

# Free argumentative essay on stoicism a lifestyle for happiness

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Although Chrysippus created the first account of Stoicism, the Greek Zeno is considered to be the founder of Stoicism, running his own school in Athens. The name “Stoicism” comes from the location where the members of the school gathered, the stoa poikilê, the porch (Baltzy). Perhaps the most appealing thing about Stoicism’s teaching is that a man can reach a state of perfection, infallibility, and therefore happiness.

Stoic philosophy is made up of three parts, including physical theory, logic, and ethics. The physical theory is complex, with God being seen as a material thing. The stoics see the material world as being made up of four elements, including fire, air, water, and earth. These elements combine to form “pneuma.” Pneuma is the sustaining force behind all existing things, including the human soul. Understanding the nature of pneuma is essential in later applying Stoic logic and ethics, the first step in attaining freedom and happiness.

Stoic logic was an important part of gaining the knowledge that would allow discernment between truth and fallacy. Once a concept of pneuma was attained, Stoic logic could then be applied to it. Stoic logic was very complex, and included everything from analyzing argument forms, rhetoric, grammar, propositions, perception, theories of concepts, and epistemology. In other words, all aspects of things must be considered, from a thing’s appearance, its different connotations in life and language, its changeability, and so on.

The ethics of Stoicism stem directly from gaining and understanding of the physical world and using logic to determine truth from fallacy. While the Epicureans held a simpler tenant, that a happy life is the one which is most

pleasant, the Stoic Cicero wrote “ that only what is noble or fine or morally good . . . is good at all, and that the possession (and exercise) of the virtues is both necessary and sufficient for happiness” (Baltzy). Chrysippus summarized the essence of Stoic ethics as “ living in accordance with experience of what happens by nature” (Baltzy). “ Assent” is a key factor in maintaining virtue. Through attainment of knowledge and an application of logic, a person can either assent to a virtuous thing, or withdraw assent from those things that are not virtuous. Therefore, Stoics believe that with great discipline in reasoning, error can altogether be avoided.

The ultimate accomplishment for a Stoic is to reach a level of knowledge, logic, and discipline to become a “ Sage.” Although this status was not impossible to attain, these rare individuals are the only ones who have enough discipline always to assent or not assent at the right times; in other words, this means a Sage never makes mistakes. Reaching the level of Sage implies happiness, for those that are not Sages are slaves, and only the wise man, the Sage, is truly free.

Finally, it is important to note that Stoicism is not a mere rhetorical means of debate or making arguments, it is a lifestyle in which thoughts and actions are carefully considered for their moral virtue. Today, people often believe the term “ stoical” means a person devoid of feeling, even happiness.

However, while it is true the Stoics of ancient times eschewed giving in to actions based on passion or strong emotions, the goal was to lead a life of virtue, prudence, justice, temperance, and courage which ultimately leads to happiness, something everybody desires.

## **Works Cited**

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