

The Redwood Stoa

MINUTES FROM OCTOBER 16, 2016, SATURDAY

REDWOOD STOA GROUP MEETING

Met at Café Au Coquelet, University Avenue, Berkeley

10:30AM–12:45PM

Weather: Rainy

Attendees: James, John, Simon, Mark

This month's theme: *Attitude*

Open discussion

- Expectations (and attitude) can affect the performance of others in the world
 - One experiment indicated that positive expectations of rat performance in a maze significantly improved their actual performance
 - Visualizing the ideal as something to live up to
- Being mindful that death is going to happen in the future can improve our present
 - This transfers to being mindful of the present moment of the life that we have
 - Not spending time fearing the end of it all
 - Don't worry about the nothing; it's the something that's the starting point!
- What is "now"?
 - The 'waking day' is a useful measurement, one day's conscious hours of worries about the future
 - The 'moment' is a time worth meditating on, in order to cleanse the palette
- Living with chronic pain
 - Valuing the chance to live in the moment, to overcome pain and discomfort
 - It is a lot easier to live according to Stoic principles when you are not in pain
- Teaching others how to live Stoically
 - Epictetus: Don't share this philosophy with those who haven't been initiated
 - Marcus Aurelius: Don't worry, this will pass, one way or another:
 - Either the misery will turn to joy again, or you will die
- Helping others by empathizing
 - Taking on another's perspective
 - Helping another along their path, which they develop by their own efforts
 - Realizing humility and our own limits, that we cannot do all the work for another person
 - Being a positive example, as Seneca liked to be
- Difference between Stoicism and Christianity
 - Living for life now vs. living for life after death
 - Being a role model vs. active converting
 - Lots of similarities: community, ritual, gratitude
- Parenting and learning



The Redwood Stoa

- Using the sacred pause for the benefit of self as parent, of offspring as a person, and of that relationship
- How old do you have to be to be able to understand the bigger perspective a philosophy offers?
- Developing the ability to delay gratification, to parent oneself
- Learning through suffering, that even punishments can be a source of understanding
- Social evolution and Trump
 - Trump as a reflection of a large group of people, a demography that has persisted despite natural selection
 - Leaders can either be a reflection of the will of the people, or they can inspire the people to change; sometimes both
- Attitude is realizing what good or bad is in our own power
 - Conforming your attitude, desire, and will to Nature
 - Taking a lesson from our studies that we turn our work into enjoyable growth
 - Accepting the reality of the situation, not fighting it
- End-of-life attitudes
 - The suffering of someone who is approaching the end includes the suffering (and grieving) of those close by watching it happen
 - Fate dictates, yet one's attitude is up to each individual
 - If you have no unfinished business and are at peace, you can be ready for death
 - How you die is a statement
- Studies have shown that happy people are wired for touch!
- Taking cold showers, and Marcus Rufonius on preparing for hardship
 - Ben Franklin ate sparsely and slept on the floor one weekend to help him realize that he didn't have to make a lot of money at work, and so decide that he could live as a poor man.

Reports and Announcements:

- Meeting location will continue to alternate between Berkeley and San Francisco.
- Game night!
 - Saturday, October 29th, probably at 6:30pm, in Panera by the Fremont BART station.
- The Stoic Fellowship — Globally Connected – Locally Engaged
 - <http://www.stoicfellowship.com/>
 - Some representation at Stoicon in NY yesterday!
 - Finalized its founding document.
 - Time of primary activity will be from March to October.
- Stoic Pods (Scholae)
 - Starting with John and James as facilitators.
 - Canvassing the group's outlying members for interest has resulted in no responses.
 - John will send out a follow up solicitation.
 - The idea is to regularly send out a prompt, like a passage, resulting in a paragraph response.



The Redwood Stoa

- Potentially use medium.com to encourage comments from a select group
- The Stoic Registry of the New Stoa!
 - Where it all began!
 - www.newstoa.com
 - It's the modern repository for current Stoics.
- James is still working on our Stoic Introduction brochure.

Announcement of upcoming community service opportunities and events:

- Help Restore Huckleberry Park – Oakland Hills 9:30AM Saturday November 12th @ 6934 Skyline Blvd.
- Little Basin park work exchange; trail maintenance for free camping & meal (November 2016); for more information contact James!

Goals:

Group goals achieved—

- We met!
- We have contributed edits to group documents!
- We brought material for discussion!

Personal goals achieved—

- James has been on the exercise bike!

Next Month's Meeting:

- Next meeting will be in **San Francisco**, on **November 20th**
- Next month's theme: **Gratitude**

Join the Redwood Stoa! Now you can become an official member of the Redwood Stoa by adding your name through the following web form: <https://redwoodstoa.wordpress.com/join-the-redwood-stoa/>
It's pleasant to do and will help the group effectively plan future events!

