SIMPLE STRONG

THE FORGE

TRANSFORMATION PROGRAM

52 STOIC QUOTES

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„Of all existing things some are in our power, and others are not in our power. In our power are thought, impulse, will to get and will to avoid, and, in a word, everything which is our own doing. Things not in our power include the body, property, reputation, office, and, in a word, everything which is not our own doing."

–Epictetus, Enchiridion, 1

„Remember that following desire promises the attainment of that of which you are desirous; and aversion promises the avoiding that to which you are averse. However, he who fails to obtain the object of his desire is disappointed, and he who incurs the object of his aversion wretched. If, then, you confine your aversion to those objects only which are contrary to the natural use of your faculties, which you have in your own control, you will never incur anything to which you are averse. But if you are averse to sickness, or death, or poverty, you will be wretched. Remove aversion, then, from all things that are not in our control, and transfer it to things contrary to the nature of what is in our control."

–Epictetus, Enchiridion, 2.1–2

„It is in our power to discover the will of nature from those matters on which we have no difference of opinion. For example, when another man's slave has broken the wine cup, we are very ready to say at once, 'Such things must happen.' Know then that when your own cup is broken, you ought to behave in the same way as when your neighbor's was broken. Apply the same principle to higher matters. Is another's child or wife dead? Not one of us but would say, 'Such is the lot of man'; but when one's own dies, straightaway one cries, 'Alas! miserable am I.' But we ought to remember what our feelings are when we hear it of another."

–Epictetus, Enchiridion, 26

„Does a man do you a wrong? Go to and mark what notion of good and evil was his that did the wrong. Once [you] perceive that … you will feel compassion, not surprise or anger. For you have still yourself either the same notion of good and evil as he, or another not unlike it. You need to forgive him then. But if [your] notions of good and evil are no longer such, all the more easily shall you be gracious to him that sees awry."

–Marcus Aurelius, Meditations, 7.26

„Now there are two kinds of [Stoic] training, one which is appropriate for the soul alone, and the other which is common to both soul and body. We use the training common to both when we discipline ourselves to cold, heat, thirst, hunger, meager rations, hard beds, avoidance of pleasures, and patience under suffering. For by these things and others like them the body is strengthened and becomes capable of enduring hardship, sturdy and ready for any task; the soul too is strengthened since it is trained for courage by patience under hardship and for self-control by abstinence from pleasures."

–Musonius Rufus, Lectures, 6

„If an evil has been pondered beforehand, the blow is gentle when it comes. To the fool, however, and to him who trusts in fortune, each event as it arrives 'comes in a new and sudden form,' and a large part of evil, to the inexperienced, consists in its novelty. This is proved by the fact that men endure with greater courage, when they have once become accustomed to them, the things which they had at first regarded as hardships. Hence, the wise man accustoms himself to coming trouble, lightening by long reflection the evils which others lighten by long endurance. We sometimes hear the inexperienced say: 'I knew that this was in store for me.' But the wise man knows that all things are in store for him. Whatever happens, he says: 'I knew it.'"

–Seneca, Letters to Lucilius, 76.34–35

„
The agitations that beset you are superfluous, and depend wholly upon judgments of your own. You can get rid of them, and in so doing will indeed live at large, by embracing the whole universe in your view and comprehending all eternity and imagining the swiftness of change in each particular, seeing how brief is the passage from birth to dissolution, birth with its unfathomable before, dissolution with its infinite hereafter.”

–Marcus Aurelius, Meditations, 9.32

„The Pythagoreans bid us every morning lift our eyes to heaven, to meditate upon the heavenly bodies pursuing their everlasting round —their order, their purity, their nakedness. For no star wears a veil.”

–Marcus Aurelius, Meditations, 11.27

„True happiness, therefore, consists in virtue: and what will this virtue bid you do? Not to think anything bad or good which is connected neither with virtue nor with wickedness.”

–Seneca, On the Happy Life, 16

„How much better to follow a straight course and attain a goal where the words ‘pleasant’ and ‘honorable’ have the same meaning! This end will be possible for us if we understand that there are two classes of objects that either attract us or repel us. We are attracted by such things as riches, pleasures, beauty, ambition, and other such coaxing and pleasing objects; we are repelled by toil, death, pain, disgrace, or lives of greater frugality. We ought therefore to train ourselves so that we may avoid a fear of the one or a desire for the other. Let us fight in the opposite fashion: Let us retreat from the objects that allure, and rouse ourselves to meet the objects that attack.

–Seneca, Letters to Lucilius, 123.12–13

Thus the oftener we are tempted by pleasure in eating, the more dangers there are involved. And indeed at each meal there is not one hazard for going wrong, but many. First of all, the man who eats more than he ought does wrong, and the man who eats in undue haste no less, and also the man who wallows in the pickles and sauces, and the man who prefers the sweeter foods to the more healthful ones, and the man who does not serve food of the same kind or amount to his guests as to himself. There is still another wrong in connection with eating, when we indulge in it at an unseasonable time, and although there is something else we ought to do, we put it aside in order to eat."

–Musonius Rufus, Lectures, 18.B4

„Just as he who tries to be rid of an old love must avoid every reminder of the person once held dear (for nothing grows again so easily as love), similarly, he who would lay aside his desire for all the things which he used to crave so passionately, must turn away both eyes and ears from the objects which he has abandoned. The emotions soon return to the attack; at every turn they will notice before their eyes an object worth their attention."

