

Stoicism in the contemporary era. Can stoicism improve our lives in today's technologically dominant world?

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Abstract

The aim of this article is to look at how stoicism has been interpreted and applied in different fields, such as psychology, psychotherapy, philosophical practice, and personal development and share the findings with the reader. We will also explore the empirical research on Stoic practices, such as negative visualization, self-reflection, and embracing adversity, and their impact on psychological well-being. In addition we shall be covering practical applications of Stoicism in everyday life, such as managing emotions, developing resilience, and finding purpose and meaning.

Ancient Stoicism had a profound influence on the philosophical, ethical, and psychological traditions. Its ideas and practices continue to resonate in modern times and have inspired various fields, including psychology (CBT), ethics, leadership, and personal

development. Stoicism's emphasis on accepting what is beyond our control, focusing on personal virtue, and cultivating resilience in the face of adversity remains relevant and offers valuable insights for navigating the complexities of contemporary life.

The intention is to showcase the importance of stoicism and how its concepts and practices align themselves with today's therapy with individuals who may suffer from negative emotions and cognitive dissonances and also individuals who seek to perfect their understanding of the universe and choose to live a more fulfilling life with gratitude and mindfulness.

Additionally, we must be aware of the misinterpretation that has also risen along with its popularity. Today's technological advancement has also created an environment where hedonistic desires are stimulated for the profit of money or for the meaningless purpose of external validation, which the stoics did not see as healthy. Moderation has become just a saying among individuals who only show intention, but no practice. Individuals have fallen into great depths of sadness and are afraid to ask for help.

This work aims to present the beauty of stoicism and its ability to supply people with reason and meaning in life and also to showcase the effectiveness of meditation as a stoic practice for a better lifestyle.

Keywords: Stoicism, Mindfulness, Meditation, Journaling, Mental Health

Contemporary Stoicism

Pierre Hadot's concept of the "Inner Citadel", we may make a reference to the experiences of the psychologist and holocaust survivor, Viktor Frankl, and his book "Man's Search for Meaning" where he presents the dichotomy of control in his own words. He claims that the last thing that someone cannot take away from you is your ability to choose. He argues in his book that between the stimulus and the reaction, there is a space where your freedom to choose lies. In that space is where the citadel resides and where your power to make a decision exists (Frankl, 1946). Every time when we choose to make the right decision based on the virtues of stoicism we add another brick to our inner citadel:

“All Hellenistic schools seem to define [wisdom] in approximately the same terms: first and foremost, as a state of perfect peace of mind. From this viewpoint, philosophy appears as a remedy for human worries, anguish, and misery brought about, for the Cynics, by social constraints and conventions; for the Epicureans, by the quest for false pleasures; for the Stoics, by the pursuit of pleasure and egoistic self-interest; and for the Sceptics, by false opinions. Whether or not they laid claim to the Socratic heritage, all Hellenistic philosophers agreed with Socrates that human beings are plunged in misery, anguish, and evil because they exist in ignorance. Evil is to be found not within things, but in the value judgments people bring to bear upon things. People can therefore be cured of their ills only if they are persuaded to change their value judgments, and in this sense all these philosophies wanted to be therapeutic.” (Hadot, 1995)

This philosophical lifestyle that Hadot is fond of can be traced back to the ancient Greek philosophical figure, Socrates. Although it is a widely known fact that Socrates, one of the most revered philosophers of all time, did not write a single piece of literature. Rather, he was known for his Socratic method of inquiry, through which he dismantled commonly accepted notions and ideas that remained unchallenged by the masses. Socrates would often traverse the streets of Athens, engaging with locals and urging them to elaborate on straightforward concepts such as friendship, gods, justice, religion, and bravery, only for the interlocutors to realise that they were unable to provide an adequate explanation and would, at times, contradict themselves. Even with the claims of the Oracle of Delphi claiming Socrates to be wisest person in the city of Athens, it was his belief that he was wiser than others due to the fact that he was the sole individual who acknowledged his own lack of knowledge. It is undeniable that Socrates stood in stark contrast to the sophists, individuals who were known to peddle their wisdom for a fee and were motivated by self-interest. Socrates, on the other hand, refused to accept any form of payment and always prioritised the well-being and enlightenment of his interlocutors. He imparted the invaluable lesson of heeding one's conscience, the internal voice that serves as a moral compass, guiding one towards what is truly just. Socrates exhorted his followers to engage in a perpetual cycle of introspection and inquiry, advising that they continue to ask themselves and others probing questions until they arrive at an answer that is borne of their own intellectual faculties. It was the process of philosophical contemplation itself, rather than the answers that it produced, that was of

utmost importance to Socrates. Questioning mandates that an individual must think for oneself and never take anything at face value. This way of thinking has later been named the “Socratic Dialogue”. It has been espoused that rational argumentation alone is insufficient when it comes to uncovering the truth. Instead, we must surrender ourselves to the Logos and allow the dynamic and living word to lead us to our ultimate destination. It is through this process that we may establish a meaningful connection between two individuals and arrive at a genuine state of dialogue. It is worth noting that this form of dialogue is distinct from the conventional notion that we hold, and it is aptly expressed in its original Greek form, dialogos.

Within Pierre Hadot’s book, we find the concept of the Daimon, which refers to the guiding divine force within every individual that influences a person’s thoughts, actions, and destiny. Pierre Hadot notes that by replacing the word “daimon” with “reason” we are able to clarify the meaning of this term. It is believed that every individual has a daimon, which is a part of the universal Logos (cosmic reason). The daimon is seen as a personal guardian or inner voice that directs one towards living in accordance with nature and fulfilling their unique potential. While individuals have control over their thoughts and actions, they are encouraged to align themselves with the guidance of their daimon and accept the unfolding of events as part of a greater cosmic plan. Within Stoicism, the daimon is considered an integral part of an individual's ethical and spiritual journey, guiding them towards virtue and eudaimonia (flourishing). One might see the Daimon as the highest version of themselves. It is widely acknowledged that the Greek concept of Logos embodies the faculty of reason and coherent thought that is inherent in each individual, as well as the principle that is leading the cosmos and the arrangement of reality. The attainment of rationality and clear-mindedness facilitates a harmonious coexistence with the Logos. Through the transformative power of dialogos, individuals are able to undergo a profound metamorphosis that would have been impossible to achieve through solitary introspection or monologue.

