

What Bugs Me This Month

By Jeddore John

To quote Monty Python again, “Now for something completely different.”

There is something that has made my life more livable. Stoic philosophy. Before you say, “Oh Crap” and skip to the next article, please let me explain.

To start, Stoicism is not a religion—it’s a philosophy about how to live a happy and productive life. It originated in Greece around 2300 years ago. Stoicism is not a “follow these rules or burn in Hell” kind of thing, but rather a suggested pattern of thinking and behaving that can guide you to a less stressful life. It suggests that there are four virtues that a person should embrace and strive to live up to.

I will defer to ChatGPT here to explain the four virtues:

1. **Wisdom:** This virtue refers to the cultivation of knowledge, understanding, and good judgment. It involves seeking truth and applying reason to make wise choices and decisions.
2. **Courage:** Courage in Stoicism is not limited to physical bravery but encompasses moral courage as well. It involves the ability to face difficulties, endure hardships, and act in accordance with one’s principles and values, even in the face of adversity.
3. **Temperance:** Temperance is the virtue of self-control and moderation. It involves restraining one’s desires and impulses, avoiding excesses, and maintaining balance in all aspects of life. It emphasizes the importance of avoiding emotional extremes and practicing restraint in pursuit of pleasure.
4. **Justice:** Justice is the virtue of fairness and equity. It involves treating others with respect, upholding moral principles, and acting in a just and equitable manner. Justice requires treating all individuals impartially and ensuring that one’s actions contribute to the greater good of society.

Another important precept of the philosophy is the concept of internal things versus external things. Internals are the things that you can control, like your attitude, your temper, your reactions to events around you, how you interact with others and so on. Externals are events and situations that are external to you and beyond your control.

Example: you are in the grocery store line and the person behind starts pushing your stuff ahead so he can start loading his stuff on the belt. The external is that you’ve got a jerk behind you in line. The internal is how you react to him. Do you punch him in the throat, ignore his ignorance, or politely ask him to stop touching your food? Check in with the 4 virtues and make your choice.

So what would you get out of looking into Stoicism? I have no idea. But I know what it has done for me. It has made me less of a baby. I used to think that it’s just not fair that such and such happened, and I let it bother me. Now I acknowledge that such and such is going to happen beyond my control, so when it does happen, I shrug it off.

And Stoicism has helped me define a different model of who I can be. I do try to gain more wisdom and knowledge. I do try to be a little less chicken to try new things, or challenge things that I once thought would be too difficult. I’ve begun to notice the excessive habits I’ve developed, and I now try to tone them down. And I’ve probably gotten the biggest benefit from doing more to treat others with respect and impartiality. Fewer people despise me now.

If you would like to learn more about Stoicism, there are two very good websites to check out: The Daily Stoic will email you a brief nugget of Stoicism six days a week at dailystoic.com. The Stoa Letter <stoaletter@mail.beehiiv.com> will do the same, only twice a week.

If you do dive in, you will be in good company, from Thomas Jefferson and Benjamin Franklin to Margaret Atwood and John Ralston Saul.

CENTRAL NOVA

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As the summer months give way to September and school begins again, I want to wish everyone the best of luck in the upcoming school year!

National Day for Truth and Reconciliation

September 30, 2023



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7th Candlelight Vigil in Musquodoboit Harbour

In recognition of National Suicide Awareness Day, on Sunday September 10th the Eastern Shore community will be gathering at Peace Park in Musquodoboit Harbour for the 7th Annual Candlelight Vigil to commemorate and honour the loved ones we have lost by suicide. The vigil is from 7:00 - 8:00 p.m. and includes stories, music, and a candlelight walk, as we remember all that our loved ones brought to our lives and our community during their time on earth.



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