

This is the Way

- Stoic Lessons on Strength and Honor –



Manuel Sanchez

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Dedication:

This book is dedicated to my parents, who ushered the beginning of my journey, and to my wife, who supported and strengthened me along the way.

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Introduction

I once worried about how others would look at me and judge. I was younger, foolish and constantly in need of validation. I lost so much time with nonsense. The intent of this book is to talk about that and to show some of the pitfalls we stumble into during our journey.

The world wants us to be weak, mindless and frivolous. Some people never notice this situation. Others do notice it, but never take action to free themselves. Life just goes by and they go with the flow, carried away by the circumstances. This may be common and normal in our society, but that does not mean it is healthy. Life cannot work if you are not the one making the decisions.

We must rebel against this established nonsense and this mediocre arrangement. Fortunately, there is a way. This book invites you to reflect. And it is a call to action. It enjoins everyone to follow a better path, supported by honor and resilience.

A path that was shaped to create the best possible world within the existing reality. Without illusions, with a strong spirit. Moving forward in peace, with strength, grit and discipline. Though they may sound old-fashioned, these values merit an urgent rescue, to save us from drowning in a sea of mediocrity and vain, dishonorable behavior.

No heroic acts will be required, only firm and objective conduct—no blamethrowing or self-victimizing. We will be responsible and resilient while facing the fire of adversities, knowing that comfort and obstacles are twin faces we will encounter in our path.

Success is the visible tip that other people may admire or envy, in the professional or intimate and personal spheres. Some believe it happens by chance—they don't understand it is a path one must follow with persistence and grit. Behind the achievements and invisible to almost everyone are the daily decisions of hard work, sacrifice, discipline, mistakes, questioning, conversations, loyalty to a shared life project and new beginnings grounded on resilience.

Everything that has any value demands consistency. Success and happiness do not come from things you do once in a while. They are the result of consistent decisions and actions. Of work ethics. Of perseverance. Of your assertiveness and ability to connect and debate with those who really matter in your life.

So, do not despair. Be hopeful. Do not procrastinate. Focus on your life projects. Have the courage to take the necessary actions.

Respect the process. Leave all childish illusions behind. Embrace reality.

This is the way.

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Stoicism

Stoicism was a Greek school of philosophy founded in the 3rd century BC which flourished in the Roman world. Among its most famous thinkers and advocates we find Epictetus, the Greek slave and philosopher, the Roman senator Seneca and the Roman emperor Marcus Aurelius.

The name of the school derives from **stoa**, a porch, because it was under a porch in Athens that the first Stoics gathered to discuss their ideas.

Central to Stoic thinking were the development of self-control, the search for distancing from destructive emotions and a life without excesses.

The wise Stoic would be the one who obeyed natural law and understood himself as a piece in the larger order and purpose of the Universe.

Maintaining serenity when faced with either tragedy or the good things in life and facing mortality with tranquility are recurring themes in stoic writings, which prepare man for life's obstacles. 'The obstacle is the way,' said Marcus Aurelius in his famous *Meditations*.

It is a mistake to suppose the Stoics embraced sadness and pessimism and talked about nothing but adversity. They advocated

serenity and self-control also in happy times, but without the fervor of excess, and keeping one's focus on the present.

The Stoics present their philosophy as a way of life. It is a mindset, a way of acting in the world. An attitude for facing life.

This school of thought never tried to create complex structures or techniques to explain the physical or spiritual world. The focus was on human *actions*. One should look to their *present actions and their actual life circumstances*. The Stoics were interested in dignified attitudes, in curtailing negative instincts, upholding one's honor and improving mental strength.

Countless authors have seen points of contact between Stoicism and the Buddhist concept of the Middle Path. Both schools address moderation and the control of emotions without excess or desperation; they encourage us to focus in the present moment without getting lost in nostalgia for the past or anxiety about the future.

The classic Stoic works remain fully approachable and some are still best-sellers that help millions of people understand themselves and act in the world in a more efficient manner.

There is also a great variety of contemporary works that try to translate Stoicism to the 21st century to make it better suited to the new generations.

This book aspires membership in that group. I follow the structure modelled by Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius, presenting content in short aphorisms or paragraphs.

I hope you will enjoy reading it.

Thoughts & Aphorisms

01 - It's a simple philosophy, forgotten as it may be. More discipline and resilience, less complaining. Politeness in personal relationships, always assuming responsibility for one's decisions. It is better to be straight from the beginning than to be rectified. Be ambitious, but never greedy. Conquer but do not hoard. Be assertive, but not rude. Correct, but do not shame. Be kind, but not soft. Command, but do not control. Forgive, but do not forget. This is the way.

02 - Positive masculinity: always protect. Be polite and choose kindness. Control your aggressiveness without extinguishing it, for it may be necessary to protect your loved ones at some point. Learn from your mistakes. Strengthen your discipline. Fix what you break. Take ownership. Keep your word. Honor agreements. Encourage good plans. Teach and advise with patience. Create positive options for your life and for the lives of those who depend on you. When talking to someone, look at them straight in the eye. Do not play victim. Never expose your lady. Do not tolerate lies. Have a firm handshake. Do not make futile complaints and do not make a habit of complaining. Be a loyal friend. Stand by your team when problems arise. A lack of purpose in men is a major modern vice. We are also attacked by mediocrity from all sides. Our mere existence is deemed toxic. Our protection is seen as condescension and our sexual appetite, as predation. It is urgent to rediscover our way. And to keep certain values in place.

03 - The idea that everyone wins in the end is false. The world does not distribute kindness. Winning is not natural. Most people lose or settle down in mediocrity. So, you must have a plan. You must focus. You are going to be hit HARD. Do you want to win? Take the blows and do not stop. Talent is a rare thing, but consistency and effort depend on no one but you. This is reality. All else is illusion. Just win. Good intentions are worth nothing. This is the way.

04 - The man who has never sinned is either an invalid, a fool or still a boy. Maturity in a man is reached through mistakes, egotism and aggressiveness. When he accepts the shadows of his personality and still chooses to be good and kind, only then a man is ready to grow and to protect his loved ones.

05 - Your aim is to be the cause, not the effect. To be active, never reactive. To choose your course and not to be dragged aimlessly by the winds. Your only chance in life is to take the wheel.

06 - Commit to the best version of yourself you can possibly imagine. And then seek it. Day after day. Fight until you reach this immaterial ideal of your potential self. This is the way.

07 - Keep your dignity: 1. Stay in shape; 2. Dress like a grown-up; 3. Be assertive; 4. Choose friends who bring something to the table; 5. Stay away from frivolousness; 6. Honor your word; 7. Respect yourself; 8) Don't be a miser; 9. Don't associate with capricious women; 10. Be resilient.

08 - Three pillars will sustain you: Finance, Family and Good Shape (mental and physical). The first one is easy to measure. The others are hard to assess, unless they start crumbling. You need all three in

good standing to lead a balanced life, and none must be sacrificed for the others.