Pierre Hadot’s concept of “Spiritual Exercises” is central in his books and mainly in his book of *“Philosophy as a Way of Life”*. He argued that philosophy was not merely a theoretical journey but a way of life that involved engaging in specific exercises to cultivate fulfilment and that “modern philosophy appears above all as the construction of a technical jargon reserved for modern specialists”. Hadot pointed out that in his eyes, modern

philosophers are more inclined to be artists of reason and while the ancient philosophers are artists of life. Although he has studied many other ancient philosophies, such as epicureanism and neoplatonism, for our study we shall be focusing primarily on his approach to stoicism. It has to also be said that the term “spiritual” in French doesn’t necessarily exactly translate the same in English. The French term for spiritual “esprit” means “mind” and so we could translate his concept as “mind exercises”. Hadot didn’t want to use any of these conventional terms and settled for the word “spiritual” as his preferred adjective. Through such practices, philosophy transforms from a mere theoretical topic into a powerful vehicle for teaching individuals to perceive and interact with the world through a fresh and enlightened lens. Its ultimate goal is to initiate a metamorphosis in humanity. The term “*askesis*”, which denotes exercise, should not be conflated with “*asceticism*”, the rigid practice of total abstinence from food, drink, sleep, and even sexual activity. Rather, *askesis* represents a form of inner activity that fosters not self-denial, but rather self-transcendence. These exercises were designed to shift one's way of thinking, acting, and being, and ultimately lead to personal transformation and a deepened understanding of oneself and the world. To practise a spiritual exercise is not solely contingent upon the type of activity that one engages in, but rather, on the manner in which it is executed. The disposition and methodology that one employs, as well as the end goal that one is striving for, are the key determinants of a spiritual experience. A state of complete attentiveness and concentration is mandatory, wherein one immerses oneself in the task at hand to such an extent that one is able to lose all sense of self and achieve what is commonly referred to as a "flow state".

“The philosophical act is not situated merely on the cognitive level, but on that of the self and of being. It is a progress which causes us to be more fully, and makes us better. It is a conversion which turns our entire life upside down, changing the life of the person who goes through it. It raises the individual from an inauthentic condition of life, darkened by unconsciousness and harassed by worry, to an authentic state of life, in which he attains self-consciousness, an exact vision of the world, inner peace, and freedom.” (Hadot, 1995)

Hadot has seen contemplation as an important tool for these exercises, involving deep reflection and meditation on philosophical concepts, virtues, and ethical principles. It aims to

foster self-awareness and develop a clearer understanding of one's values and priorities. Furthermore, the practice of self-examination involves regular introspection and critical evaluation of one's thoughts, desires, and actions. By doing so we identify flaws, passions, and attachments, and work towards aligning ourselves with reason and virtue.

Hadot's major influence on Stoicism can be seen in his work "*The Veil of Isis*", written in 2006. In this work, Hadot explored the idea of nature in ancient philosophy, including Stoicism. Hadot argued that the Stoics saw nature as a divine and rational order, and that the goal of the Stoic philosopher was to align themselves with this order. The idea of nature underwent a significant transformation in the early modern period, as the emergence of modern science led to a new understanding of the natural world and our relationship to it. Prior to this, the idea of nature was closely linked to the idea of God, and was often seen as infused with spiritual meaning and purpose.

Albert Ellis, although not a philosopher by trade, was an American psychotherapist and psychologist and founder of the REBT concept (rational emotive behaviour therapy), which later became known as CBT (cognitive behavioural therapy). His first works on this concept were published in 1962 and presented his technique as a philosophical-empirical based psychotherapy. The goal of this form of therapy was to address emotional and behavioral problems and disturbances, empowering individuals to better understand their thoughts and emotions, and learn effective strategies for managing them. (Ellis, 1962)

It is quite intriguing to consider the historical roots of modern cognitive psychotherapy and the role that Stoic philosophy played in shaping its development. Indeed, the principles of Stoic philosophy were a key source of inspiration for Albert Ellis. At its core, Stoic philosophy emphasises the importance of developing a rational and self-aware approach to life, recognizing that our emotions and behaviours are shaped by our beliefs and attitudes. This approach resonated deeply with Ellis, who saw the potential for applying these principles to the practice of psychotherapy.

Through his work, Ellis helped to popularise the use of cognitive and behavioural techniques in psychotherapy, drawing heavily on the principles of Stoic philosophy. By helping individuals to cultivate a more rational and self-aware approach to their emotions and behaviours, he helped to empower them to transform their lives and lead happier and more fulfilling existences.

One of the key tenets of Ellis's approach is the importance of accepting oneself unconditionally, recognizing the unique value of being alive and that of being human. At the heart of this therapeutic approach is the process of disputing irrational beliefs, which can have a profound impact on our emotions and behaviours.

In REBT, individuals are encouraged to examine their beliefs about activating events, recognizing how these beliefs influence their emotional responses. By disputing irrational beliefs and replacing them with more effective and rational beliefs, individuals in therapy can develop a deeper sense of self-awareness and learn to manage their emotions and behaviours in a more positive and fulfilling way.

While in cognitive therapy, individuals can learn practical techniques for disputing irrational beliefs and replacing them with more effective beliefs. By engaging in behavioural practice and committing to these positive changes, they can truly tune into the change and develop a more positive and empowering relationship with themselves and their emotions.

Ellis emphasised that individuals should not give themselves a global rating or be influenced by the opinions of others, but rather should embrace their individuality and recognize their inherent worth as human beings. By cultivating a deep and abiding sense of self-acceptance, individuals can develop a more positive and fulfilling relationship with themselves and with the world around them.

Massimo Pigliucci, a philosopher and scientist, has made significant contributions to the popularisation and modern understanding of Stoicism. His work has had a profound impact on the contemporary Stoic movement. Pigliucci has engaged extensively with the online Stoic community through his blog "*How to Be a Stoic*" and "*Rationally Speaking*", social media presence, and involvement in Stoic gatherings and conferences. He has contributed to fostering a sense of community among Stoics, providing guidance, answering questions, and encouraging dialogue on Stoic philosophy and its practical applications. Pigliucci played a pivotal role in the revival and reinterpretation of Stoic philosophy for modern audiences. He has written extensively on Stoicism, exploring its practical applications in personal development, ethics, and resilience. Through his books, articles, and public speaking engagements, Pigliucci has helped popularise Stoicism and make it accessible to a wide range of individuals.

Pigliucci has explored the connections between Stoicism and CBT, highlighting the compatibility of Stoic principles with modern psychotherapy. He has written about the integration of Stoic ideas into cognitive restructuring, emotional regulation, and acceptance techniques, contributing to the development of Stoicism as a therapeutic tool. It is also worth mentioning that the integration of Stoic principles in CBT has been an ongoing process, and many clinicians and researchers have contributed to this development over the years. The specific techniques and approaches used in integrating Stoic principles with CBT may vary among practitioners, and the influence of various figures in the field has collectively shaped the incorporation of Stoicism into CBT. His regular contributions on climate change denial or scepticism, intelligent design, pseudoscience, and philosophy highlight his expertise in these important areas of inquiry. Massimo always believed that stoicism was part of his Italian heritage and felt a natural affinity towards the school but it was when he got into Buddhism that he noticed the many similarities of both philosophies:

“I actually tried to study Buddhism for a bit, but the parts I managed to get exposed to felt too alien, couched in cultural, linguistic, and conceptual terms that did not resonate with me. By contrast, when I picked up Epictetus, or Marcus, or Seneca, I immediately felt at home.” (Holiday, 2017)

Although he is well-acclaimed for popularising stoicism, he announced in 2021 that he will be shifting his interest away from the school of stoicism towards what he calls

“a new synthesis, something that I have called Neo-skepticism, and which uses the combined insights of the ancient Sceptics and Stoics to craft a better way to think about and especially live one’s life.” (Pigliucci, 2021)

We can see the shift he is taking by challenging the beliefs of individuals on controversial topics such as climate change denial, evolutionism, consciousness and theism. Despite being a realist, he criticises the hard problem of consciousness and claims it to be just a category error.

