

Select Quotations from Stoic Writings

Seneca the Younger (c.4 BC - 65 AD), *Letters from a Stoic*

Epictetus (c.55 AD - 135 AD), *Discourses, Enchiridion*

Marcus Aurelius (121AD - 180 AD), *Meditations*

If you really want to escape the things that harass you, what you're needing is not to be in a different place but to be a different person. *Letters, #104*

For we are mistaken when we look forward to death; the major portion of death has already passed. Whatever years be behind us are in death's hands. . . . What fools these mortals be! *Letters, #1*

Of this one thing make sure against your dying day – that your faults die before you do. *Letters, #27*

You will not die because you are sick, but because you are alive. *Letters, #78*

We deprive ourselves of all the friends we fail to make. *Letters, #*

It is not the man who has too little that is poor, but the one who hankers after more. *Letters, #2*

Wild animals run from the dangers they actually see, and once they have escaped them worry no more. We however are tormented alike by what is past and what is to come. . . No one confines his unhappiness to the present. *Letters, #5*

Ambition means tying your well-being to what other people say or do. Self-indulgence means tying it to the things that happen to you. Sanity means tying it to your own actions. *Meditations, VI.51*

No man can rob us of our free will. *Meditations, XI.36*

Accustom yourself to listen carefully to another's words, and as much as possible, be in the speaker's mind. *Meditations, VI.53.*

The best way of avenging yourself is not to become like the wrongdoer. *Meditations, VI.6*

When you have done a good act and another has received it, why do you still want something more, as fools do, either to have credit for the good act, or recompense? *Meditations, VII.73*

Let not your thoughts at once embrace all the various troubles which you may expect to befall you . . . remember that neither the future nor the past pains you, but only the present. *Meditations, VIII.36*

You get what you deserve, for you choose rather to *become* good tomorrow rather than *be* good today. *Meditations, VIII:22*

If you are pained by any external thing, it is not this thing which disturbs you, but your own judgment about it. And it is in your power to wipe out that judgment now. *Meditations. VIII.47*

First say to yourself what you would be, and then do what you would do. *Discourses, III.23*

Demand not that events should happen as you wish, but wish them to happen as they do happen, and your life will be serene. *Enchiridion, #8.*

Remember that you are an actor in a play the character of which is determined by the author – if short, then in a short one, if long then in a long one. If it be his pleasure that you enact a poor person, see to it that you act it well; or a lame person, or a ruler, or a private citizen. For this is your business, to act well the given part; but to choose it belongs to God. *Enchiridion #17* (Epictetus was poor, he had a lame leg, and he was born a slave.)