09 - Anything you plant in your subconscious mind and feed daily with focus and feeling will bear fruit. Your subconscious will guide your actions and decisions in moments of doubt and temptation and lead you to your goals. So be careful what you wish for.

10 - One of the greatest pleasures in life is to lead a lifestyle that is forbidden or envied by most people. You must understand most people are cowardly, apathetic or frivolous. People will hate you when you make firm choices and manifest your personality to its fullest, without heeding opinions from others. People become furious if you live an authentic, transparent life. They cannot control you. They cannot make you feel ashamed of your choices. Their domination strategies are questioned. Here is where you must be careful. You will be the targeted of vicious attacks. The world hates firm opinions that go against common sense. You should know that. Get ready. Keep going. Be happy. This is the way.

11 - There is a difference between someone who acts on their honor, someone who acts to preserve their reputation, or someone who acts on their ego. In the first case, the focus is on one's own sense of dignity. In the second, one wants to prove oneself to others. In the last (and worst) case, one is looking for validation by trying to look special with nothing to show for it.

12 - You are smart when you know that you create options; they are not given to you. Do not complain about your current options. Create new ones. Work so hard on your goals and on creating positive changes in yourself that you forget what others are doing.

13 - Many people will criticize you just out of spite or selfishness. But some will be right when they criticize you and expose weaknesses in your personality. Listen carefully. If you dismiss any and all criticism, your ego is in charge and it will keep you attached to your weaknesses and failures.

14 - The only time you owe explanations to others is when you don't act the way you said you would. If you are doing exactly what you said you would, and people still don't understand, they are the ones who should tell you why they didn't pay attention.

15 - It is a false idea that you should downplay the impact of your mistakes and call it humbleness. What you usually find behind that thought is cowardliness: an attempt at avoiding ownership of responsibilities. Don't be that person. Fix what you break. Be a man.

16 - Don't torture yourself if you are rejected. People often choose the cheap option because they cannot deal with the sophisticated one. You did your best and the other person wasted your time with childishness and lies. Their mistake. Now, if you offered a second chance and their behavior was the same. Your mistake. Whatever you are saying right now, you are just trying to justify your feelings. Do not sanction bad behavior by ignoring it.

17 - Your efforts should matter to you. For everyone else, nothing matters but your results. Life will teach you that. But getting hit in the face with that is a choice you do not need to make.

18 - Anger breeds stupidity. If you are angry, make no important decisions, do not discuss your relationship, do not publish anything, do not send messages. Chances are you will go too far. And once you say some things, you can never take them back.

19 - You do not get what you wish for. You get what you strive for.

20 - Many men believe their vices or virtues are demonstrated only through open, explicit actions. They cannot appreciate that vices and qualities irradiate from one's thoughts and leave traces of their energy wherever they go.

21 - Mental detox. Remove these from your thoughts, immediately:
1. People who don't care about you; 2. People who lie to you; 3. Toxic people who live to make trouble and drain your energies; 4. Your age, because it is never too late or too early to start acting on your plans; 5. Your past mistakes. Do what is right, TODAY.

22 - Be patient. Good things may take time. They are the result of methodical effort. A good partner will not show up by accident. Keep your calm. But when the opportunity arises, apply all your energy to the conquest. This is the way.

23 - Doing what is easy, taking the level path, retreating from obstacles. These will always make you soft. Do what is hard. This is what it takes. Your life will progress when you do the hard things. The obstacle is the way. Major decisions will often test your values.

24 - 'Learn quickly. But build slowly and methodically.' Men will understand this piece of advice. Boys will be hesitant.

25 - The worst that can happen is not the event in itself. The event may be devastating, you should never doubt that. But even worse is the conjugation of what happened and you losing your mind. Do not lose your mind. Think. Evaluate. Breathe and keep your shield in place. With a cool head, there is a chance you might find a solution.

26 - Things start to change when you stop LETTING things happen and start MAKING things happen. Self-victimization leads nowhere.

27 - Lions led by gazelles end up killing each other.

28 - Each thing you choose in the present is a wager on your future: who you date, the job you pick, the friends you keep, relationships you build or tear down. Play it wisely.

29 - Peace of mind is within yourself. The body will follow. Fuel your mind with good reading, good conversation and good company. The body evolves. If you keep arguing and keeping bad company, your body becomes ill.

30 - Changing oneself to meet one's needs is maturity. Changing oneself to fulfill desires is perpetual illusion.

31 - Thought with no action is as poisonous as action with no thought. The first one leads to stagnation and torpor. The other leads to destruction and shattered trust.

32 - Do not let tame and submissive people tell you how to live.

33 - A strong mind is in great part the result of focusing on what you can control while acknowledging and letting go of what you cannot control.

34 - You can always pretend you don't know what you are doing and enjoy a bit of pleasure with no dignity. Or you may grab your stuff and go away with your honor intact.

35 - Learn to move away from the person you no longer wish to be. Stand the pain of a new beginning. Keep to the path. Day in, day out.

You will get there, and you will be a new person, with new perspectives.

36 - Face the truth of your situation. Admit that it is bad, and you need to change it. Then you will find the discipline to do just that. Discipline for concrete actions. Actions that change reality. Reality that will free you. Discipline equals freedom.

37 - Money, time, energy, attention. You should only spend them with people who make your life better, who care for you and respect you.

38 - You must learn to think ten steps ahead. The first three or four steps ahead may look advantageous and they may be full of pleasure. But the next ones could bring dreadful consequences and destroy your long-term plans. Calculate consequences rigorously.

39 - Don't be too hard on yourself if things do not work out. Reassess the situation. Change tactics, if needed. You may even abandon your initial plans in some cases. You are fighting and traveling away from your comfort zone. It is only natural that you will trip over and fall. Keep fighting.

40 - From the moment you see things the way they are, your attitude becomes more objective. Set aside your desires, wishes and expectations and look at the scenario LIKE IT ACTUALLY IS. Then, based on reality — not wishful thinking —, make your decisions.

41 - You don't need to let mediocrity, baseness and weakness take a seat in your life. React.

42 - This is how you should think about relationships: If someone wants to enter your life, you leave the door open. If someone wants

to leave your life, you leave the door open. But don't have anyone standing at the door. They will keep others from entering and staying.

43 - You should be assertive. But you never need to be rude.

44 - The biggest risk is never to take any risk at all.

45 - Once you realize the power of your thoughts and the strength of your words, you will never again express negative ideas and thoughts about yourself and your plans. And you will likewise find the will to leave those who think ill of you.

46 - I have a cruel mind. Maybe even perverse. But I chose to be kind. Everything in life depends on your standpoint. You have choices. It is entirely possible to control your aggressiveness and viciousness.