Romano Madera is an Italian philosopher that has written many practical books on philosophy as a practice. Most notably he is known for his book “*Philosophy as Life Path: An Introduction to Philosophical Practices*”, written in 2007. In his book, Madera emphasised that philosophy is used in search for wisdom but sadly it has seen a decline in interest among students. He later revels in the idea of finding meaning through philosophical practice. Additionally, he highlights the need for a renewed focus on cultivating wisdom, and provides a compelling call to action for professional philosophers to re-evaluate their approach to knowledge and truth. He is the founder of the “*analisi biografica a orientamento filosofico*”, or philosophically oriented biographical analysis (ABOF). A philosophical practice aimed at using and transforming the psychoanalytic method, born at the beginning of the 21st century and now practised in various Italian cities.

The practice of the philosopher analyst addresses the "healthy" dimensions of the person and is aimed at a conscious self-care of the existence of the client. The philosophical orientation is understood as a search for meaning which, unlike philosophy as a way of life of antiquity, starts from the historically, culturally and socially embodied biography. Taking care of the whole personality and the life of groups has always been the essential centre of the vocation of philosophy, re-proposed as a container of different approaches and disciplines of the human sciences, from psychoanalysis to pedagogy.

To use ABOF in a philosophical practice, the analyst is required not only the professional competence but also the vocational orientation of his life to philosophy, dedicating himself to personal and community philosophical exercises.

Those who practise and profess philosophically oriented biographical analysis (also called philosophical analysis) define themselves as philosophically oriented biographical analysts (ABOF). The practice of the philosophically oriented biographical analyst offers, to those who feel uneasiness due to existential disorientation and the difficulty of finding meaning in life, a method of accessing one's own inner resources which is essential for turning uneasiness into opportunities for growth. It does not address the psychopathological dimensions that require treatment other than the caring skills of the philosophically oriented biographical analyst, unless he is also a psychotherapist, psychologist or psychiatrist

Romano, together with Luigi Vero Tarca, have developed 5 rules of biographical-solidarity within the practice of ABOF in the last years and have been promoted

in Italy in various philosophical communities. The rules provide for the conscious assumption of a nonviolent form of communication, capable of stimulating fruitful encounters and the emptying of sterile and destructive contrasts, without thereby denying the transformative effect inherent in the conflict and in the difference between theoretical, political, existential positions, and religion. These rules invite the practitioners to: 1) approach communication by referring to oneself, that is to one's own biographical experience, the contents that are submitted to the attention of others; 2) promote mutual recognition and curb the thoughts of opposition where the intention to affirm one truth to the detriment of all the others prevails; 3) empathise with the other's story and prohibit substitute interpretations that suggest "You said, but in reality you meant"; 4) use the so-called "anamorphic offer"(changing of perspective in order to broaden one's perception of a topic) to provide new opportunities for reading events that are capable of grasping further points of view, however renouncing the claim to possess superior knowledge on what the interlocutor narrates; 5) to suspend the inner assent to critical/destructive fantasies and thoughts, working on one's own shadow projections in view of an integration of the negative that weakens the toxic and fruitless aspects.

In the perspective of biographical analysis with a philosophical orientation, body language must be listened to, considering it an active protagonist. The idea is that nothing done in a caring relationship should be separated from the awareness of bodily mediation in which care and training are implemented and reflected. The creative evolution of Mădera's converging efforts towards an integral care of human existence is concentrated with the utmost intensity in the idea of a possible "solidarity of self-realisation" that allows the individual to be in search of a lifestyle free from excess of the passions (apatheia).

Madera is considered to be a neo-stoic, implementing a lot from Pierre Hadot and trying to bring back and analyse the old ancient philosophy of stoicism and its practices. Transcendences as a characterization of ancient philosophy are, for Pierre Hadot, the transcendence towards true discourse, towards the world and towards others. To these forms of transcendence are added, in the practice of the ABOF, those towards the inner magisterium (inner citadel), towards the transformation of the negative, towards a reconstruction of experiences and, finally, towards the opening to the desire for wisdom and eudaimonia. This perspective greatly expands the concept of health and entrusts each person with the

right/duty, as advised by Socrates, to put their own life under scrutiny so as not to act automatically and unreflectively. The specific "therapeutic" side of philosophy can be found in the choice to problematize the obvious, refining the tools of conscious questioning and the search for meaning, cultivating one's own capacities for transcendence of egoic centering and understanding of events in their interweaving in the face of inevitable discomfort complex of contributing causes.

Ryan Holiday is a writer and considered to be an influential figure in the context of modern stoicism. He has published multiple books regarding stoicism and runs the blog "*The Daily Stoic*". Ryan's most notable works are considered to be "*The Obstacle Is the Way*", "*Ego is the Enemy*", "*Stillness is the Key*", "*Courage is Calling*", and "*Lives of the Stoics*". Ryan worked with the famous Author of the book "*The 48 Laws of Power*", Robert Greene and managed to create his own movement and impact on stoicism. His journey continues and he is currently considered to be leading the charge of contemporary stoicism. Throughout his career he has influenced many army men, athletes, actors and individuals through his writings and has gained credit for it. This passion for Stoicism began after reading Epictetus in his student years and it has inspired him to delve deeper into this ancient philosophy.

Through his books, articles, and lectures, Holiday has been widely credited with increasing the popularity of Stoicism, with The New York Times even describing him as "leading the charge for Stoicism." (Alter, 2016) This trend has been noted in various fields, including among Silicon Valley entrepreneurs.

While Holiday is not bringing anything new or revolutionary in the philosophy of Stoicism, he can be seen as an "influencer-philosopher" type of figure within the internet community. Some critics argue that Ryan Holiday's presentations of Stoicism oversimplify the philosophy, focusing primarily on its practical aspects and self-help applications. They claim that this approach may neglect the nuanced philosophical depth and complexity of Stoicism as a whole.

Another reason for criticism would be that, as a prolific author and entrepreneur, Ryan Holiday has built a brand around Stoicism, which some critics argue can lead to a commercialised or superficial understanding of the philosophy. They express concerns that this commercialization may dilute the essence of Stoicism and create a market-driven

approach that detracts from its original intent. Some critics argue that Ryan Holiday's works may lack the scholarly rigour and depth found in academic studies of Stoicism.

While there may be disagreements and differing perspectives, his work has sparked interest in Stoic philosophy and encouraged many individuals to explore its teachings. Ultimately, the reception of his work may vary depending on one's personal preferences, level of familiarity with Stoicism, and scholarly expectations.

