## Facilitator moves

**THE MAIN MOVE**

**"What do you mean by…?"** Words like *nature*, *reason*, and *virtue* meant something specific to the Stoics.

Then ask: **"Where does the article say that?"**

### When the room needs help

- **Silence.** Wait ten seconds. Ask, "Which sentence would you underline?"
- **Dominating.** "Let's hear from someone who hasn't spoken and wants to."
- **Lecturing.** "Can you put that in one sentence?"
- **Too technical.** "How does that show up in ordinary life?"
- **Didn't read it.** "Listen for one idea you'd like to read later."
- **Debating cosmology.** "What follows for how we live?"

**PROTECT THE TIME**

Give each question about eight minutes and start the practice by minute 65. If time is short, skip the reveal. Begin the close by minute 80 and finish at 90.

### When asked for your view

Offer it briefly: "Here's my tentative view. What would make you doubt it?" Keep the question open.

## Notes and follow-up

Key texts: Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy, "Stoicism"; Epictetus, *Discourses* 1.1.

# A Deeper Introduction

What did the Stoics actually believe, and why?

Today looks beneath the practices of the first six months to the beliefs behind them: how the Stoics joined logic, physics, and ethics into one way of life.

**THE MEETING**

**Date:** _____ **Place:** _____

**90 minutes of discussion** · Getting Started

## Before you begin

Silence your phone, set a quiet timer, and keep this guide open. Have the reading ready on a phone or printout, and a pen for your own notes.

## Open (10 minutes)

Welcome. Challenge ideas, give reasons, and share the floor. Passing is always fine, and a made-up example works as well as a personal one. If the group met last month, invite one brief report on the practice.

Ask the whole group: **"What idea from our first six meetings has stayed with you?"** Hear three or four brief answers.

## Read (10 minutes)

**READ ALOUD · INTERNET ENCYCLOPEDIA OF PHILOSOPHY, "STOICISM"**

Choose one or two key paragraphs from the article and read them aloud. It surveys Stoic logic, physics, and ethics; dense, but rich and readable.

IEP: Stoicism

Ask: **"Which sentence would you underline?"** Then move to the discussion.

| Open · 10 min | Read · 10 min | Discuss · 45 min | Practice · 15 min | Close · 10 min |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Welcome; what has stayed | Key passages aloud | Questions 1–5 | One sentence | One takeaway each |

## Discuss

**1. Which idea in the article surprised you most?**

**Probe:** What had you assumed before?

**2. The Stoics tied ethics to physics and logic. Does that change how you'd live?**

**Probe:** What would follow if nature were not orderly?

**3. Which idea from our first six meetings does the article help explain?**

**Probe:** What makes more sense now than it did then?

**4. What would you still push back on?**

**Probe:** Is your objection to the idea, or to how it's usually described?

**5. Which belief would make the most difference if you truly held it?**

**Probe:** What would you do differently this week?

**GOING DEEPER · IF THE ROOM IS READY**

The Stoics called the universe rational and providential. Can you practice Stoicism without that belief?

## Practice: one sentence

Start with this case, or use a volunteer's example if one is ready. A friend asks, "So what do the Stoics actually believe?" You have about a minute before the conversation moves on.

Work through the steps aloud. Take two or three answers at each step.

1. **Choose.** Which idea matters most to me? One idea, not a summary.
2. **Say it.** How would I put it in one plain sentence? Try it aloud.
3. **Test it.** What would a thoughtful skeptic ask next?

**IF TIME ALLOWS · THE REVEAL**

Your friend replies, "Isn't that just positive thinking?"

**Probe:** How would you answer in one more sentence?

*A good sentence is accurate, plain, and something you could live by.*

## Close

Return to the opening: **"What did the Stoics actually believe, and why?"** Take one or two answers. Invite each person to choose one occasion to try the practice; anyone may pass.

**UNTIL NEXT TIME · ONE SENTENCE**

Reread your one sentence each morning this week.

Thank members, confirm the next meeting, and finish on time. Next time: The Three Disciplines. **How do you practice Stoicism, not just think about it?**

After the meeting: send a short recap through your group's usual channel with one or two observations and the practice.