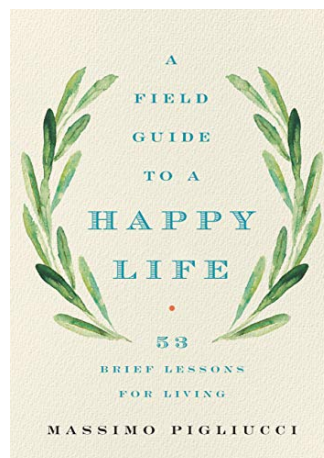
If you're interested in exploring more about the Stoic way, Donald Robertson's article, *The Stoic Virtues and Code of Honor*, is a good beginning point.

[Click HERE to read the article.](#)

If you're interested in some of Massimo's work on Stoicism. Here are two books to explore:



[Click HERE to see more about the book.](#)



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