Stoicism Today

Revival

In an era marked by increased stress, anxiety, and distractions, there has been a growing interest in mindfulness and self-care practices. Stoicism's emphasis on self-awareness, emotional regulation, and being present aligns with the principles of mindfulness. Many individuals turn to Stoicism as a way to cultivate resilience, reduce suffering, and improve their overall well-being.

Stoicism offers practical tools and techniques that can be applied to everyday life. Its focus on understanding and accepting what is within our control, and letting go of what is not, provides individuals with a sense of empowerment and equanimity in the face of adversity. Stoicism's emphasis on personal responsibility and self-improvement appeals to those seeking practical wisdom to navigate life's challenges. Many people are seeking deeper meaning and purpose in their lives. Stoicism provides a framework for examining our personal values, developing virtues, and living in accordance with reason. Additionally there is a fine availability and accessibility of ancient Stoic texts, such as the writings of Epictetus, Seneca, and Marcus Aurelius, have contributed to the resurgence of interest in Stoicism. Translations, commentaries, and modern interpretations of these texts make Stoic philosophy more accessible to contemporary readers. The wisdom and timeless relevance found in these ancient works have sparked curiosity and engagement with Stoicism.

The rise of digital communities and social media platforms has facilitated the sharing and discussion of Stoic ideas. Online forums, blogs, podcasts, and social media groups dedicated to Stoicism provide a space for individuals to connect, learn, and exchange ideas. These platforms have contributed to the popularisation of Stoicism and have created a sense

of community among modern Stoics. We have authors such as Ryan Holiday, Massimo Pigliucci, Lawrence C. Becker and William B. Irvine, and many others, and have taken their time and made it their mission to share the philosophy of stoicism in a more compact and practical way that can be applied in today's world.

Why is stoicism important in today's world? Or better yet, why are we witnessing this sudden interest in stoic philosophy? The contemporary era has witnessed the emergence of a renewed interest in Stoicism, manifesting as an intellectual and popular movement that seeks to revive the practice of this ancient philosophy. This movement, known as "modern Stoicism," implies not only a resurrection of interest in ancient Stoic philosophy but also an attempt to adapt its teachings to the language and conceptual framework of today's standards of living.

The rise of modern Stoicism can be traced back to November 2012 when the first annual Stoic Week event was organised, gaining significant attention from the international media. This event served as a catalyst for the popularisation of Stoicism, prompting a renewed interest in its principles and practices. (Modern Stoicism, 2012)

A lot of individuals are now following a neo-stoic idea of "dopamine detox" where one would cease to use every technology based dopamine release such as phone, social media, video games and such to rehabilitate themselves and get in tune with their inner selves. This combined with meditation has seen great success in the online community. The same is applied for alcohol consumption, fast-food, drinks, and mainly anything that is deemed to be an unhealthy passion.

Another reason for the growth in popularity of Stoicism is the increasing interest in mindfulness and other contemplative practices. Stoicism shares many similarities with mindfulness in its emphasis on self-awareness, present-moment actualization, and acceptance of one's thoughts and feelings. As mindfulness and related practices have become more popular, many people have been drawn to Stoicism as a complementary philosophy that can help them deepen their practice and cultivate greater wisdom and insight.

There has been a contrast between the ancient and modern iterations of Stoicism, particularly with respect to their attitudes towards money and power. However, it is worth noting that some scholars have identified an apparent contradiction within Stoicism that its modern adherents may not be aware of. This contradiction lies in the philosophy's emphasis

on coping with problems rather than fixing them, which may discourage individuals from seeking to rectify issues altogether. Nonetheless, it remains a matter of scholarly debate, and many Stoic practitioners would argue that the philosophy provides a robust framework for dealing with life's challenges in a constructive and meaningful manner. Indeed, it is true that there exist certain problems that are beyond our capacity to solve, and in such cases, Stoicism can prove to be a valuable tool for coping with these challenges. However, it is equally true that many problems can be resolved through proactive measures and problem-solving strategies.

Misinterpretation of Stoicism

In an age of decadence, many people, primarily men, are turning to stoicism as a means of understanding how to manage their emotions and build their character. Technology has snatched the attention span of many individuals and has diluted people of temperance and ethics. Stoicism has begun to get attention and because of this, many self-help groups have been formed that have begun quoting the stoics. The age of men today has been feeling attacked by the media and overall general public in the west. Suicide rates (World Health Organization, 2021) among men and divorce rates (Danielson, 2022) have grown tremendously and have only increased depression and it is not being talked about. The global suicide rate among men is double than the rate of women. Over half (58%) of all deaths by suicide occur before the age of 50 years old. Most marriages fail out of lack of commitment. Generally around 70% of married women initiate divorce. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, more than 1 in 4, live without a father in their home. (US Census Bureau, 2022) Not to mention the increasing rise of depression cases in young adults and even teenagers or children. (Goodwin, et al., 2022)

These numbers do not clearly show a bright image for men or for women, but generally men are the most impacted and usually the ones to turn to stoicism for guidance, which should be considered good news since that means they choose salvation of some sort. Too often we have seen young boys without fathers who have no role model to look up to and have nothing else to do than to look for the missing piece in the external world. Oftentimes bad faith or negative circumstances drive these children towards reckless behaviour which cause dangerous outcomes and sometimes the death of themselves or others. Fathers who fail

to accept responsibility or succumb to depression. We are seeing an age of men who have no support or role-models to learn from. An age of decadence where you are rewarded for what you have and not for what you are.

This is completely against the idea of stoicism and many men have turned to the virtues to feel relevant. There is a great difference between the boys from 50 years ago and the boys of our century. The culture we are now seeing is not anymore invested in virtues but instead into hedonistic pleasures without temperance. But something that has also been of great remark is how often stoicism has been misinterpreted in the online community and within so called self-help gurus. We often hear this concept of being “stoic” being “immovable” but oftentimes the way it is portrayed is almost clinically dangerous. The way it is presented in the community is that you have to rid yourself completely of emotions and to reject any kind of pleasures, this is almost sociopathic in a sense and not in tune with what stoicism is actually about.

We are seeing young boys that are being influenced by these false idols and begin to act in a very self-destructive way by completely invalidating their own feelings and almost becoming sociopathic in a sense. Empathy is one of the main attributes of stoicism and by having none, you are also not acting according to apatheia and additionally you are failing to temper yourself. In reality, Stoicism teaches emotional resilience and cultivates an inner state of tranquillity. Rather than suppressing emotions, Stoics aim to understand and regulate their emotional responses through reason and mindfulness.

This has all begun after many people started seeking the meaning of masculinity and what it means to be a man and most often than not stoicism was among the answers. They portray characters of silent nature and of assertiveness. These characters are often portrayed as tough and unemotional, with their lack of expression being a hallmark of traditional masculinity. While this ideal has been celebrated in popular culture for many years, it is important to recognize that it can also be harmful, as it can encourage men to suppress their emotions and deny their vulnerability. This can lead to a range of negative outcomes, including mental health issues, relationship problems, and a lack of fulfilment and connection in life. Fortunately, there is a growing recognition of the importance of emotional expression and vulnerability in men, and a movement towards a more balanced and authentic approach to masculinity. The characteristics associated with traditional masculinity, such as

aggressiveness, dominance, and competitiveness, seem to be inconsistent with greater male stoicism. This suggests that the stoic ideal of emotional restraint is likely to be more a product of socialisation than biology.

