

## Key Takeaways From “The Essential Marcus Aurelius” by Jacob Needleman and John P. Piazza

- To remain always the same, during terrible pains
- Never to reveal that he was harboring anger or any other emotional reaction, but to be unaffected- yet at the same time displaying genuine affection
- Rule over oneself and never to be “carried away” by anything
- Conduct oneself in a gentle and dignified way
- The accomplishment of necessary duties without complaint
- To be strong and persistent in each case is characteristic of someone who has a perfected and unconquerable soul
- Nor can I be angry with my fellow man or hate him, for we have been made for cooperation
- Perform every action in your life as if it were your last, putting aside all aimlessness and emotional resistance to the choices of reason
- See how few things which a person must gain control of in order to live a peaceful and godlike existence
- Each person has only one life- and yours is almost finished; yet you still do not respect yourself. But locate your own happiness in the minds of others
- Those who do not follow the movements of their own soul will surely be unhappy
- People are ignorant of what is good and what is bad, which is no less a disability than the inability to distinguish white from black
- Above pains and pleasures
- The struggle not to be overthrown by our emotions
- It is in accordance with our nature to care for all people
- Simply and freely choose what is better and hold your ground
- Only make sure you have made a choice that is not dishonorable
- For the person who has chosen his own intelligence and inner spirit, and the sacred reveling in this kind of excellence does not play a tragic role, does not groan with lament, and has no need of either complete solitude or excessive company
- Live life neither chasing it nor fleeing from it
- Nothing is so productive of greatness of mind as the ability to examine systematically and truthfully each thing we encounter in life
- Rational beings have come into existence for the sake of each other
- Our lives are but a series of choices
- If you want to be content, occupy yourself with a few things
- Do what is necessary, and what reason requires of a creature who is made for society- do whatever it demands

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Taken directly out of the book

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- Do not think that living many years is any better than dying tomorrow
- This is not unfortunate. Indeed, to bear such things nobly is good fortune
- If something noble is to be done or said, do not judge yourself unworthy of doing or saying it
- The truly fortunate person has created his own good fortune through good habits of the soul, good intentions, and good actions
- I am calm; I place my trust in that which governs all things
- Nothing cheers the heart as much as the images of excellence reflected in the character of our companions
- He who acts wrongly harms himself
- Very often an unjust act is done by not doing something
- It is not the actions of others that trouble us but rather it is our own judgments