47 - Pay more attention to your body and less to your mind. Your body will tell you whether you are strong, healthy and resistant. The mind wants instant gratification and huge doses of dopamine. It specializes in self-delusion.

48 - You may not like what you are hearing, but that doesn't mean this isn't exactly what you need to hear. Learn how to listen. You could be learning fundamental lessons.

49 - Truth exists regardless of anyone's participation. But lies and deception need accomplices.

50 - You can choose to be free or to be enslaved by your mind or situations. Stop complaining. Face your troubles. Ignore your negative past. Rise above your circumstances. Give yourself a chance to progress.

51 - Focus and direction help keep your body alive when you face seemingly unsurmountable hurdles. It is hard. It hurts. Keep your eyes on the prize. There is a reason to go on.

52 - Your decisions matter. So, stop complaining and procrastinating. Attack what troubles you. Eliminate weak spots from your character.

53 - Gratitude is important: look at your origins and acknowledge the progress you have already made. But do not linger in past reminiscence for too long. That is no longer where you want to be.

54 - It may be discouraging to set your sight on goals that are too far or too high. They may seem like impossible tasks. All those great goals you set for your life are possible if you understand they must be split into several, smaller, intermediate steps.

55 - How to progress: Learn new things. Be humble. Let go of fear. Leave your comfort zone. Take the reins of your life and create your options instead of just living off the options that were offered to you. Take ownership. Fix what you break. Keep your word. And most of all, love without restraint.

56 - A weed in a flower bed parasites and drains the nutrients from all flowers. The same is true of relationships. Weed out your social circle. Get rid of people who drain you out.

57 - Grief is healthy. It is a way of accepting reality and validating past events. It is a process of healing and overcoming. We may mourn for people, animals, relationships... it's all good. Mourning is a real and important phase of life. Respect it.

58 - As a rule, your life is the result of your choices. If you are not happy with your life, improve your decisions and refine your choices.

59 - Here is a quick tip for relationships. Carefully pick those who deserve explanations. Those who deserve answers. And those who deserve rigorously NOTHING from you. Then give to each according to their worth. Not an ounce more.

60 - Failure is better than regret. Make sure you live the life you chose or strived for, not just the life others led you to live. Regret is a slow form of suicide. People settle down because they are needy, lazy, fearful, comfortable or just lack any initiative. They later regret not having tried anything different, anything that would have rescued them from inertia and moved them ahead. Get out of your comfort zone.

61 - A goal with no plan is just a wish.

62 - Studying is uncomfortable. When you study finance, you see the mistakes in your investments. When you study philosophy, you see your moral flaws. When you study nutrition, you see the lapses in your lifestyle. People are terrified of facing their own mistakes. For that reason, they would rather not study.

63 - Sometimes you don't get a second chance. Do it right the first time.

64 - When a black swan brings chaos into your life: 1. List what structures were damaged; 2. Analyze what depends on you and what you cannot control; 3. Attack those situations you can control; 4. Do not move on to the next problem before solving the first one.

65 - The more you avoid voluntary discomfort, the longer you will be submitted to mandatory suffering. To advance, embrace discomfort and the unknown. Get out of your comfort zone.

66 - 'Time is money' is a wrong saying. You may make more money if you go bankrupt. You may create passive income if you invest. But there is nothing in the whole world that will recover lost time or give you more time. Treasure your time and be careful when you decide on how to spend it.

67 - Your beliefs about reality shape your reality. If you believe you can achieve something, you will try all possibilities. There is no guarantee of success: life's framework may also break. But reality could progress and improve. If you do not believe in your potential, then it's guaranteed that nothing will happen. Failure has already happened in your mind.

68 - If you are not dead, get back in the ring. Life will teach you that if you want to get ahead. Failing is part of the process, but becoming a failure is a choice. Man was not made for defeat. A loser stops in the middle of the journey because he is afraid to suffer more. It is better to press on to the end and destroy your ego in the process. If you are still breathing, come back for another round. The best blades are made in fire.

69 - Don't sacrifice the person you can be tomorrow for the person you are today. Don't stop learning. Don't lose focus. Maintain your discipline. Dodge vindictiveness. You will find a better version of yourself tomorrow. Keep your cool. Keep to the path.

70 - The best antidote to suffering is truth. That is it: truth. Face truth and face the process. No illusions, self-victimization or spite.

Face the process. You will find the strength you need when you decide to stop hiding.

71 - Winners never offer excuses. They show results.

72 - The fruit is harvested by those who worked the earth and planted seeds, not by those who just talked about planting. One must act. Theory and words will not deliver the progress you are aiming at.

73 - Manipulation is an apology without any change in behavior.

74 - It is all in your mind. Redirect your thoughts about rejection. When faced with rejection, you can either sink or renew your posture, redirecting expectations and plans. If you need to push, it doesn't fit. And if you are the only one who is making any effort, this is not your path.

75 - Live according to this premise: whatever adds no value to your life must be removed. This works for people, events, books and even food. We reflect the things that surround us and the people we socialize with.

76 - We live amongst Wolves. To avoid being shred by the pack, you must be as smart as the Serpent and as fearless as the Lion.

77 - Knowledge does not always lead to concrete action. Action may lead to knowledge, if you analyze the process. Start now, with whatever you have, wherever you are. There is no such thing as 'the right time.' It's always the right time. When your 'why' becomes strong enough, you will find a 'how.'

78 - Always keep in your pocket: a pinch of craziness, some dark humor, a grain of irony and a large dose of imagination.

79 - You yourself are the strength or situation that will change your life. Nothing comes from without. Not events. Not that special person you dream of. It's you, and only you. Decide to change and move in that direction. Incredible things will happen in your life.

80 - If you want to change your life, you must be willing to listen to criticism, face the judgements and obstacles. It is neither easy nor pleasant. But it is worth it. This is the way.

81 - Stop saying or doing things that undermine or weaken you. Analyze yourself. Get to know what makes you weak. But don't go there! Do not talk about this weakness anymore. Work, day in, day out, to move away from that person, place or situation. Let your actions drive you toward a better version of you.

82 - There are two reasons for rejection: 1. They don't understand what you are adding to their life; 2. You don't understand that what you offer is not what they are looking for right now. Before going nuts about being rejected, make sure this is not a case of misaligned expectations.

83 - My decision process when I am mired in doubt: I visualize conquering my goal and what my life would be like from then on. I then analyze my feelings. Then I visualize not conquering that goal and my life without it. I try to go deep into the good and bad feelings inspired by each option. I use my energy to pursue the option that will bring about a better world. When I realize the world would become worse, I do my best to avoid that option. Exploring the depths of the feelings of victory or failure is energizing and creates the discipline you need to conquer or avoid a certain scenario or person. It's not

guaranteed that you will succeed in either case. But you can control what you decide to do.

84 - Be discreet. Be private. Be humble. Be assertive.