Another misconception is that Stoics advocate for complete detachment from the world and a lack of concern for others. While Stoicism encourages individuals to focus on what is within their control, it also emphasises the importance of virtue, social responsibility, and empathy towards others. Stoics believe in acting virtuously and contributing to the well-being of society. Stoics are often portrayed as unfeeling or lacking in emotions. However, Stoicism teaches the cultivation of positive emotions, such as joy, gratitude, and love, while seeking to minimise negative emotions through rationality and wisdom. Stoics aim for emotional balance rather than a complete absence of feelings. Stoicism is sometimes misunderstood as a philosophy that denies the existence of free will or personal agency. This in essence is not true and the Stoics do believe in the existence of free will and the power of personal choice. They encourage individuals to focus on what is within their control and accept what is beyond their control, recognizing that they can choose their responses and attitudes towards external events. Stoicism is often associated with enduring hardship and suffering without complaint. While Stoicism does teach resilience and the ability to endure adversity, it also emphasises the pursuit of virtue, personal growth, and leading a flourishing and meaningful life. Stoicism provides guidance on how to live a good life and find fulfilment, not just in times of hardship but in everyday circumstances.

Lastly, I would like to emphasise that today's world is very driven towards the idea of "meaning in life" that has been pressured by all the online personalities. It has come to be seen as the ultimate goal, to find meaning in life. While this does not sound like a bad thing, it becomes one when it revolves around unrealistic expectations or unnecessary pressure. Every young man is being told that they should find their meaning or "mission" right there and right now, something to work towards and look forward to. Many fail to do so and begin feeling frustrated or saddened by this and turn to philosophy for answers but they mistake it to have all the answers. While it is only natural to say that the meaning of life is to be happy, it is not enough, for it becomes a problem when it interferes with the mental health of the individual. Although nowadays happiness has been seen as a distant goal that everyone strives for and yet it is misunderstood. The age of materialism and instant gratification has

diluted people into thinking they always need a purpose or goal to work towards. While this may not really sound like a bad thing at first glance, it is actually a pressure set upon individuals and makes them think that they require a purpose in order to have meaning in life. This has been promoted by the media and so-called „self-help gurus”. Taoist philosopher Alan Watts has stated that:

“The meaning of life is just to be alive. It is so plain and so obvious and so simple. And yet, everybody rushes around in a great panic as if it were necessary to achieve something beyond themselves.” (Watts, 1999)

It might sound too simple to be accepted but we are free to choose our path and what we enjoy. There is too much pressure on this topic and it only deepens the anxiety and fear of a meaningless existence.

The question of the meaning of life has been a subject of human inquiry for centuries, and it is a question that has never been fully answered. Each answer is subjective and can be accepted by individuals that feel that it resonates with their core beliefs. The search for meaning is a natural human impulse, as we seek to make sense of our existence and find a sense of purpose in the world. However, the pressure to find meaning can be intensified by various factors, including cultural expectations, social norms, and personal experiences. In many cultures, there is a strong emphasis on the importance of finding meaning in life. This can manifest in religious traditions that offer a specific set of beliefs and practices aimed at answering questions about the nature of existence and the purpose of life. It can also be seen in secular cultures that place a premium on personal achievement, fulfilment, and success. In both cases, the pressure to find meaning can be heightened by the sense that one’s life will be incomplete or unsatisfying without a clear sense of purpose.

One thing that ancient philosophies like Taoism, Stoicism, or the teachings of Miyamoto Musashi have in common is the detachment of external factors, in a sense that you do not let it control your emotions, for these are things that are out of our control. By controlling our reactions to the outside we develop a more calm and grounded character without letting our emotions get the best of ourselves. For the Stoics, “meaning” is closely tied to the idea of living in accordance with nature and fulfilling one’s role in the universe.

The Stoic philosopher Epictetus famously said, “*Nature has given us one tongue but two ears, so that we may hear from others twice as much as we speak*”. (Epictetus, 125 AD) This quote illustrates the Stoic emphasis on listening and learning from others as a means of discovering one’s place in the universe. From a Stoic perspective, the meaning of life is not something that can be objectively defined or measured, but rather something that must be discovered through a process of self-discovery and cultivation. The Stoics believed that each individual has a unique role to play in the universe, and that fulfilling that role is the key to living a meaningful and fulfilling life.

The Stoics also believed that virtue was the highest good, and that living a virtuous life was essential to achieving a sense of meaning and purpose. Virtue, in this sense, was not just a matter of individual morality or personal conduct, but also involved a broader sense of social responsibility and duty to others.

The Stoic view of meaning is closely tied to the idea of living in accordance with nature, fulfilling one’s role in the universe, and cultivating a sense of virtue and social responsibility. While the specifics of what this means may vary from person to person, the overarching goal is always to live in a way that is consistent with one’s own nature and the natural order of the universe.

Can Stoicism Improve Our Lives in today’s technologically dominant world?

Hypothesis. There have been in the last 10 years a lot of dramatic changes in our world on a macro level and maybe also on a micro scale. We do not know where the world is going and it is all up to fate and we have the concept of amor fati on our side. A lot of the concepts require a lot of mindfulness and self-awareness that is said to be achieved via meditation and journaling, rational thinking and using wisdom to apply the dichotomy of control. Given what we have discussed and discovered, we can assume that a lot of stoic concepts can be implemented within meditation. The goal of meditation and stoicism is to reach eudaimonia, a state of flourishing, a state of awareness and equanimity. One cannot reach such a state without practising mindfulness in order to implement the concepts of stoicism. Many stoic concepts are similar to self-awareness meditation. Realising what is within our control and what not is something that meditation teaches us. Negative

visualisation is part of the CBT in therapeutic practice where one would cease to catastrophize by progressively asking himself questions about the thing he fears and realising that it is not as bad as our mind makes it seem.

The famous quote from Epictetus is oftentimes given to clients seeking help through CBT: *"It's not the events that upset us, but our judgments about the events."* (Epictetus, 125 AD)

Method. I have gathered studies that praise the use of meditation, with the aim of mindfulness, on a daily basis and that has shown positive results following its practice. These studies have been gathered from multiple online sources such as: PubMed, PsychMed and others as such. We will be reviewing the ones that are relevant to mental health and personal development and the practices of meditation.

Background. This section examines studies that investigate the role of meditation in personal growth and self-improvement in regards to mental health and common negative emotions. It explores how Stoic principles such as practising virtue, focusing on what is within our control, and embracing adversity can contribute to psychological well-being, resilience, and flourishing with meditation techniques based on the results of the studies.