–Seneca, Letters to Lucilius, 69.3–4

„How far happier is he who is indebted to no man for anything except for what he can deprive himself of with the greatest ease! Since we, however, have not such strength of mind as this, we ought at any rate to diminish the extent of our property, in order to be less exposed to the assaults of fortune. Those men whose bodies can be within the shelter of their armor are more fitted for war than those whose huge size everywhere extends beyond it, and exposes them to wounds; the best amount of property to have is that which is enough to keep us from poverty, and which yet is not far removed from it."

–Seneca, On Tranquility of Mind, 8

„Take care that we do not labor for what is vain, or labor in vain; that is to say, neither to desire what we are not able to obtain, nor yet, having obtained our desire too late, and after much toil, to discover the folly of our wishes. In other words, that our labor may not be without result, and that the result may not be unworthy of our labor, for as a rule sadness arises from one of these two things, either from want of success or from being ashamed of having succeeded."

–Seneca, On Tranquility of Mind, 12

„When anything, from the meanest thing upwards, is attractive or serviceable or an object of affection, remember always to say to yourself, 'What is its nature?' If you are fond of a jug, say you are fond of a jug; then you will not be disturbed if it be broken. If you kiss your child or your wife, say to yourself that you are kissing a human being, for then if death strikes it you will not be disturbed."

–Epictetus, Enchiridion, 3

„No man can have a peaceful life who thinks too much about lengthening it, or believes that living through many consulships is a great blessing. Rehearse this thought every day, that you may be able to depart from life contentedly; for many men clutch and cling to life, even as those who are carried down a rushing stream clutch and cling to briars and sharp rocks."

–Seneca, Letters to Lucilius, 4.4–5

„When you want to cheer your spirits, consider the excellences of those about you—one so effective, another so unassuming, another so open-handed, and so on and so on. Nothing is more cheering than exemplifications of virtue in the characters of those about us,

suggesting themselves as copiously as possible. We should keep them always ready to hand."

–Marcus Aurelius, Meditations, 6.48

„When you are about to take something in hand, remind yourself what manner of thing it is. If you are going to bathe, put before your mind what happens in the bath—water pouring over some, others being jostled, some reviling, others stealing; and you will set to work more securely if you say to yourself at once: 'I want to bathe, and I want to keep my will in harmony with nature,' and so in each thing you do. For in this way, if anything turns up to hinder you in your bathing, you will be ready to say: 'I did not want only to bathe, but to keep my will in harmony with nature, and I shall not so keep it, if I lose my temper at what happens.'"

–Epictetus, Enchiridion, 4

„You will hear many of those who are burdened by great prosperity cry out at times in the midst of their throngs of clients, or their pleadings in court, or their other glorious miseries: 'I have no chance to live.' Of course you have no chance! All those who summon you to themselves, turn you away from your own self …. Check off, I say, and review the days of your life; you will see that very few, and those [that are] the refuse … have been left for you …. Everyone hurries his life on and suffers from a yearning for the future and a weariness of the present. But he who bestows all of his time on his own needs, who plans out every day as if it were his last, neither longs for nor fears the morrow."

–Seneca, On the Shortness of Life, 7

„Be silent for the most part, or, if you speak, say only what is necessary and in a few words. Talk, but rarely, if occasion calls you, but do not talk of ordinary things, of gladiators, or horseraces, or athletes, or of meats or drinks—these are topics that arise everywhere—but above all do not talk about men in blame or compliment or comparison."

–Epictetus, Enchiridion, 33.2

„Refuse the entertainments of strangers and the vulgar. But if occasion arise to accept them, then strain every nerve to avoid lapsing into the state of the vulgar. For know that, if your comrade have a stain on him, he that associates with him must needs share the stain, even though he be clean in himself."

–Epictetus, Enchiridion, 33.6

„If some one tells you that so and so speaks ill of you, do not defend yourself against what he says, but answer, 'He did not know my other faults, or he would not have mentioned these alone.'"

–Epictetus, Enchiridion, 33.9

„In your conversation avoid frequent and disproportionate mention of your own doings or adventures; for other people do not take the same pleasure in hearing what has happened to you as you take in recounting your adventures."

–Epictetus, Enchiridion, 33.14

„When you wake, say to yourself: 'Today I shall encounter meddling, ingratitude, violence, cunning, jealousy, self-seeking; all of them the results of men not knowing what is good and what is evil. But seeing that I have beheld the nature and nobility of good, and the nature and meanness of evil, and the nature of the sinner, who is my brother, participating not indeed in the same flesh and

blood, but in the same mind and partnership with the divine, I cannot be injured by any of them; for no man can involve me in what demeans. Neither can I be angry with my brother, or quarrel with him; for we are made for cooperation, like the feet, the hands, the eyelids, the upper and the lower rows of teeth. To thwart one another is contrary to nature; and one form of thwarting is resentment and estrangement.'"

