Facilitator moves

THE MAIN MOVE

"How would you know?" Test the book's claims against members' own experience.

Then ask: **"What happened when you tried it?"**

When the room needs help

- **Silence.** Wait ten seconds. Ask, "Which chapter stuck with you?"
- **Dominating.** "Let's hear from someone who hasn't spoken and wants to."
- **Didn't finish.** "Speak from what you read; partway is fine."
- **Book report.** "What did that change for you?"
- **Author worship.** "Where might he be wrong?"
- **Racing ahead.** "Part Two is next time; let's stay with the first half."

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: Massimo Pigliucci, *How to Be a Stoic*; Seneca, *On Anger* 3.36.

How to Be a Stoic, Part One

What does a modern Stoic life look like?

Today discusses the first half of Massimo Pigliucci's *How to Be a Stoic*, testing a modern account of Stoicism against our own experience.

THE MEETING

Date: _____ **Place:** _____

90 minutes of discussion · Reading Together

Before you begin

Silence your phone, set a quiet timer, and keep this guide open. Have your copy of the book handy, 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: **"How far did you get, and what kept you reading?"** Partway is fine; hear a sentence from each.

Share (10 minutes)

SHARE ALOUD · MASSIMO PIGLIUCCI, HOW TO BE A STOIC, FIRST HALF

Invite a few people to read one short passage that stood out. Those who haven't read the book can listen. Pigliucci presents modern Stoic theory and practice through Epictetus's three disciplines.

The book

Ask: **"What do these passages have in common?"** Then move to the discussion.

Open · 10 min	Share · 10 min	**Discuss · 45 min**	Practice · 15 min	Close · 10 min
Welcome; how far you got	A favorite passage each	Questions 1–5	An evening review	One takeaway each

Discuss

1. Which of Pigliucci's examples comes closest to your own life?

Probe: What would you have done in his place?

2. Where does a modern reading change what Epictetus meant?

Probe: Is the change an improvement or a loss?

3. Where do you disagree with the author?

Probe: What would he say back?

4. What would you ask him if he were here?

Probe: How do you think he'd answer?

5. What's one idea from the book you've already tried?

Probe: What happened?

GOING DEEPER · IF THE ROOM IS READY

Pigliucci presents Stoicism as open to anyone, whatever they believe about God. Can it be?

Practice: an evening review

Start with this case, or use a volunteer's example if one is ready. At the end of an ordinary day, you snapped at a driver, kept a promise you'd been dreading, and lost an hour you'd meant for a walk.

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

1. **Look back.** What happened today that tested me?
2. **Weigh.** Where did I act well, and where did I miss? Name it without excuses or blame.
3. **Resolve.** What will I do differently tomorrow?

IF TIME ALLOWS · THE REVEAL

Someone says, "When I review my day, I just feel worse."

Probe: How could the review be honest without becoming harsh?

Seneca ended his review and slept well: examine the day, then let it rest.

Close

Return to the opening: **"What does a modern Stoic life look like?"** Take one or two answers. Invite each person to choose one occasion to try the practice; anyone may pass.

UNTIL NEXT TIME · EVENING REVIEW

Each evening, ask where you practiced Stoicism today, and where you missed.

Thank members, confirm the next meeting, and finish on time. Next time: *How to Be a Stoic*, Part Two. **Which Stoic exercise is worth keeping?** Ask members to finish the book.

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