Results. A study ran in 2020 by Alexander MacLellan and Nazanin Derakshan with the title *"The Effects of Stoic Training and Adaptive Working Memory Training on Emotional Vulnerability in High Worriers"* from the Department of Psychological Sciences, Birkbeck College, University of London, have given positive results in the area of mindfulness meditation using stoic concepts in those who are at risk of anxiety and depression. (MacLellan, Derakshan, 2021, 45, 730–744) The researchers have conducted a study that compares the effectiveness of three different online cognitive training sessions over the course of eight days. The first cluster had to undertake a structured journal training, involving three exercises derived from the principles of Stoic philosophy. The second experimental group underwent the same Stoic training, but also completed an adaptive cognitive training that adjusted the difficulty of a memory task based on the participant's performance. The third group served as an active control and underwent a simple, non-adaptive cognitive training where the memory task remained at the easiest level throughout. The study assessed all three groups on their anxious and depressive symptoms before and after the training period.

This study sheds light on the efficacy of various cognitive training methods and their potential to improve mental health and well-being. The incorporation of Stoic philosophy in cognitive training is particularly intriguing, as it suggests that ancient wisdom can still be relevant and useful in our modern world.

These findings have been accepted for publication in the journal, “*Cognitive Therapy and Research*”. The groups, who underwent various cognitive training methods, had significant reductions in rumination, by 18% and 13% respectively, in contrast to the control group. Rumination, as we know, is a thought process that tends to dwell on sad or dark thoughts, and is often a precursor to the onset of depression. Therefore, this study is of great significance in the field of mental health, as it demonstrates the potential of cognitive training methods to reduce the risk of depression.

Furthermore, the group that underwent Stoic training showed an impressive 15% increase in self-efficacy, which is a crucial factor in promoting positive coping mechanisms in response to stress. These results suggest that the incorporation of Stoic philosophy in cognitive training may have significant benefits for mental health and well-being, and may offer a promising avenue for future research in this field.

An article on the topic of the benefits of mindfulness written by Alvin Powell in 2018 showcases the effects it has on the mind and how its popularity has grown. The number of studies on the topic have significantly increased within the last decade to approximately 220 between 2013 and 2015. The studies have monitored patients that were asked to use meditation techniques and the effects were seen in the anatomy of the brain. It is quite fascinating to learn about the effects that meditation can have on the brain. Research has shown that meditation can stimulate the growth of the left hippocampus, which is responsible for episodic memory, self-awareness, and spatial cognition. This is a remarkable finding, as it suggests that regular meditation practice can enhance cognitive abilities and overall brain function. (Powell, 2018)

One of the most active areas in the brain, Posterior Cingulate, is linked to most notably wandering/intrusive thoughts. This area of the brain has also been shown to benefit from meditation. Studies utilising generative topographic mapping have demonstrated that meditation can increase the density of the area, allowing individuals to observe sensations and emotions without overreacting. Applying stoic concepts to this can be particularly

beneficial for those seeking to cultivate greater emotional regulation and mindfulness in their daily lives. (Mindworks Team, 2019)

Meditation has also been shown to decrease the size of the amygdala, which is the part of the brain responsible for processing emotions such as fear and anxiety. This finding is particularly significant, as it suggests that meditation can be an effective tool for reducing stress and anxiety, and promoting overall mental health and well-being. The amygdala controls the "flight or fight" response in the face of environmental stressors. This region is the core fear system for the body, and it interprets external factors and events into internal physiological responses, such as increased heart rate, blood pressure, and the release of adrenaline via the adrenal gland.

Studies have shown that regular meditation practice can decrease the size of the amygdala, which may have significant implications for mental health and well-being. By reducing the size of this fear centre in the brain, meditation can help individuals to manage their stress and anxiety more effectively, and to cultivate greater emotional regulation and resilience. These findings underscore the potential of meditation as a powerful tool for promoting overall health and well-being, and highlight the importance of continued research in this field. (Best, 2004)

It is quite intriguing to consider how modern-day life may be impacting our amygdala, which was originally designed to respond to ancient predator and prey situations that threatened our ancestors' survival. In today's world, our amygdala may be firing in response to modern-day emotions such as fear, anxiety, and anger, which can lead to a "flight or fight" response. While human civilization has certainly evolved and provided us with a more stable society, our response system, which is tailored for detecting and reacting to stressors, has not necessarily kept pace with these changes.

That being said, meditation offers a promising avenue for better managing our emotional responses, particularly those that trigger the "flight or fight" response on a daily basis. By practising meditation regularly, individuals may be able to cultivate greater emotional regulation and resilience, allowing them to respond to stressors in a more balanced and effective way. This is an exciting area of research.

Lastly, an article published in the "National Institutes of Health" gathered multiple studies and researches that have concerned themselves with using meditation as a tool to

combat the negative impacts of life such as: Stress and Anxiety, Insomnia and Sleep Disorders, Pain, Weight Loss and Eating disorders, ADHD, Cancer, Substance Use, PTSD and High blood pressure. (Ginexi, Burke, Shurtleff, 2022)

In the United States, according to a 2012 survey of around 35 thousand adults, only 1.9% reported practising mindfulness meditation within the past year. However, among those who did practise mindfulness meditation exclusively, a significant majority (around 73%) reported doing so for the purpose of promoting general wellness and preventing disease. Additionally, the vast majority (92%) of respondents cited relaxation and stress reduction as their primary motivation for meditating.

Interestingly, the survey also revealed that more than half of respondents reported practising mindfulness meditation in order to improve their quality of sleep. This finding underscores the potential benefits of meditation for promoting healthy sleep habits and overall well-being. It is truly remarkable to consider how meditation can positively impact so many areas of our lives, from reducing stress and anxiety to promoting better sleep and overall health.

Let us take a look at one of the most commonly encountered negative effects in individuals, primarily Stress and Anxiety, Pain, Substance abuse and Insomnia. These aspects were chosen for the sake of this thesis and without the intention to undermine the other serious aspects.

A 2018 analysis encouraged by the National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health (NCCIH) examined the efficacy of mindfulness-based approaches for treating diagnosed psychiatric disorders such as anxiety and depression. (Goldberg, et al., 2018) The study compared mindfulness meditation approaches with both no treatment and established evidence-based treatments such as cognitive behavioural therapy and antidepressant medications. Remarkably, the analysis included more than 12 thousand participants, and the researchers found that mindfulness-based approaches were more effective than no treatment at all for treating anxiety and depression. Remarkably, they found that these approaches were as effective as evidence-based therapies in addressing these conditions. These findings underscore the potential of mindfulness meditation as a powerful tool for promoting mental health and well-being, particularly for individuals struggling with

anxiety and depression. It is truly remarkable to consider the impact that mindfulness-based approaches can have on the lives of those suffering from psychiatric disorders.

Additionally, in regards to pain, it is quite interesting to learn about the findings of a 2020 report by the esteemed Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality. According to the report, mindfulness-based stress reduction was found to be associated with short-term improvement in low-back pain, but not fibromyalgia pain. This finding highlights the potential of mindfulness-based approaches in managing certain types of pain, particularly low-back pain. However, it also underscores the need for continued research in this area to better understand the potential benefits and limitations of mindfulness-based interventions for pain management. Overall, these findings are a promising step forward in the field of pain management.