–Marcus Aurelius, Meditations, 2.1

„First. My relation towards men. We are made for one another …. Second. What are men like in board, in bed, and so on? Above all, what principles do they hold binding? And how far does pride enter into their actual conduct?
Third. If others are doing right, you have no call to feel sore; if wrong, it is not willful, but comes of ignorance.
Fourth. You are like others, and often do wrong yourself. Even if you abstain from some forms of wrong, all the same you have the bent for wrongdoing, though cowardice, or desire for popularity, or some other low motive keeps you from wrong of the same kind.
Fifth. You cannot even be sure if they are doing wrong; for many actions depend upon some secondary end. In short, one has much to learn, before one can make sure and certain about another's action.
„Sixth. When sorely provoked and out of patience, remember that man's life is but for a moment; a little while, and we all lie stretched in death.
Seventh. Men's actions—resting with them and their Inner Selves—cannot agitate us, but our own views regarding them. Get rid of these, let judgment forego its indignation, and therewith anger departs.
Eighth. How much more unconscionable are our anger and vexation at the acts, than the acts which make us angry and vexed!
Ninth. Kindness is invincible if only it is honest, not fawning or insincere. What can the most aggressive do, if you keep persistently kind, and as occasion offers gently remonstrate, and seize the

moment when he is bent on mischief, for trying quietly to convert him to a better frame of mind …. Then point him gently to the general law of things … but avoid any touch of irony or fault finding, and be affectionate and conciliatory in tone; not in schoolmaster style, or to show off before others, but quietly in his own ear, even if others are standing by.
Bear these nine heads in mind, gifts as it were of the nine Muses. While you still live, before it is too late, begin to be a man! Be on your guard against flattering as well as against petulance; both come of self-seeking, and both do harm …. Anger, like grief, is a mark of weakness; both mean being wounded, and wincing.
Tenth and lastly—a gift, so please you, from Apollo, leader of the Choir. Not to expect the worthless to do wrong is idiocy; it is asking an impossibility. To allow them to wrong others, and to claim exemption for yourself, is graceless and tyrannical."

–Marcus Aurelius, Meditations, 11.18

„We see athletes, who study only their bodily strength, engage in contests with the strongest of men, and insist that those who train them for the arena should put out their whole strength when practicing with them. They endure blows and maltreatment, and if they cannot find any single person who is their match, they engage with several at once. Their strength and courage droop without an antagonist; they can only prove how great and how mighty [they are] by proving how much they can endure. You should know that good men ought to act in like manner, so as not to fear troubles and difficulties, nor to lament their hard fate, to take in good part whatever befalls them, and force it to become a blessing to them. It does not matter what you bear, but how you bear it.

–Seneca, On Providence, 2

„Fight hard with yourself and if you cannot conquer anger, do not let it conquer you: You have begun to get the better of it if it does not show itself, if it is not given vent. Let us conceal its symptoms, and as far as possible keep it secret and hidden. It will give us great trouble to do this, for it is eager to burst forth, to kindle our eyes and to transform our face. But if we allow it to show itself in our outward appearance, it is our master. Let it rather be locked in the innermost recesses of our breast, and be borne by us, not bear us. Nay, let us replace all its symptoms by their opposites; let us make our countenance more composed than usual, our voice milder, our step slower. Our inward thoughts gradually become influenced by our outward demeanor."

–Seneca, On Anger, 3.13

„We can get rid of most sins, if we have a witness who stands near us when we are likely to go wrong. The soul should have someone whom it can respect—one by whose authority it may make even its inner shrine more hallowed. Happy is the man who can make others better, not merely when he is in their company, but even when he is in their thoughts! And happy also is he who can so revere a man as to calm and regulate himself by calling him to mind! One who can so revere another will soon be himself worthy of reverence. Choose therefore a Cato; or, if Cato seems too severe a model, choose some Laelius, a gentler spirit. Choose a master whose life, conversation, and soul-expressing face have satisfied you; picture him always to yourself as your protector or your pattern. For we must indeed have someone according to whom we may regulate our characters; you can never straighten that which is crooked unless you use a ruler.

–Seneca, Letters to Lucilius, 11.9–10

„The spirit ought to be brought up for examination daily. It was the custom of Sextius when the day was over, and he had betaken himself to rest, to inquire of his spirit: 'What bad habit of yours have you cured today? What vice have you checked? In what respect are you better?' Anger will cease, and become more gentle, if it knows that every day it will have to appear before the judgment seat. What can be more admirable than this fashion of discussing the whole of the day's events? How sweet is the sleep that follows this self-examination? How calm, how sound, and careless is it when our spirit has either received praise or reprimand, and when our secret inquisitor and censor has made his report about our morals? I make use of this privilege, and daily plead my cause before myself: When the lamp is taken out of my sight, and my wife, who knows my habit, has ceased to talk, I pass the whole day in review before myself, and repeat all that I have said and done. I conceal nothing from myself, and omit nothing, for why should I be afraid of any of my shortcomings, when it is in my power to say, 'I pardon you this time; see that you never do that anymore?"

–Seneca, On Anger, 3.36

„This is what I think ought to be done by virtue and by one who practices virtue: If Fortune gets the upper hand and deprive him of the power of action, let him not straightaway turn his back to the enemy, throw away his arms, and run away seeking for a hiding place, as if there were any place whither Fortune could not pursue him …. Even in an oppressed state a wise man can find an opportunity for bringing himself to the front, and that in a prosperous and flourishing one wanton insolence, jealousy, and a thousand other cowardly vices bear sway. We ought therefore to expand or contract ourselves according as the state presents itself to us, or as Fortune offers us opportunities; but in any case we ought to move and not to become frozen still by fear. Nay, he is the best man who, though peril menaces him on every side and arms and chains beset his path, nevertheless neither impairs nor

conceals his virtue, for to keep oneself safe does not mean to bury oneself."