85 - A harmless man is not a good man. A good man is capable of spreading chaos and evil; but he chooses to keep that always under control and to be protective and kind.

86 - The phoenix is reborn from its own ashes. Sometimes you must reach the very bottom, to be physically and mentally destroyed so you can rise again. Whatever has happened to you, get up. Stand and say you are not defeated. And keep moving. If you are not dead, get back in the ring.

87 - Don't let anyone get under your skin. Everything depends on your behavior. You cannot control what you feel, but you control 100% of your reactions based on those feelings. Keep your cool. Do not lower yourself to their level. Do not forget your goals. Maybe you haven't reached them now, but it could be next time. Just don't lose your head. Train your mind not to be reactive and to keep calm in any situation.

88 - It is hard for a man to leave his ego to the side, acknowledge the chaos he's created, assume his errors, fix them and move on, trying to do better next time. This demands maturity.

89 - Only 3% of people have clear goals with well-established strategies to meet them. The other 97% have dreams, desires and fantasies about the places they wish to go.

90 - When presented with adversity, one should smile. Why shouldn't it be so? One has just received an opportunity to go up one level.

91 - Discard whatever adds no value to your life.

92 - Life is suffering. This truth is at the core of Buddhist thinking and Stoicism and is in the pages of the Book of Job. You are not the only one going through hardship and humiliation. What sets us apart is how we deal with this pain and how resilient we are to continue the journey.

93 - Politely dismiss constructive criticism from those who have never achieved anything. Those who have no skin in the game or have never had it can offer nothing but vain opinions.

94 - A frantic search for pleasure and happiness is not the goal of life. The goal is to improve your character so you can deal with responsibilities and be resilient when times are tough.

95 - People's anxieties often result avoiding the obstacles that are necessary to develop their potential.

96 - You must set different levels of access to your life. People are not equally relevant, and their emotional importance is not the same. Not everyone needs the details of your life. Some should know nothing. Thank me later.

97 - Hope is not a plan. Clear goals, discipline and focus create a plan.

98 - Don't let your ego rationalize your mistakes and cover your weaknesses. Face your weaknesses and assume the responsibility for your acts. Change can be really uncomfortable. Embrace it. Use

it. Accept it. Leave your comfort zone and become the person who is needed for this new moment. Attaching oneself to the past and to nostalgia is a mistake and a weakness.

99 - Don't behave like the hyena if you have a lion's soul. Each has their own way.

100 - Do not mistake imagination for reality nor words for facts.

101 - If someone corrects you and you feel offended, then you have an ego problem.

102 - Strange are the movements of people and feelings in our lives. They come slowly at first and then in bursts. Next, they slow down again until they are gone.

103 - Confidence is the result of knowing your worth.

104 - The real noise does not come from without. It comes from your own mind. Focus on your mind, get away from the turbulence of excessive ego and then no external noise will detract from your peace. How to focus your mind? With discipline. Discipline to stop being reactive. Discipline to resist the temptations of easy rewards. Discipline to follow through your goals. Discipline is what determines your level of freedom.

105 - People want shortcuts. That is understandable. There are some shortcuts in life. But first you need clarity of purpose. You need to inquire yourself about conflicting interests. And if you find any, eliminate them. This is where most will fail.

106 - I have no trust in words. I keep a lookout for actions. And I never doubt repeated patterns. Humans are creatures of habit.

107 - The more silence you can tolerate, the more freedom you will enjoy. People will desperately seek noise, distraction and constant bursts of activity because they can't tolerate being quiet in the company of their own silence.

108 - The only easy day was yesterday. Maintain your discipline.

109 - The mind is very capable. You attract and reject, you join and separate. Everything is done inside your mind. Your choices, the ability to decide: entirely in your mind. Now, start acting.

110 - To be firm and clear, you don't need to be rude. Be classy and elegant.

111 - The world is full of malicious and envious people. You can neither change them nor ignore their existence. But you can change the way you react to them. Keep the least possible amount of contact with them, maintain your privacy and above all, do not react to ignorance. Keep to your own path.

112 - Weak men are a burden to the resilient ones, a shame to the honorable ones and should be ignored by those who are able.

113 - Never show your card tricks to those who you play poker with.

114 - Be selective in your battles. Peace of mind can be better than being right.

115 - There is too much nonsense on TV and social media. Things are either stupid and frivolous or just meant to numb your senses. Drop that. Go read a good book or talk to someone who makes you think. Attune your mind to something productive.

116 - From the moment you decide a certain action is necessary, focus your discipline on making it happen. Discomfort is irrelevant. Execute.

117 - Your past actions quickly become irrelevant. What matters is your CURRENT actions to build your future.

118 - Life is totally non-linear. There is no such thing as 'justice' or 'compensation.' Accept that. Enjoy it when it brings you pure happiness and be stoically firm when the machine gun is pointed in your direction. Know that happy moments exist. And so does the machine gun. Such is life.

119 - The same day that breaks you could be the one that restores you. Strength & Honor.

120 - Your reputation is supported by the foundation of your actions and results, not by the countless debates in which you take part.

121 - Most people don't want truth. They want comfortable illusions. Facing the truth would force them to solve a situation or assume responsibility for it. But if they cling to illusion, they may be seen as brave, hard-working or even innocent victims. Avoid illusion. Life is not all about comfort.

122 - To find new ideas, read old books.

123 - It is hard to give priority to long-term achievements if you still believe all pleasures and amenities should be received in the short term.

124 - Procrastination loves to disguise as preparation. Know the difference.

125 - Taking responsibility gives meaning to life. Assume responsibility for yourself. For your work, your family and for the value of your love. Mature people understand that.

126 - No one will come to your rescue. It's all on you. Sink or swim. Fight or flee. Be quiet or make yourself heard. Learn or ignore. Follow the heard or your own path. It's all on you. Choose wisely.

127 - Learn how to be pleasant and interesting to yourself. You can run away from places. You can avoid people. But you cannot leave yourself behind.

128 - Life rewards action, not the wait for the perfect moment.

129 - Your focus determines what you see. What you see influences your feelings. Your feelings trigger actions. Your actions determine choices. Your choices bear consequences. Consequences impact your life. Be wise about your focus.

130 - Not all storms come to unravel everything. Some just clear the path.

131 - All theories and all books in the world are futile if you do not act the moment circumstances are favorable. Action without preparedness is blind strength. Preparedness without action is impotence.

132 - Most people fill their tanks up with knowledge but never start the engine to go anywhere. Cruising along the straight roads in life is not something you should put to waste, but achievements come from your level of control through bends and heavy rain.

133 - Most people will prefer listening to praising, narcissistic lies than to one hard, rectifying truth. And that is exactly why they will

remain stagnant and comfortable in their mediocrity. That is why they are easily seduced.

134 - Protect your time. It is limited. It is your most precious asset. Why give it to people who give nothing in return? You should cast them away with no remorse. They show no pity when they use your time and give nothing back.