According to another 2020 analysis supported by the NCCIH (National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health), meditation practices were found to be strongly associated with pain reduction in adults using opioids for acute or chronic pain. (Skelly, et al., 2020) The analysis included five studies with a total of 514 participants, and the findings suggest that meditation may be a promising tool for managing pain in individuals using opioids.

Another intriguing find is about the potential benefits of mindfulness meditation practices in managing insomnia and improving sleep quality. According to a 2019 analysis of 18 studies, comprising a total of 1,700 participants, mindfulness meditation practices were found to be effective in improving sleep quality. In fact, the analysis revealed that mindfulness meditation practices were more effective than education-based treatments in this regard. However, it is important to note that the effects of mindfulness meditation on sleep quality were comparable to those of other evidence-based treatments such as cognitive behavioural therapy and exercise. (Rusch, et al., 2019)

Numerous clinical trials have explored the efficacy of mindfulness-based relapse prevention (MBRP) in this regard. MBRP is a powerful tool that can help individuals increase their awareness of the thoughts and emotions that trigger cravings and learn effective strategies to manage their automatic reactions to those cravings. By cultivating greater mindfulness and self-awareness, individuals in recovery can develop a deeper understanding of their triggers and underlying emotional states, as well as learn coping mechanisms to

overcome their cravings. This approach is particularly promising for individuals with a history of substance use disorders, as it can help them to develop a more balanced and positive relationship with their thoughts and emotions.

According to a 2018 review of 37 studies, comprising a total of 3,500 participants, mindfulness-based approaches were found to be effective in reducing craving levels in individuals with substance use disorders. The review revealed that mindfulness-based practices were slightly more effective than other therapies in promoting abstinence from substance use. These findings underscore the potential of mindfulness-based approaches as a powerful tool for supporting individuals in recovery from substance use disorders. By cultivating greater self-awareness and developing effective strategies for managing cravings and triggers, individuals in recovery can develop a deeper understanding of their underlying emotional states and develop a more balanced and positive relationship with their thoughts and emotions. (Cavicchioli, Movalli, Maffei., 2018)

A 2017 analysis of 9 studies, comprising around 900 participants, specifically focused on the efficacy of MBRP (Mindfulness-Based Relapse Prevention) in preventing substance use relapses. The analysis found that MBRP was not more effective at preventing relapses than other treatments such as health education and cognitive behavioural therapy. However, the analysis did reveal that MBRP was effective in reducing cravings and alleviating symptoms of withdrawal associated with alcohol use disorders.

These findings highlight the potential of MBRP as a promising tool for managing substance use disorders, particularly in reducing cravings and alleviating withdrawal symptoms. However, it is important to continue to explore the efficacy of MBRP in relation to other treatments for preventing substance use relapses.

Lastly, we have noticed that in the case of people suffering from PTSD, meditation has been of great effect in these cases. Additionally, a study from the “*JOURNAL OF THE ROYAL SOCIETY OF MEDICINE Volume 89 July 1996*” found a potential connection between greater pain tolerance with stoicism of recreational athletes. In many cases, individuals may continue to engage in physical activity despite injuries or other physical challenges, demonstrating a remarkable level of resilience and strength. The same could be said of soldiers that have survived the effects of war. (Malvin, 1996)

A 2018 review examined the effects of meditation and other mindfulness-based practices on symptoms of PTSD, drawing from a pool of eight studies that included a total of 511 participants. The study participants included veterans, medical staff, and people who had been victims of interpersonal violence, highlighting the diverse range of individuals who may benefit from these interventions. The results of the review were quite promising, with 6 of the 8 studies reporting a reduction in PTSD symptoms following some form of mindfulness-based treatment. (Nidich, et al. 2018)

An additional study from a 2018 clinical, supported by the U.S. Department of Defense, compared the effectiveness of meditation, health education, and prolonged exposure therapy for post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). This study included 203 veterans with PTSD resulting from their active military service. The findings suggest that meditation may be as effective as prolonged exposure therapy in reducing PTSD symptoms and depression. Furthermore, the veterans who used meditation also showed improvement in mood and overall quality of life, highlighting the potential benefits of this approach for individuals seeking to overcome the emotional and psychological challenges of PTSD. (Niles BL, Mori DL, Polizzi C, et al., 2018)

Stoic Practicality. Now that we have already covered the stoic concepts and shown how these were implemented in today's therapeutic field, we shall be mentioning some exercises that have been influenced by stoicism and now play a great role in the process of well-being of the individual.

The mentioned studies about meditation are proof that meditation is a tool that can be used on many occasions, regardless of the context. It has many benefits and its impact is surely to be recognized as beneficial if done consistently. Stoicism is the nuance that we approach meditation with. These are some of the common and easy practices that have shown to be effective in treating negative emotions. A lot of these practices involve changing one's perspective but I would like to also mention tools that along with these perspectives can fundamentally change one's lifestyle for the better.

Journaling

As the title suggests, one can begin journaling in order to release tension within their mind and body. There are two ways of doing this. Journaling every day at the end or beginning of the day, practising gratitude or simply releasing their thoughts on paper. Afterwards, if necessary, challenging his texts and looking for irrational or negative beliefs, applying the dichotomy of control. Additionally, one may use negative visualisation to progressively unfold the story of the fear that one might have. For example, if one might have a fear of failing a test, we would progressively write the scenario and notice the patterns of cognitive dissonances which are irrational or subject of our imagination and outside of our control.

A second way of journaling is by simply letting your mind run free with the pen. This may take hours but it can release tension that one has stored within. Bottling up emotions and never managing to release them in a healthy way can gradually impact our way of life and perception of the world. After this was done, one might find relief and also review the texts and apply the dichotomy of control to rationalise which are and aren't in our control. One might ask themselves if they were acting according to the stoic virtues.

Stoic Meditation

Meditation in essence is a relaxation technique that has been practiced since ancient times. There are many ways to meditate, many body positions and many activities that serve as a form of meditation. We will only be referring to the most widely used meditation, which is simply sitting with your thoughts and emotions. It is quite a big misunderstanding that someone has to “clear their mind” or “control your thoughts” because such an action goes against the very anatomical nature of the brain. Our psyche is working constantly and you can never cease brain activity unless you yourself cease to exist. Meditation is just sitting in a comfortable upright position, looking at thoughts and feelings from a spectator's perspective, without judging them, along with breathing deeply.

To apply stoicism is to meditate on the impermanence of life and how grateful we are to be chosen to experience life in all its glory. It is to meditate on the things that are out of our control and not let ourselves attach negative feelings to events or unhealthy passions. Releasing ourselves of the desire for control and accepting that we may leave this world at any moment and that our fate is dictated by the universe.

