

Stoic Maxims for Strong Men

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“Do not seek to have events happen as you want them to, but instead want them to happen as they do happen, and your life will go well.”

Epictetus

Ensuing are a selection of stoic aphorisms which I have put together for your perusal and contemplation. The aphorisms are thoroughly influenced by Epictetus, one of the foremost stoics of his time, among others such as Seneca and Aurelius. Meditate on these notions and reflect to better comprehend.

Maxims

1. We do not own our body, property, fame and office, we own everything that is naturally unencumbered and unrestricted. Things outside our ownership are weakly and obstructed.
2. Pursue great aims unreservedly, not passably. You must temporarily disown some things while putting off others.
3. When faced with disagreeable occurrences, remember Epictetus' dictum, “You are an appearance, and not at all the thing that has the appearance.”
4. Evaluate whether it involves what is in your control or what is outside it. If it is the latter, readily recognise that it is not related to you.
5. When you don't get what is desired, you're unfortunate: when you are confronted with what you oppose to, you stumbled on misfortune.
6. If you desire what is not in your control, you will likely be out of luck. Disconnect from your distaste for things outside your will and desire the good that lies within it.
7. Death is not unpleasant, your judgement about death is unpleasant.
8. When things are turning out poorly, the illiterate shifts blame, the partially literate blames himself, and the well informed blames neither himself nor someone else.
9. Your wife and children are not yours, they have been endowed to you. Like this, when death calls, readily let them go and yield to your departure with no second thought.
10. Do not pursue expectancy, instead desire for events to occur as they like and you will never be thwarted.
11. Sickness impedes the body, not your capacity for choice, unless your choice desires it hinder itself.
12. Every thing that unfolds, turn inwards and inquire into yourself what power you possess for taking care of it.
13. When challenged by hardship, you will discover tenacity. When challenged by mistreatment, you will discover forbearance. If you adjust to it, you will stop being misled by impressions.
14. You don't lose anything which isn't yours, you simply give it back. The way in which the giver takes it does not pertain you; so long as you have it, look after it without trying to own it.
15. It is more preferable to expire of starvation without terror than live troubled amongst prosperity.

16. Whether a blunder or a thieving, such are the cost of being unperturbed and composed.
17. Imagination nurtures more suffering than reality.
18. Muse on life's beauty, gaze at it and flow openly with it.
19. You should allow others to think an idiot of you, with no want for noticing them. If people think highly of you, be wary.
20. Fool is he who wants to have his friends, family and wife evermore; to control things which are beyond your control, and to have ownership over things that are not yours.
21. If you want freedom, give up your desire or evasion for anything outside your control.
22. It is your judgement of events and things that weigh you down. That being so, do not wait to show careful concern to another who has met hardship, yet be cautious not to complain inwardly.
23. It is your personal belief which annoys you, not a person's actions. Do not be misled by impressions, slow down and buy yourself time to control yourself.
24. Contemplate on the loss of life regularly, chiefly death. In doing so, you will not have despicable or intemperate yearnings.
25. Avoid looking unduly sophisticated but embrace those things that are suitable to you as if appointed by divinity. In doing so, those who formerly mocked you will be moved, but if you are thwarted by their scorn, you will be mocked twice as much.
26. If you insist that someone else should be deprived of the good for you to gain things that are bad, think about how unjust and thoughtless you are.
27. Nothing detrimental by nature takes place in the world. For, a mark is not erected to be missed, but hit.
28. Consider with each action what paves the way and what comes after it. Proceed by taking that into consideration.
29. Do not unenthusiastically undertake things, don't be a rascal who imitates every impression with little consideration. Undertake things with unswerving commitment and only after musing on it from every perspective.
30. Good fortune is a consequence of the convergence between intention and chance.

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