August Meeting Primer

An optional read-ahead and quick reference, about 10 minutes

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Guiding Question: What am I treating as something that must never happen?

At the Meeting

- **Today's reading: Epictetus, *Enchiridion* 2**. We'll bring it into discussion question 3.
- **The shared case:** A broken borrowed drill brings the wish to escape cost and displeasure into conflict with honesty. Everyone can reason from these facts, whether or not they have done the weekly practice.

What Am I Trying Never to Face?

You borrowed a friend's drill and broke it. You expect an awkward exchange and perhaps a repair bill. Letting your friend think the drill was already faulty begins to seem like an easy way out.

August asks what deserves our aversion. An unwelcome cost can deserve practical attention. The question is how much authority avoiding it has acquired over what we are willing to choose. If avoiding a friend's annoyance makes misleading them seem acceptable, the priority itself needs training.

Re-aiming means becoming more unwilling to choose dishonesty or injustice than to face the cost we hope to escape. We can still seek a fair repair arrangement and prefer a calm conversation. We are practicing a priority that can remain even if the conversation is uncomfortable.

The readings examine aversion, the value of virtue, and the time we have to use well. *For ancient texts, use any translation you like.*

Optional Reading (about 8 minutes)

1. **Epictetus, *Enchiridion* 2** (2 minutes) This is the passage we'll read together. Why does Epictetus direct aversion toward what is contrary to nature within our own choice?
2. **Epictetus, *Enchiridion* 48** (2 minutes) What changes in the progressor's attitude toward praise, criticism, and obstruction as aversion is redirected?
3. **Seneca, *On the Happy Life* 16** (3 minutes) What gives happiness its basis? How does Seneca distinguish the completely virtuous person from someone beginning to loosen dependence on fortune?
4. **Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations* 4.17** (1 minute) How does limited time affect the importance of living well now? What condition might keep a worthwhile priority on hold?

Think About

The shared case is enough to participate. We explore reasons and alternatives before using the application steps.

- What are you trying to prevent besides the repair bill?
- What would be worse to choose than facing this unwelcome cost?
- What would show that your aversion was being re-aimed?

Application at the Meeting

Application after discussion: Re-Aim Aversion. Use the steps once to test the understanding developed together.

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1. **Name.** What external cost do I want to avoid, and why?
2. **Compare.** What poor judgment or choice might I accept to escape it?
3. **Re-aim.** I would prefer to avoid this cost, but it would be worse to choose this wrong.
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Compare avoiding the repair bill and annoyance with avoiding an intentionally misleading account. Use Name → Compare → Re-aim once. The earlier fault revealed later should test honesty under uncertainty, rather than requiring the borrower to accept blame for damage they may not have caused.

The object and priority of aversion matter. Continuing to dread the conversation can coexist with understanding why deception is worse to choose. No physical discomfort exercise or confession is needed.

Key Terms

For reference during the meeting. No need to memorize these.

Aversion (*ekklisis*). Movement away from what appears bad. Notice both its object and the importance you give preventing it.

External cost. An unwelcome result, such as expense, criticism, or changed plans, that also depends on circumstances or others.

Dispreferred indifferents. Conditions reasonably avoided when appropriate that do not themselves constitute vice. Their practical importance remains.

Virtue and vice. Virtue accords with sound reason and our social nature. Vice is a poor use of judgment and choice, such as deception or injustice.

The Fundamental Rule. Recognizing our own use of choice as distinct from the results and responses we cannot determine.

Two Missions. The modern teaching exercise that gives character priority over an external undertaking. Re-Aim Aversion applies that priority to what we most want to avoid.

The Finite Horizon. A modern reflection on limited time that helps reconsider what deserves priority. It does not predict how long anyone will live.

Voluntary Discomfort. Chosen training in willingness to be without a familiar comfort. August's weekly course uses it as preparation for re-aiming aversion; this meeting requires no discomfort task.

The Discipline of Desire. Training what we seek and avoid. August's question is *What deserves my aversion, and what can I learn to face?*