135 - Maybe what we call chance and randomness in our lives is just the result of our short-term views. If you put life into perspective and consider longer cycles, many things that looked like mere chance fit together and reference each other. We must be humble and accept the fact that, just maybe, there is a greater intelligence at work.

136 - Those who can't obey themselves are commanded by chance and transient feelings.

137 - We may find it difficult to pin down what is correct, true and good. But deep inside, each of us knows when we are tempted by lies and evil. Start by not acting on these inclinations. Effort and discipline will bear fruit and we may eventually comprehend what is good and right.

138 - Seneca's Stoicism teaches that 'we suffer more in imagination than when we face actual hardships.' That is due to anxiety and our tendency to imagine future problems instead of taking care of current undertakings.

139 - Be selective. Many will say you are arrogant. You should ignore them and be selective in your friendships, your reading, your tasks and affections. Your time is limited and precious. Use it carefully, spend it on people or activities that really add something to

and matter in your life. If you notice something is mere noise and stupidity, just prune it back.

140 - I distrust anyone who tries to offer convoluted explanations for simple things.

141 - Those who are not willing to risk uncommon choices will have to settle for the average and mediocre ones. Forever. Are you comfortable with mediocrity?

142 - You don't need to have an opinion about every subject. But when you do have one, there is still no need to participate in every discussion and defend your point of view. However, if you do enter an argument, you can still opt to be more polite than your opponent.

143 - Have you noticed that those who never progress are the same ones who view the phrase 'You changed!' as an insult?

144 - The game will always be YOU vs. YOU. The rest is just the audience, rooting for or against you, making lots of noise and throwing objects on to the turf.

145 - Inner peace does not start with OTHERS accepting who you are; but with YOU finding out who you are and what your objectives and flows are. If you do not impose your wishes on life through study, efforts and focus, life will give you nothing but leftovers. Fight for your goals!

146 - When you decide to consistently do what's right instead of what's easy, no matter the consequences, your character is strengthened.

147 - Life will always present with problems. I try to act on them piece by piece, one step at a time. Contemplating the whole obstacle

at once is paralyzing. Baby steps. Start. Don't stop. Accept difficulties and split them into modules. The obstacle is the way.

148 - From the moment you do what is right, consequences do not matter. Is the act true in its origin? Is your action free of vices? Then let the dice roll. From then on, you cannot control them. Accept that. And let Uprightness of Character be your armor.

149 - The quest for wisdom destroys innocence. But it brings with it responsibility and discipline. Unsurprisingly, most people will therefore avoid that goal.

150 - Settle down and realize everything around you is ephemeral and transitory. Why agonize over people you will soon never see again? Why all the anxiety for situations you will soon no longer care about? Don't let small things unbalance you. Do you remember the worries you had one year ago? Six months ago? Does that one argument still bother you? What is the current relevance of that person whose voice you can now barely remember? Keep to your own path.

151 - The power of the word is incredible. It is biblical, in fact. When you finally explicit your wishes clearly, things begin to fall into place. And the reasons behind certain actions become clearer. And some procrastinated measures become imperative.

152 - Our culture consistently favors a lack of purpose. Numerous tasks and targets are set. But almost no one asks why.

153 - Experience knows things that theory ignores. Theory casts its light on facts that experience thought were caused by chance.

154 - There is always a right choice. It is often painful, slow or difficult. But solid and lasting achievements are based on correct actions. Avoid the temptation of shortcuts and dishonest comforts. Do not fall prey to vapid pleasure. Do what is right.

155 - A life without reflection is a slow, gradual form of suicide.

156 - Everything happens for a reason. Sometimes the reason is you lack prudence and make stupid decisions.

157 - Be brutally honest when judging yourself. Have the courage to face the stupid things you've done and the humbleness to resume your journey and correct your mistakes. Without this attitude, progress is impossible. And without progress we would remain forever the same bland, miserly people.

158 - Study while others are sleeping. Get ready while others dream with no plans. Decide while others procrastinate. Work while others just wish for something. Save while others waste. Listen while others just talk. Persist while others give up. This is the way.

159 - Yes, the world is often hard and cruel. But you were not picked to be a target. You are not important enough to be the target of anything in the universe. Processes in life are often random, based on chance and will affect anyone. Just accept that and adjust your course.

160 - When you acquire a little morsel of wisdom, it hurts deeply. But lacking this knowledge would hurt even more in the future. Mature people understand that.

161 - Pleasing everybody is more than impossible: it is absolutely unnecessary.

162 - Just as your body thrives or fails depending on what you eat, your mind will flourish or wither depending on the company you keep or the books you read. Have standards. Seek people and things that make you grow.

163 - You live, you do things and then you die. Those who stay will cry for a while and then go on with their lives. No one cares that much about you, not as much as you imagine or fear they do. So, enjoy your stay. Live. Love. Teach. And don't make much of people's opinions.

164 - The comfort zone generates an illusion of capacity. The learning zone makes you feel like there is no progress. Reality is in between those limit sensations.

165 - Even if you are sceptic of reality, it does not go away. It stays there, punching you in the face. So, face it.

166 - Some minimalist notes: 1. Use what you have. 2. If you broke it, fix it. 3. If it's not necessary, sell or donate it. 4. Don't accumulate stuff for status or just on impulse. 5. Pick one day of the week to spend no money on anything.

167 - People will rarely show their real intentions when in need. They will play the game circumstances force upon them. But you may have an actual perspective on the situation when this person has options.

168 - No one deserves anything from life. Effort and work are values one must prize. There are too many lazy and envious people who think they deserve much but who aren't willing to work for it.

169 - The shackles of habit are too light to be felt until they are too heavy to be broken. In five years, you will have habits that started in

small acts you are beginning today. So, start putting into practice the things you admire.

170 - Too much attention or intense emotional responses are traps that reinforce negative behavior. This goes for relationships, child rearing, melodramatic friends or dog training.

171 - Defeats are inevitable, but quitting is a weakness. Rethink and get back in the game. That's how you grow strong. What looks like misfortune now could be the call to a new level in life. Respond wisely.

172 - The past taught you. It may have been good or bad. But you're not there anymore. Move forward.

173 - I am always surprised by the number of things I had to unlearn in life. Professional abilities or world views that matured and changed to accommodate new knowledge or redefine many issues. Only the dead have unchanging certainties.

174 - Assertiveness is a desirable line of action. It focuses on transparent purposes and attitudes. It has nothing to do with hostility or rudeness. It is important to undo this common association.

175 - Our thoughts are engines for actions or for unfulfilled malice. Both have consequences. It is amazing how people don't ponder the consequences of their actions or omissions. And both are equally important.

176 - Having free time, good health and caring for your loved ones: that is status. All else is garbage, noise and ostentation.

177 - Sometimes not getting what you want is exactly what you need. The invisible protects you. Trust it.