–Seneca, On Tranquility of Mind, 4–5.1

„It was, I imagine, following out this principle that Democritus taught that 'he who would live at peace must not do much business either public or private,' referring of course to unnecessary business. For if there be any necessity for it, we ought to transact not only much but endless business, both public and private; in cases, however, where no solemn duty invites us to act, we had better keep ourselves quiet, for he who does many things often puts himself in Fortune's power, and it is safest not to tempt her often, but always to remember her existence, and never to promise oneself anything on her security. I will set sail unless anything happens to prevent me; I shall be praetor [magistrate], if nothing hinders me; my financial operations will succeed, unless anything goes wrong with them. This is why we say that nothing befalls the wise man which he did not expect. We do not make him exempt from the chances of human life, but from its mistakes, nor does everything happen to him as he wished it would, but as he thought it would. Now his first thought was that his purpose might meet with some resistance, and the pain of disappointed wishes must affect a man's mind less severely if he has not been at all events confident of success."

–Seneca, On Tranquility of Mind, 13

„Try, in your dealings with others, to harm not, in order that you be not harmed. You should rejoice with all in their joys and sympathize with them in their troubles, remembering what you should offer and what you should withhold. And what may you attain by living such a life? Not necessarily freedom from harm at their hands, but at least freedom from deceit. In so far, however, as you are able, take refuge with philosophy: She will cherish you in her bosom, and in her sanctuary you shall be safe, or, at any rate, safer than before.

People collide only when they are travelling the same path. But this very philosophy must never be vaunted by you, for philosophy when employed with insolence and arrogance has been perilous to many. Let her strip off your faults, rather than assist you to decry the faults of others. Let her not hold aloof from the customs of mankind, nor make it her business to condemn whatever she herself does not do. A man may be wise without parade and without arousing enmity."

–Seneca, Letters to Lucilius, 103.3–5

„It is the act of a generous spirit to proportion its efforts not to its own strength but to that of human nature, to entertain lofty aims, and to conceive plans that are too vast to be carried into execution even by those who are endowed with gigantic intellects, who appoint for themselves the following rules:
I will look upon death or upon a comedy with the same expression of countenance.
I will submit to labors, however great they may be, supporting the strength of my body by that of my mind.
I will despise riches when I have them as much as when I have them not; if they be elsewhere I will not be more gloomy, if they sparkle around me I will not be more lively than I should otherwise be.
Whether Fortune comes or goes I will take no notice of her.
I will view all lands as though they belong to me, and my own as though they belonged to all mankind …
Whatever I may possess, I will neither hoard it greedily nor squander it recklessly. I will think that I have no possessions so real as those which I have given away to deserving people.
I will not reckon benefits by their magnitude or number, or by anything except the value set upon them by the receiver.
I never will consider a gift to be a large one if it be bestowed upon a worthy object.
I will do nothing because of public opinion, but everything because of conscience; whenever I do anything alone by myself I will

believe that „the eyes of the Roman people are upon me while I do it.
In eating and drinking my object shall be to quench the desires of Nature, not to fill and empty my belly.
I will be agreeable with my friends, gentle and mild to my foes.
I will grant pardon before I am asked for it, and will meet the wishes of honorable men half way.
I will bear in mind that the world is my native city, that its governors are the gods, and that they stand above and around me, criticizing whatever I do or say.
Whenever either Nature demands my breath again, or reason bids me dismiss it, I will quit this life, calling all to witness that I have loved a good conscience, and good pursuits; that no one's freedom, my own least of all, has been impaired through me.
He who sets up these as the rules of his life will soar aloft and strive to make his way to the gods."

–Seneca, On the Happy Life, 20

„Each of us is, as it were, circumscribed by many circles; some of which are less, but others larger, and some comprehend [i.e., include], but others are comprehended [i.e., included], according to the different and unequal habitudes with respect to each other. For the first, indeed, and most proximate circle is that which everyone describes about his own mind as a center, in which circle the body, and whatever is assumed for the sake of the body, are comprehended. For this is nearly the smallest circle, and almost touches the center itself. The second from this, and which is at a greater distance from the center, but comprehends the first circle, is that in which parents, brothers, wife, and children are arranged. The third circle from the center is that which contains uncles and aunts, grandfathers and grandmothers, and the children of brothers and sisters. After this is the circle which comprehends the remaining relatives. Next to this is that which contains the common people, then that which comprehends those of the same tribe, afterwards that which contains the citizens. And then two other

circles follow, one being the circle of those that dwell in the vicinity of the city, and the other, of those of the same province. But the outermost and greatest circle, and which comprehends all the other circles, is that of the whole human race.
These things being thus considered, it is the province of him who strives to conduct himself properly in each of these connections to collect, in a certain respect, the circles, as it were, to one center, and always to endeavor earnestly to transfer himself from the comprehending circles to the several particulars which they comprehend. It pertains, therefore, to the man who is a lover of kindred [to conduct himself in a becoming manner] toward his parents and brothers; also, according to the same analogy, toward the more elderly of his relatives of both sexes, such as grandfathers, uncles and aunts; towards those of the same age with himself, as his cousins; and toward his juniors, as the children of his cousins."