Breathing techniques are a big part of meditation and I must mention one that is clinically proven to impact our body in a positive way is the “physiological sigh” that was discovered in the late 30’s and has been popularised by Stanford Professor of Neurobiology Andrew Huberman. The way he describes it is that this technique involves two nasal inhales, a deep one and a second one that serves to fill and expand the lungs further, followed by a long exhale. Anatomically, when we are exposed to a stressor we start to inhale more vigorously and the process happens in the following order, the lungs expand, the diaphragm is pushed down and the heart grows slightly in volume, causing the blood flow to slow down in that expanded volume, neurons send signal to the brain and alerts it that blood is flowing slower and it should ramp up the heart rate, thus we are experiencing anatomical stress. If we wish to slow our heart rate, the already mentioned technique does just that. The way it works is that the diaphragm, during the long exhale, pushes the lungs and the heart up, the heart shrinks in size and blood flow runs quicker in the tightened valves this in turn sends a signal to the brain via the sinoatrial nodes (neurons) and this activates the parasympathetic nervous system which is tasked with calming the body down. The way this is effective is that it can be done in real-time and regardless of the context one might be in. We must understand that, and I quote Professor Huberman, *“we can’t use the mind to control the mind, we need tools”*. (Huberman, 2021)

Exposure Therapy

The approach of exposure therapy, which is a form of psychotherapy, is used to treat anxiety disorders and phobias. In this form of therapy, psychologists work with individuals to create a safe and supportive environment in which they can confront and overcome their fears.

By gradually exposing individuals to the things they fear and avoid, exposure therapy helps to reduce fear and decrease avoidance. This process can be challenging, but it is also incredibly empowering, as individuals learn to confront their fears and develop greater resilience and inner strength. What we might call it “baptism by fire”.

This along with journaling and changing the perspective of the process to something that is a constant evolution. One must see that every action in his power that he has done, no matter how small it might be, brings him closer to sharpening himself. Exposure therapy has

a few methods of applying it but a simple stoic way is to journal about their gradual exposure to the feared stimuli and applying the dichotomy of control. The participant can grade his experiences to the exposure and become more accustomed to his response and internalize them.

Cognitive Behavioural Therapy. Cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT), which is a form of psychotherapy that aims to help individuals break free from negative cycles of thought and feeling. CBT is based on the concept that our thoughts, feelings, physical sensations, and actions are interconnected, and that negative patterns in one area can lead to negative outcomes in others.

Through CBT, individuals learn to identify and challenge negative thought patterns, and to break overwhelming problems down into smaller, more manageable parts. By developing a more positive and realistic outlook, individuals can learn to cope with challenges more effectively and cultivate greater resilience and inner strength. (Robertson, Codd, 2019)

One stoic way of using CBT is the Behaviour Modelling Technique which influences individuals to overcome certain phobias or disorders based on the example of others that resonate with them and have overcome the same condition themselves. This in accordance with the Sage, who has turned to stoicism and achieved eudaimonia through virtue, can influence individuals and help them achieve a better well-being. While behaviour modelling can be effective in promoting short-term learning, it is often most effective when combined with other techniques such as role-playing and reinforcement. When used together in sequence, behaviour modelling, role-play, and reinforcement can improve the effectiveness of this therapy and promote lasting behaviour change. Additionally, several factors have been shown to increase the effectiveness of behaviour modelling therapy, including the skill level and likability of the models, the clear demonstration of target behaviours, and the enactment of behaviours by multiple different models. An example would be to ask yourself how your role-model would act in this particular situation or how would they deal with it or what course of action would they take.

Stress Inoculation Training (SIT)

This method of therapy is similar to the stoic practice of *premeditatio malorum* which involves regularly imagining a variety of feared situations as if they were already happening to you. (Tull, 2021)

This can include experiences such as exile, poverty, sickness, and death, among others. The purpose of this exercise is to mentally rehearse a more philosophical attitude toward these challenges, in order to cultivate a sense of apatheia, or inner calm and resilience. SIT involves more techniques such as exposure therapy and cognitive restructuring techniques where one individual would identify and challenge negative patterns of thought, and replace them with more realistic and self-affirming beliefs. By practising negative visualization, we come to terms with what might be our negative views on it and we are able to reconstruct our way of thinking about a particular event, feeling or individual. Someone who has a fear of stage can reconstruct his process of dealing with such feelings and label fear to look more like an “excitement” of stage.

Acceptance and Commitment Therapy

ACT, which is a psychotherapeutic approach that is focused on action and commitment, has its roots in traditional behaviour therapy and cognitive behavioural therapy. (Psychology Today Staff, 2022) In ACT, clients are encouraged to halt their efforts to evade, reject, and battle with their inner emotions and, instead, appreciate that these profound emotions are legitimate responses to particular situations that should not hinder them from progressing in their lives. With this realisation, clients start to accept their afflictions and pledge to make essential modifications in their conduct, irrespective of their life's circumstances and how they perceive them.

Similar to the Amor Fati concept in stoicism, with the help of meditation and accepting one's mortality and fate, we can live a more grateful life and be able to strive towards greater productivity in all areas of interest.

The concepts involve six core processes that greatly impact the results of the individual. Acceptance, where one should accept the actions of avoidance or denial as part of his disturbance. Cognitive Defusion, its intention enables one to detach oneself from and alter

the way one responds to troubling thoughts and emotions, thus diminishing their detrimental impact. Mindfulness, which can be achieved through meditation and grounding exercises. Self as context, is a profound notion that broadens the understanding of self and identity, proposing that individuals are more than the mere sum of their thoughts, emotions, and encounters. Values (Virtues), selection of personal principles in various domains of life and the exertion of effort to live in accordance with them. This is in stark contrast to actions that are motivated by the urge to evade distress or conform to societal expectations. Commitment, the devotion of oneself to the practice of achieving a better self.

Conclusions

The main goal of this work was to highlight the effectiveness of stoicism in today's practice. While it is still not yet fully implemented within clinical practice, meditation is. Stoicism has been alive and with multiple resurgences throughout history for a good reason. It teaches us to be mindful of our emotions and shortcomings while striving to become the best version of ourselves and live life to the fullest. In today's world where we are bombarded with information and chaos from every direction, more and more individuals are seeking to find some wisdom somewhere and because stoicism has such a great grasp in the current spotlight, it is also the first one to be taken seriously. The books are very easy to come by and accessible even online. It must be also noted that one must be careful not to fall into the trap of becoming an emotionless individual as the philosophy is sometimes often misportrayed.

The great news out of all our findings is that meditation has been increasingly proving science that it can have a great impact on the mental health and physical body. The art of letting go is something that is taught in almost every philosophy, be it buddhism, taoism, shintoism and so on. The main ideas of stoicism, the dichotomy of control and amor fati, which are also "mistakenly" practised within meditation, are the cogs for a better understanding of the self and the universe.

The fact that meditation has been proven to be such a powerful tool, only shows how much it can be used in stoic practices. Additionally, neuroscience has also proven many times that breathing exercises have a benevolent effect on the body and the mind.

Given the data found and how the resurgence of stoicism has increased the desire of knowledge and wisdom, we can be sure that its influence will spread to many other areas of psychotherapy and psychology as it did before as well.

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