178 - Minimalists have nothing against comfort. You can have whatever object pleases you, as long it has a purpose and is not a useless frill or, as is often the case, beyond your financial means. Say yes to comfort. Say no to debt that keeps you captive, say no to hoarding. It's not about being poor or making ascetic sacrifices. Minimalism is about avoiding useless consumerism, about valuing and caring for the things you have already conquered, about avoiding the last trend in spending and accumulation.

179 - When you change your perspective and objectives, your life changes. Be wise when choosing what to focus on.

180 - Looking for a better version of oneself is more dignified than trying to copy someone.

181 - Maybe the true journey is not in the search for new landscapes but in looking at current ones with new eyes.

182 - Two types of people you should never let back in your life: those who do not come back until things change for the better, and those who do not come back until things change for the worse.

183 - You notice the glow of maturity when discomfort stops being uncomfortable. Don't let bad days determine your future. Read that again.

184 - One should be true to one's word whatever the circumstances. Keep your word especially in unfavorable situations. Otherwise, it's just marketing.

185 - Everything you wish for is on the other side of insecurity. There is more fear inside your head than in actual reality. Seek what you wish for. Fight for what you want. Fuck fear.

186 - Sometimes things will not go as planned. You will ardently wish for something just to see it escape through your fingers. A job. A home. A love. A woman. A child. Those moments will define your personality and your future. You can move on or go on feeling devastated. Move on, brother.

187 - A man who stops learning, ceases his spiritual growth or stops looking after his loved ones is a dead man walking.

188 - The end is certain. But life must be built day by day.

189 - If our loved ones knew what we were like before we met them and how they transformed our lives, they would be more careful in their actions and words. Love creates such beautiful moments. Lie is an unforgivable executioner. Loving a liar is death itself.

190 - If you read a text and like it, that is because it reveals something in your life. Meaning is irrelevant. The unconscious speaks when we are quiet. Let the text guide your memories and reveal what you are hiding from yourself. Be a poem in a world where so many are nothing but drug label texts.

191 - Everyone has some anger in their chest. Love is one way to control it and turn this coal into a diamond. When love comes, it lingers where there are no lies. And if it comes back after you hurt it, do not take any chances again.

192 - Whatever happened won't get lost. Intensity is a form of eternity.

193 - Be brutally realistic about your current situation and overly optimistic about your future. In both cases, *ACT* accordingly.

194 - Some things are deeply displeasing to me: 1. Grow men trying to pass for boys. 2. Manipulative and false women. 3. Impoliteness. 4. Lies told by those you care for and protect. 5. Killjoys. 6. Ungrateful people.

195 - Just do it. Don't wait for the right time or the best day. Don't wait for a green light. The stars will not align. Just start. Start writing, studying, adventuring. Start training, running, changing habits. It's on you.

196 - Learn the hard way soon, when there is little to lose; learning late will cost you much more. It may cost you ALL.

197 - Plan for the long term. Execute in the short term. Live in the present.

198 - Be wary of sadness: it is addictive. Sadness can induce harmful behaviors and various lies. Go out. Have fun. Read. Train. Run. Date. Fight sadness back with life.

199 - Be careful with people you associated with in the lowest points of your life. You may have been united by anger or frustration. When you overcome that phase and grow, your friend or partner may focus their anger or frustration on you, if they cannot grow with you.

200 - Minimalism is not miserliness. Dress well. Eat well. Live comfortably. Learn to select for quality instead of quantity. Consumerism, not your well-being, is the enemy.

201 - Remember this: People will judge you by the way you are dressed and the way you present yourself. It is entirely irrelevant if you find that unfair, incorrect or shallow. Learn to benefit from reality or face the consequences of your stubbornness.

202 - One day you suddenly find out everything was just a nightmare. That person who spread only lies is gone from your thoughts. You died a little with each betrayal. And how many deaths can a man stand? But he still stood. A man is made of the things he can stand while preserving the privacy of those he loved. This is something a perfidious traitor will never understand.

203 - Discipline creates habit. Habit begets domain. And domain establishes excellence. This is the way.

204 - Let your actions structure your personality so that there is no need for further explanation.

205 - Of course a man can also suffer in his soul. But he can decide how he will suffer. Keep your composure and dignity. This is part of the way.

206 - No one decides their own future. But you can decide your habits. Your habits shape your future.

207 - I have never seen a winner complain about difficulties, lack of time or the hurdles he encountered. Winners find a way and just do it. Losers complain about everything. Everything. And they lose one opportunity after the other.

208 - No one will come to your rescue. Learn to defend yourself. But if someone helps you along the way, be grateful.

209 - 'Stop trying to be someone else' does not mean you should accept who you are today and leave it at that. It means you should not create a false or fictional personality. Be yourself but always strive to improve, to grow and fix your ways.

210 - Do the right thing. And let consequences take their course.

211 - Let them think what they may about you. You are on your way. Stick to it. You have NOTHING to prove to mediocre people.

212 - Flexibility when facing events is an advantage that will help you master any scenario. Re-framing is taking an existing meaning and, instead of fighting against it, using it to extract new meaning and reposition yourself in a negotiation.

213 - Things you cannot control are not excuses to refrain from acting on those you can control.

214 - There is great confusion about what it means to develop contrarian thought. The point is not to go AGAINST the herd. Because the herd can sometimes be right and trample you down in their migration route. The point is GET AWAY from the crowd and think for yourself, then follow the necessary and intelligent path.

215 - Be ambitious, but never greedy. Have clear goals but don't become paranoid.

216 - Know your worth. Add fees and tariffs to that. Don't ever sell yourself short.

217 - No exceptions: 1. Don't talk about others behind their backs. 2. Don't slander the place that fed you. 3. Don't be ungrateful to those who offered you a hand and helped you. 4. Do not attack those who protected you. 5. Never expose those you have loved.

218 - Small positive daily changes become great victories in time. Small daily peeves, vices and disrespectful moments become catastrophic if ignored for long. Time multiplies.

219 - Consider your circumstances. Consider the actual chances you have in your scenario. Make the most of every opening. Use each

opportunity. Walk your talk. Be passionate. No matter how small your chance is now, use it and capitalize on it. Growth comes from consistently repeating that cycle.

220 - The other person is not always at fault. Sometimes you place unrealistic and foolish expectations on them. Adapt to reality, however uncomfortable it may be. The great thing about reality is that it also exists outside of your imagination.

221 - You should play finite games in attack mode because victory is the goal. Infinite games should be played in partnerships because the goal is to keep the game going for as long as you can. Your relationship with your partner should always be played as an infinite game.

222 - People in relationships often argue over symptoms when they should be discussing the system. Review the couple's agreements. Because there is always a system of agreements in place. And some were established in silence by both sides, or by the omission of one side. Reassess.