–Hierocles, Fragments, How We Ought to Conduct Ourselves Towards Our Kindred

„Of every action ask yourself, what does it mean for me? Shall I repent of it? A little while and I am dead, and there is an end of all. Why crave for more, if only the work I am about is worthy of a being intellectual, social-minded, and on a par with God?"

–Marcus Aurelius, Meditations, 8.2

„Make it your study then to confront every harsh impression with the words, 'You are but an impression, and not at all what you seem to be.' Then test it by those rules that you possess; and first by this—the chief test of all—'Is it concerned with what is in our power or with what is not in our power?' And if it is concerned with what is not in our power, be ready with the answer that it is nothing to you."

–Epictetus, Enchiridion, 1.5

„Epictetus urged the need of a sound grammar of assent; and in dealing with the impulses, to take good heed to keep them subject to reservation, unselfish, and in due proportion to their object: always to refrain inclination, and to limit avoidance to things within our own control."

–Marcus Aurelius, Meditations, 11.37

„There are four moods to which your Inner Self is liable, against which you must constantly be upon the watch, and suppress them as soon as detected with such reprimands as these: It is a needless fancy; or, It is antisocial; or, It does not come from your heart, and not to speak from one's heart is a moral inconsequence; or, fourthly, you will never forgive yourself, for such a feeling implies subjection and abasement of the diviner element in you to the perishable and less honorable portion, the body and its coarser apprehensions."

–Marcus Aurelius, Meditations, 11.19

„The wise man, indeed, overcomes Fortune by his virtue, but many who profess wisdom are sometimes frightened by the most unsubstantial threats. And at this stage it is a mistake on our part to make the same demands „upon the wise man and upon the learner. I still exhort myself to do that which I recommend; but my exhortations are not yet followed. And even if this were the case, I should not have these principles so ready for practice, or so well trained, that they would rush to my assistance in every crisis. Just as wool takes up certain colors at once, while there are others which it will not absorb unless it is soaked and steeped in them many times, so other systems of doctrine can be immediately applied by men's minds after once being accepted; but this system of which I speak, unless it has gone deep and has sunk in for a long time, and has not merely colored but thoroughly permeated the soul, does not fulfil any of its promises. The matter can be imparted quickly and in very few words: 'Virtue is the only good; at

any rate there is no good without virtue, and virtue itself is situated in our nobler part, that is, the rational part.' And what will this virtue be? A true and never-swerving judgment. For therefrom will spring all mental impulses, and by its agency every external appearance that stirs our impulses will be clarified. It will be in keeping with this judgment to judge all things that have been colored by virtue as goods, and as equal goods."

–Seneca, Letters to Lucilius, 71.30–33

„Sickness is a hindrance to the body, but not to the will, unless the will consent. Lameness is a hindrance to the leg, but not to the will. Say this to yourself at each event that happens, for you shall find that though it hinders something else it will not hinder you."

–Epictetus, Enchiridion, 9

„Every pain sometimes stops, or at any rate slackens; moreover, one may take precautions against its return, and, when it threatens, may check it by means of remedies. Every variety of pain has its premonitory symptoms; this is true, at any rate, of pain that is habitual and recurrent. One can endure the suffering which disease entails, if one has come to regard its results with scorn. But do not of your own accord make your troubles heavier to bear and burden yourself with complaining. Pain is slight if opinion has added nothing to it; but if, on the other hand, you begin to encourage yourself and say, 'It is nothing—a trifling matter at most; keep a stout heart and it will soon cease'; then in thinking it slight, you will make it slight. Everything depends on opinion; ambition, luxury, greed, hark back to opinion. It is according to opinion that we suffer. A man is as wretched as he has convinced himself that he is. I hold that we should do away with complaint about past sufferings and with all language like this: 'None has ever been worse off than I. What sufferings, what evils have I endured! No one has thought that I shall recover. How often have my family bewailed me, and the physicians given me over! Men who are placed on the rack are

not torn asunder with such agony!' However, even if all this is true, it is over and gone. What benefit is there in reviewing past sufferings, and in being unhappy, just because once you were unhappy? Besides, every one adds much to his own ills, and tells lies to himself. And that which was bitter to bear is pleasant to have borne; it is natural to rejoice at the ending of one's ills. Two elements must therefore be rooted out once for all—the fear of future suffering, and the recollection of past suffering; since the latter no longer concerns me, and the former concerns me not yet."

