

“Channel Your Inner Stoic” – Seven Actionable Improvement Leadership Tips from Ancient Philosophy – Reflection Questions

- Tables are self-facilitated. We suggest you break up into smaller groups at your table of either pairs or threes.
- Pick one of the principles we have covered that most resonated with you and reflect (find 1-2 other people at table interested in same principle).

Please think about a current piece of improvement work and/or leadership challenge you have right now and how applying this principle might help you. We’ve provided some reflection questions to stimulate your thinking but **please don’t feel you have to stick with these – they are just a jumping off pad to get the discussion going.**

Breakout One – please pick one of the following three principles to reflect on:

<p>1. Focus on what you can control:</p> <p>Work with the system the way it is now. Accept the things that you can’t change – political, people, structural or resource constraints. Find ways to work smarter.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What or who are you trying to control that isn’t actually within your control?• Are you trying to master yourself or other people? <p>On the basis that all we actually control is what we do and say, and to a lesser extent what we think and feel:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What could you experiment with doing differently that might lead to a different outcome?• What could you experiment with saying/contributing differently that might lead to a different outcome?
<p>2. Take action and lead by example:</p> <p>Don’t put off fixing things. Don’t think that it is someone else’s problem. Everyone has responsibility for the system they are working on.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What are you putting off doing?• Where are you making excuses rather than taking responsibility?• Where and how can I be the most effective role model, right now?
<p>3. Be virtuous and put aside your ego:</p> <p>Name one situation you’ve ever been in that called for more ego – enough said!</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What if you stopped caring what others thought? What would that liberate you to do (or not do)?• Where might your ego be getting in the way of progress being made?• How can you spot it? What action can you take when you feel the ‘warning signs’?

Breakout Two – please pick one of the following two principles to reflect on (or feel free to pick another one from principles 1-3)

<p>4. <i>Practice resilience when faced with failure:</i></p> <p>Prepare for unexpected consequences – balancing measures. Be realistic about how long things will take and the real-world consequences.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where is perfectionism holding me back? • Am I staying the course, or being steered away?
<p>5. <i>Act with empathy and understanding:</i></p> <p>Everything is mutually interdependent.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where are my opinions part of the problem? • Can I stop thinking I already know and learn something here? • What can I learn from others – even people I don't like? • How can I work better with others? • What would change if I looked for other peoples good intentions?

Breakout Three – please pick one of the following two principles to reflect on (or feel free to pick another one from principles 1-5)

<p>6. <i>Eliminate toxic emotions and their effects:</i></p> <p>Though hope is not a strategy, hope and ambition are essential; aim for excellence and see obstacles as ways to new ideas and ways to better.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do I need to nip in the bud right now in terms of my thinking and how I appear to others? • What does what I am feeling say about <i>me</i> rather than <i>what I need to do to be helpful to others</i>? • What am I not seeing or hearing which is important here? • What would happen if I responded with kindness, and ready to release my agenda...no matter what? • Think of something you are struggling with right now – how can you use this obstacle as an opportunity?
<p>7. <i>Never blame others; shoulder the burden:</i></p> <p>Things are constantly more difficult than we expect. We control how we respond to challenge.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do I blame others without realising? • What is the harder choice I'm avoiding? • Why is it hard for me to shoulder the burden?

These questions are taken from or based on those found in “The Daily Stoic Journal – Ryan Holiday and Stephen Hanselman”