223 - As a rule, people don't care about what you can do. They care about what you can do FOR THEM. Facts will not change because you don't like them. Ignore that at your own risk.

224 - Wu Wei: the Zen way of forcing nothing that is not ripe or ready for attack. There are moments when you should just follow the movements. And at the right time, you execute your movement or attack. Waiting is not the same as being passive. Waiting is a part of preparation.

225 - Be humble. Everyone makes wrong choices. Acknowledge your mistakes. Have the courage to fix your errors and course-correct. This is the way.

226 - Be grateful. But don't be satisfied.

227 - A man with no self-confidence is a passenger of circumstances.

228 - So many people want to talk about their rights. I hear so few manifest any interest in responsibilities. Look around and notice the results.

229 - Falcons do not fly side by side with pigeons. Who are your friends? With whom do you share ideas, from whom do you learn things? You must find like minds and avoid those who insist on mediocrity.

230 - Becoming organized, pursuing objectives and expressing one's personality with transparency: this will attract the friendships you really need. It will also shun those ill-advised ones you chose in the past. Embrace the consequences of maturity.

231 - Your personal history stands for nothing in the history of the world, but it probably conditions about 80% of your world view. We are naturally prone to confirmation bias and groupthink, sheltered in the protection of the herd. Be careful. The world is bigger than your view of it.

232 - You will pay a price for whatever you decide to do. You will pay a price for whatever you decide NOT to do. There is no way out and a fee will be charged from your life, your duties and your relationships. Choose your poison and drink it.

233 - It is reasonable to align your thinking with transcendence of some sort. That could even be a future, better version of yourself. Then establish a realistic, pragmatic view of your current surroundings. Focus on concrete actions to go and search for your ideal. Even if your actions are small, just act.

234 - When you respect yourself, you naturally get away from relationships that don't respect you.

235 - Ignored facts don't go away. Remember that along the way.

236 - Imagine what your life would be like if you fought for the best, for what is right, for progress, for good. Imagine a better version of yourself. And now go fight for it. This is the way.

237 - Flexible. Adaptable. Calm. Brilliant. These are the targets you should follow. This is the way.

238 - Risk is the price you pay for opportunity. Pay it. Risk it.

239 - Remember: there should be joy and good humor on your journey. Laugh hard, tell jokes, drink with your friends, play, listen to music, go dancing, make love, party. Enjoyment is a crucial part of life's balance. This is the way.

240 - People whose mentality is antifragile view victories and defeats in battles under the same light. They are focused on winning the war. Be antifragile. Be resilient.

241 - Establish a macro vision for your life and then work hard in the microcosm to attain your original view. Little by little, step by step. But always moving forward.

242 - The Stoics created the expression *premeditatio malorum*: anticipate in your mind anything that could go wrong with your plans. Then you can make contingency plans or prepare for frustration with no surprises.

243 - If you need pills or have suicide thoughts, if you are fighting alcoholism, that does not disqualify you. Life is not about being perfect or constantly happy. **It's about how you deal with your demons and resist your bad instincts.**

244 - We all suffer. Suffering can potentially change your character. Did you stand back up, restructure your plans and move ahead? Or did you play the victim? Because you know the right way.

245 - Sometimes, later becomes never. Stop being a coward. Stop being lazy. Stop procrastinating. We have too much work to do. This is the way.

246 - Keep moving whenever you are ahead. Increase your distance. Personal progress can be scaled, but few realize it.

247 - Act like an adult. Fix important relationships. Do not let your ego and hurt destroy love and prevent forgiveness. But acting like an adult also entails not letting people play with your feelings or trample on you.

248 - The stoics teach us: *memento mori*. All of us will die. Then live, damn it! Travel. Love. Write your book. Start your business. Ask her out. Have your children. Risk it. Risk it. Life is but a whisper. Past and future are simulations. Transform the present, because the present is all there is. Let go of nostalgia and do not succumb to anxiety about the future. Act in the present.

249 - We live through the perceptions of what we do in our minds. If your mind is left untrained, it will be programmed by the most mediocre setup available. If you want to live fully, train your mind. Commit to the best version of yourself you can possibly imagine.

250 - If you want different results, start cultivating different attitudes. It is foolish to maintain the same behavior patterns and complain about the consequences.

251 - Be kind to yourself. People agonize over small failures. Compose yourself and move on. The hurdles along the way are expected. Life is constant movement. What's important is that you always try to aim at your targets.

252 - Some people will never understand the gift of freedom in a relationship. Their immaturity will convert freedom into lies and betrayal until the relationship explodes. Yes, some people are that stupid and ungrateful. Why waste your time investing in liars? A lie is the embodiment of disrespect. Everything that follows it is garbage.

253 - Stop looking for culprits and start taking on responsibilities. Stop thinking and start acting. Stop complaining and get stronger. This is the way.

254 - Luck never visits those who do not try.

255 - Money is an excellent tool to solve problems. Money is an excellent tool to create comfort. Money is an excellent tool to open doors. Money is an excellent tool to buy free time. Money is a tool.

256 - We are the sum of our beliefs and the product of our habits. Both beliefs and habits can be questioned and altered. The things we

think and do in the present shape our future. Not many comprehend the force of this fact.

257 - 'Do what makes you happy' is the wrong advice. One can have moments of happiness in various selfish, stingy or even dishonorable activities. Do what is right. Do what is honorable. Happiness is not the goal; happiness is the product. This is the way.

258 - There is a direct, very concrete correlation between positive energy IN ACTION and positive results. You must act with good intentions. This is the way.

259 - You want to get closer to your goal today than you were yesterday. Take a step, no matter how small. But let that step bring you toward your goal. Structure your life around your professional or personal purpose and keep it in mind in your every action. And above all, act.

260 - When your intentions were sincere, but no one valued them, you lost nothing. It was their loss.

261 - In life you can become atrophied by apathy or you can rise by facing adversity. Choose. This is the way.

262 - Unbound anger and hurt can be more harmful than the situations that caused them. Be resilient. Think before reacting explosively or emotionally.

263 - Hope is a mere paranoid illusion if not fueled by concrete actions toward a goal.

264 - Some people will never support you because they fear what you might become. Maintain your focus and discipline. Take the necessary actions to reach your targets. This is the way.

265 - You don't need anyone to believe your potential. If ONE person believes you, that is enough. That one person is you. Do your best and chase your ambitions. Discipline. Bravery. This is the way.

266 - Meet your Sphinx and answer her questions. Look her in the eye and tell her if you are happy. Because that is the answer that should inspire you to fight, whether to maintain or to achieve your goals. The rest are consequences.

267 - Ignorant people can be taught. But incurious people are a lost cause.

268 - A man who is not constantly trying to improve himself and protecting his loved ones is a miserable creature who deserves no respect.

269 - Someone will disagree with your plans for the future. Someone will disagree with your current actions. Embrace tension and discomfort. There is no other way ahead.