–Seneca, Letters to Lucilius, 78.12–14

„Men seek retirement in country house, on shore or hill; and you too know full well what that yearning means. Surely a very simple wish; for at what hour you will, you can retire into yourself. Nowhere can man find retirement more peaceful and untroubled than in his own soul, specially he who has such stores within, that at a glance he straightaway finds himself lapped in ease, meaning by ease good order in the soul, this and nothing else. Ever and anon grant yourself this retirement, and so renew yourself. Have at command thoughts, brief and elemental, yet effectual to shut out the court and all its ways, and to send you back unchafing to the tasks to which you must return. What is it chafes you? Men's evil doing? Find reassurance in the tenet that rational beings exist for one another, that forbearance is a part of justice, that wrong doing is involuntary; and think of all the feuds, suspicions, hates and brawls, that before now lie stretched in ashes. Think, and be at rest. Or is it the portion assigned you in the universe at which you chafe? Refresh yourself with the alternative—either a foreseeing providence, or blind atoms—and all the abounding proofs that the world is as it were a city. Or is it bodily troubles that assail? You have but to realize that when once the understanding is secure of itself and conscious of its own prerogative, it has no more part in the motions of the pneuma [soul], smooth or rough, and to rest in the creed to which you hold regarding pain and pleasure. Or does some bubble of fame torment you? Then fix your gaze on swift

oblivion, on the gulf of infinity „this way and that, on the empty rattle of plaudits and the fickle accident of show applause, on the narrow range within which you are circumscribed. The whole earth is but a point, your habitation but a tiny nook thereon; and on the earth how many are there who will praise you, and what are they worth? Well then, remember to retire within that little field or self. Above all do not strain or strive, but be free, and look at things as a man, as a human being, as a citizen, as of mortal make. Foremost among the maxims to which you can bend your glance be these two: First, things cannot touch the soul, but stand without it stationary; tumult can arise only from views within ourselves. Secondly, all things you see, in a moment change and will be no more; think of all the changes in which you have yourself borne part. The world is a moving shift, life a succession of views."

–Marcus Aurelius, Meditations, 4.3

„How am I to know whether my sufferings are real or imaginary?' Here is the rule for such matters: We are tormented either by things present, or by things to come, or by both. As to things present, the decision is easy. Suppose that your person enjoys freedom and health, and that you do not suffer from any external injury. As to what may happen to it in the future, we shall see later on. Today there is nothing wrong with it. 'But,' you say, 'something will happen to it.' First of all, consider whether your proofs of future trouble are sure. For it is more often the case that we are troubled by our apprehensions, and that we are mocked by that mocker, rumor, which is wont to settle wars, but much more often settles individuals. Yes, my dear Lucilius; we agree too quickly with what people say. We do not put to the test those things that cause our fear; we do not examine into them. We blanch and retreat just like soldiers who are forced to abandon their camp because of a dust cloud raised by stampeding cattle, or are thrown into a panic by the spreading of some unauthenticated rumor. And somehow or other it is the idle report that disturbs us most. For truth has its own definite boundaries, but that which arises from uncertainty is

delivered over to guesswork and the irresponsible license of a frightened mind. That is why no fear is so ruinous and so uncontrollable as panic fear. For other fears are groundless, but this fear is witless.

Let us, then, look carefully into the matter. It is likely that some troubles will befall us, but it is not a present fact. How often has the unexpected happened! How often has the expected never come to pass! And even though it is ordained to be, what does it avail to run out to meet your suffering? You will suffer soon enough, when it arrives, so look forward meanwhile to better things. What shall you gain by doing this? Time. There will be many happenings meanwhile that will serve to postpone, or end, or pass on to another person, the trials that are near or even in your very presence. A fire has opened the way to flight. Men have been let down softly by a catastrophe. Sometimes the sword has been checked even at the victim's throat. Men have survived their own executioners. Even bad fortune is fickle. Perhaps it will come, perhaps not; in the meantime it is not. So look forward to better things."

–Seneca, Letters to Lucilius, 13.7–11

„In regarding meats or eatables, you say: that is the carcass of a fish, or fowl, or pig; falernian is so much extract of grape juice; the purple robe is sheep's wool dyed with juices of the shellfish; copulation, a functional discharge. Regards of this kind explore and search the actual facts, opening your eyes to what things really are. So should you deal with life as a whole, and where regards are overcredulous, strip the facts bare, see through their worthlessness, and so get rid of their vaunted embellishments. Pride is the arch sophist, and when you flatter yourself that you are most engrossed in virtuous ends, then are you most fooled."

–Marcus Aurelius, Meditations, 6.13

„Always define and outline carefully the object of perception, so as to realize its naked substance, to discriminate its self from its surroundings, to master its specific attributes, the elements of which it is composed and into which it will be resolved. Nothing so emancipates the mind as the power of scientifically testing everything that comes into our life, of looking into it and gathering the class and order to which each belongs, the special use which it subserves, its value to the universe, its value in particular to man as citizen and member of that supreme world-city, of which all other cities are as households. What is the object, ask, that now produces the given impression upon me? Of what is it compounded? How long has it to last? On what virtue does it make demand? Gentleness, courage, truth, good faith, simplicity, self-help, or what? In each case say, 'This comes from God.' Or 'This is part of the co-ordination, the concatenating web, the concurrence of destiny.' Or 'This is from one who is of the same stock and kind and fellowship as I, but who is ignorant of his true relation to nature. I am not ignorant, and therefore in accordance with nature's law of fellowship I treat him kindly and justly, though at the same time in things relative I strive to hit their proper worth.'"

–Marcus Aurelius, Meditations, 3.11

„Remember that foul words or blows in themselves are no outrage, but your judgment that they are so. So when any one makes you angry, know that it is your own thought that has angered you. Wherefore make it your first endeavor not to let your impressions carry you away. For if once you gain time and delay, you will find it easier to control yourself."

–Epictetus, Enchiridion, 20

„The greatest remedy for anger is delay; beg anger to grant you this at the first, not in order that it may pardon the offense, but that it may form a right judgment about it. If it delays, it will come to an end. Do not attempt to quell it all at once, for its first impulses are fierce; by plucking away its parts we shall remove the whole …. Some offenses we ourselves witness: in these cases let us examine the disposition and purpose of the offender. Perhaps he is a child; let us pardon his youth, he knows not whether he is doing wrong. Or he is a father; he has either rendered such great services, as to have won the right even to wrong us, or perhaps this very act which offends us is his chief merit …. Suppose that it is a disease or a misfortune; it will take less effect upon you if you bear it quietly …. Is it a good man who has wronged you? Do not believe it. Is it a bad one? Do not be surprised at this; he will pay to someone else the penalty which he owes to you—indeed, by his sin he has already punished himself."

–Seneca, On Anger, 2.29–30

„Whither, say you, does this inquiry tend? That we may know what anger is. For if it springs up against our will, it never will yield to reason, because all the motions which take place without our volition are beyond our control and unavoidable, such as shivering when cold water is poured over us, or shrinking when we are touched in certain places. Men's hair rises up at bad news, their faces blush at indecent words, and they are seized with dizziness when looking down a precipice. And as it is not in our power to prevent any of these things, no reasoning can prevent their taking place. But anger can be put to flight by wise maxims, for it is a voluntary defect of the mind, and not one of those things which are evolved by the conditions of human life, and which, therefore, may happen even to the wisest of us."

–Seneca, On Anger, 2.2

„If a man washes quickly, do not say that he washes badly, but that he washes quickly. If a man drink much wine, do not say that he drinks badly, but that he drinks much. For until you have decided what judgment prompts him, how do you know that he acts badly? If you do as I say, you will assent to your apprehensive impressions and to none other."

–Epictetus, Enchiridion, 45

„Do not let the impression of life as a whole confound you. Do not focus in one all the train of possible and painful consequences; but as each trouble comes, say to yourself: What is there here too hard to bear or to endure? And you will be ashamed to avow it so. And yet again remember, that you have not to bear up against the future or the past, but always against the present only. And even that you minimize, when you strictly circumscribe it to itself, and repudiate moral inability to hold out merely against that."

–Marcus Aurelius, Meditations, 8.36

„When you relax your attention for a little, do not imagine that you will recover it wherever „you wish; but bear this well in mind that your error of today must of necessity put you in a orse position for other occasions. For in the first place—and this is the most serious thing—a habit of inattention is formed, and next a habit of deferring attention, and you get into the way of putting off from one time to another the tranquil and becoming life, the state and behavior that nature prescribes. Now if such postponement of attention is profitable, it would be still more profitable to abandon it altogether: but if it is not profitable, why do you not keep up your attention continuously?
'I want to play today.'
What prevents you, if you attend?
'I want to sing.'
What prevents you, if you attend?

„Is any part of life excluded, on which attention has no bearing, any that you will make worse by attention and better by inattention? Nay, is there anything in life generally which is done better by those who do not attend? Does the carpenter by inattention do his work better? Does the helmsman by inattention steer more safely? And are any of the minor duties of life fulfilled better by inattention? Do you not realize that when once you have let your mind go wandering, you lose the power to recall it, to bring it to bear on what is seemly, self-respecting, and modest; you do anything that occurs to you and follow your inclinations?

„o what then must I attend?

First to those universal principles I have spoken of. These you must keep at command, and without them neither sleep nor rise, drink nor eat nor deal with men: the principle that no one can control another's will, and that the will alone is the sphere of good and evil. No one then has power to procure me good or to involve me in evil, but I myself alone have authority over myself in these matters. So when I have made these secure, what need have I to be disturbed about outward things? What need have I to fear tyrant, or disease, or poverty, or disaster?

'But I do not please So-and-so.'

Well, is he my doing? Is he my judgment?

'No.'

What concern is it of mine then?

'Nay, but he is highly thought of.

„That will be for him to consider, and for those who think much of him. I have one whom I must please, one to whom I must submit myself and obey: God and those who come next to God. He commended me to myself, and made my will subject to me alone, and gave me rules for the right use of it. And if I follow these in syllogisms I pay no heed to anyone who contradicts me; if I follow them in dealing with variable premises, I pay regard to no one. Why then am I annoyed by those who criticize me in greater matters? What is the reason for this perturbation? It is none other than that I have had no training in this