270 - The best people I know have an aggressive demon inside their chests but choose, at every moment, to be kind and protective.

271 - Red flag behaviors of people you should avoid: 1. Constant complaining; 2. Constant criticizing; 3. Relishing in frivolity; 4. Talking only about people, never ideas; 5. Fits of rage; 6. Compulsive lying; 7. Having excuses for every mistake.

272 - People can rarely say what they like. And they will invariably say they like one thing, but manifest interest in another. Do not listen to what they say. Observe what they do.

273 - Do not compare your life to anyone else's. Compare yourself to eternity. What you do today reflects on your life forever. Choose wisely.

274 - Understand who and what should be taken seriously. And just ignore or have a good laugh about the rest.

275 - If you are too worried about the opinions of others, you are giving them the key to control your behavior. You will become a slave of their views on you.

276 - Stop and ask yourself: does this really deserve an answer? You can avoid frustration by remaining silent for a little while.

277 - If you can laugh of your own misfortune, you will never lack amusement in your life.

278 - If you take no risks, you are never right. But if you risk everything, you also end up with nothing. Learn to distinguish what is worthwhile and the risks you are willing to take. Just like Saint Paul said, 'everything is permissible to me, but not everything is beneficial.'

279 - Keep your options open. If no choice was given to you, create choices. But you should never be seen as someone who has no other option.

280 - Never feel ashamed for failing. Failure is temporary. Only those who give up are losers.

281 - Know your strengths and improve your weaknesses. But your priority should be the optimization of your strengths. They will take you to such a strong position that anyone will think twice before attacking your weak spots.

282 - One of the best ways to change your life is to change your environment. Don't waste time or energy in places where a worse version of you would like to be.

283 - Stop trying to win every petty argument. You don't always have to come out on top. Let the other person think what they may and be content with their own errors. You just go your own way. Your peace of mind will thank you.

284 - Most people can't get what they want because they don't know what they want. Of those who do know, many don't act. Of those who act, many can't focus. And of those who focus, many give up. Persevere. You will often be your only competition. Most people are just part of the herd.

285 - Kindness and attention are courtesies. If they aren't valued, take them back. But politeness is an attitude. Maintain it even when others are rude.

286 - It does not matter whether you like the ambiguities of life. The fact is they exist. They are part of our days of joy, frustration, passion, sacrifice, lies, agreements and betrayals. Things are what they are. It is up to you to adapt, be resilient and focus on the process.

287 - Do not lose sleep over people who were part of your past. Remember the reason they are not part of your present and won't be part of your future.

288 - I believe in myself. And that drives me forward. Only one person needs to believe you: YOU. Take action.

289 - One of the most important abilities you can cultivate is the ability to overcome unfortunate situations or relationships. Come to terms with the fact that it didn't work out, that your wishes didn't come true and move on. Let go of the past. Happiness can only be built in the present.

290 - Once you realize feelings cannot be controlled, your life becomes more meaningful. When you understand you can control the way you react to those feelings, life becomes nobler.

291 - Anything that is important, admirable or satisfying in one's life is the result of work, of risk-taking or of fighting adversity.

292 - Never mistake what you are offered for what you are worth.

293 - People try to define themselves by nouns, when actually we are verbs.

294 - Last message to the Captain: Most will call it luck. Very few will be interested in knowing the efforts you made, the struggle of your sleepless nights. Never mind that. That is how people are. Come to terms with reality instead of despairing of others' understanding.

Amor Fati: don't just accept facts, but love what is real.

Keep your course, hold the wheel of your ship with firm hands. Those who stay in the shore will see you disappearing into the sea. You have new continents to discover and explore. Keep going.

This is the way.

Final Words

I know life has complicated moments. You often sought me, and I was silent. Maybe you would rather have me tell a sweet tale, something that would shift responsibility from your shoulders. But I didn't.

In those moments you doubt your decisions and look up for a sign from the heavens ... well ... nothing will come from that.

Unlike in a fairy tale, no enchantment will confirm your path or tell you that this is your destiny.

Life is no game. It's not a carnival of laughing, sex and partying. Do not embark on this childish notion that life owes you something. No one owes you anything. There is nothing special about you and you will find your portions of joy and disappointment like everybody else.

You will not be compensated for every effort you make. Not all gestures will be acknowledged.

There will be hard days, some people will go away and others will hurt you. There will be much frustration along the journey. That is how it is. Don't be fooled by the flattering words of those who want to alienate you in a teenage shell. Grow up. Immaturity is your responsibility.

Doubt is normal and won't go away with maturity. Loss, disease, defeat, death and pain are also part of the game. The difference lies in how we deal with them.

The life we lead starts with our daily choices. Not the great scenarios nor the roll of the drums. It's the everyday work. It is often easier to let others choose for us. But even then, you are deciding—you decided to delegate. The consequences, however, are entirely on us. Because so were the decisions.

So, look inside yourself and honestly reflect and decide.

You can change your path. Or stay on it. End this relationship or try to change it. Get a new job or stay in the current, more stable one. Have children or opt for autonomy and individualism.

Whatever you choose, the choice is yours only.

Even if all you do is remain silent.

Even when you flee.

Even in silence.

And all paths will have obstacles, dry seasons, flowers and rivers. All things will cost some effort. You are in charge of creating or reinforcing your situation.

And even when that hurts, assume the consequences of your choices. There are thorns in flowers. There is honey to delight you.

Such is life.

Keep walking. Never stop.

This is the way.

Manuel Sanchez

About the Author

I was born in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Books, travels and catching up with friends over drinks are some of my favorite pastimes. I have worked as a Public Defender for the State of Rio de Janeiro since 2003. Since 2013, I have been writing at Opinião Central (<https://opiniaocentral.wordpress.com/>), a blog that addresses the popularization of philosophy, book reviews and where I publish my chronicles.

I love movies, comics, TV series, dogs, wheat beer, whisky on the rocks, cigars and rock 'n' roll from the 70's and 80's.

I am the author of *This Is the Way – Stoic Lessons on Strength and Honor* and *No Coração da Vida e Sob o Hálito da Morte (In the Heart of Life and Under the Breath of Death)*.

Yes, I am a happy man.

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Classic Stoic works

Here goes a list of the great books that shaped Stoic philosophy and whose values are still with us, passed down through millennia.

1. *Meditations*, by Marcus Aurelius.
2. Seneca's *Letters*, available in several collections.
3. Epictetus' *The Good Life Handbook* or *Enchiridion*.

The Seven Stoic Tenets:

1. *Summum Bonum*: Aim for the Highest Good
2. *Amor Fati*: Love Your Fate
3. *Premeditatio Malorum*: Prepare for Trouble
4. The Obstacle Is the Way.
5. Ego Is the Enemy
6. *Sympatheia*: The Common Good that Unites Us All
7. *Memento Mori*: Accept Your Mortality