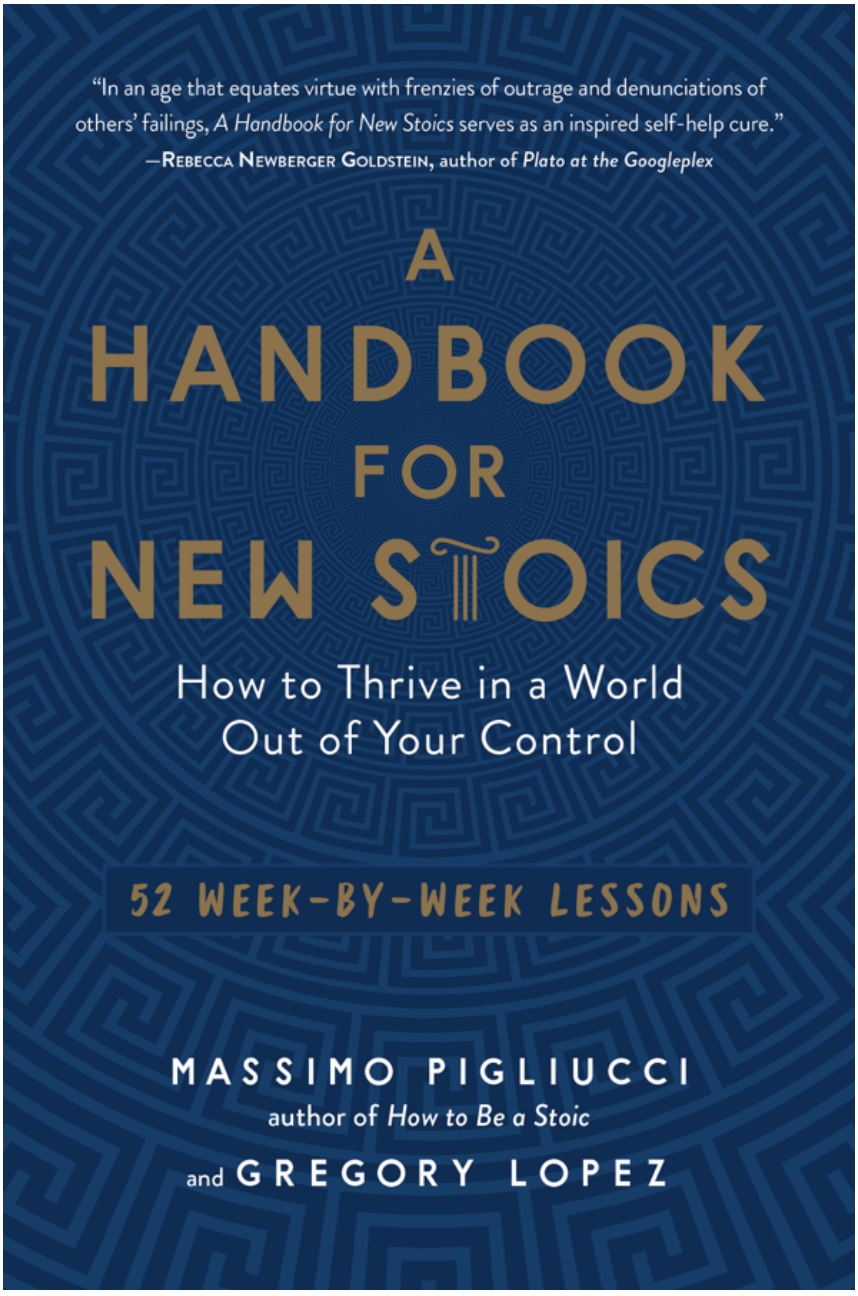
„sphere. For every science is entitled to despise ignorance and the ignorant, and this is true of arts as well as of sciences. Take any shoemaker, any carpenter you like, and you find he laughs the multitude to scorn when his own craft is in question.
First then we must have these principles ready to our hand. Without them we must do nothing. We must set our mind on this object: pursue nothing that is outside us, nothing that is not our own, even as He that is mighty has ordained; pursuing what lies within our will, and all else only so far as it is given us to do so. Further, we must remember who we are, and by what name we are called, and must try to direct our acts to fit each situation and its possibilities.
We must consider what is the time for singing, what the time for play, and in whose presence; what will be unsuited to the occasion; whether our companions are to despise us, or we to despise ourselves; when to jest, and whom to mock at; and on what occasion to be conciliatory and to whom. In a word, how one ought to maintain one's character in society. Wherever you swerve from any of these principles, you suffer loss at once; not loss from without, but issuing from the very act itself."

–Epictetus, Discourses IV, 12.1–18

„It is by this principle above all that you must guide yourself in training. Go out as soon as it is dawn and whomsoever you may see and hear, question yourself and answer as to an interrogator. What did you see? A beautiful woman or boy. Apply the rule: Is this within the will's control or beyond it? Beyond. Away with it then! What did you see? One mourning at his child's death. Apply the rule: Is death beyond the will, or can the will control it? Death is beyond the will's control. Put it out of the way then!
Did a Consul meet you? Apply the rule: What is a consulship? Is it beyond the will's control or within it? Beyond it. Take it away—the coin will not pass; reject it, you have no concern with it.
I say, if we did this and trained ourselves on this principle every day from dawn to night, we should indeed achieve something. As it is,

we are caught open mouthed by every impression we meet, and only in the lecture room, if then, does our mind wake up a little. Then we go into the street and if we see a mourner we say, 'He is undone'; if a Consul, 'Lucky man'; if an outlaw, 'Miserable man'; if a poor man, 'Wretched man, he has nothing to buy food with.'
These mistaken judgments we must eradicate, and concentrate our efforts on doing so. For what is weeping and lamenting? A matter of judgment. What is misfortune? Judgment. What is faction, discord, criticism, accusation, irreligion, foolishness? All these are judgments, nothing else, and judgments passed on things beyond the will, as though they were good and evil. Only let a man turn these efforts to the sphere of the will, and I guarantee that he will enjoy peace of mind, whatever his circumstances may be."

–Epictetus, Discourses III, 3.14–19



Massimo Pigliucci & Gregory Lopez, A Handbook for New Stoics, 2019