

# **Stoic Week 2016 Report Part 4: Feedback on Stoic Week and Overall Conclusions**

## **Tim LeBon**

### Introduction

This article is the fourth part of the report on Stoic Week 2016. The previously published parts of the report summarised the [demographics](#), the level of happiness and Stoicism at the [start of Stoic Week](#), the impact of taking part in [Stoic Week on well-being](#)

This report is divided into two sections:

- Participant feedback at the end of Stoic week on various parts of the materials<sup>1</sup> and their experience: specifically the
  - [Audio recordings](#),
  - [Daily Stoic exercises](#),
  - [How Stoic Week was helpful](#),
  - [How long participants spent on the materials each day](#),
  - [What formats participants used](#),
  - [What additional formats participants would like to be made available](#).
  - [Feedback on the questionnaires](#)
  - **[How can we improve Stoic Week?](#)**
  - [Other qualitative feedback](#)
- [Overall conclusions and recommendations](#)

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<sup>1</sup> To view the Stoic Week 2016 materials see

[http://modernstoicism.com/q\\_lesson\\_page/introduction-to-stoic-week/](http://modernstoicism.com/q_lesson_page/introduction-to-stoic-week/)

Registration may be required.

## Participant Feedback

### How useful were the audio recordings?

As in previous years participants were invited to listen to a number of audio recordings. Table 1 below shows participants' ratings of the recommended audio recordings. The early and morning meditations were part of the recommended daily routine, the Stoic Attitudes meditation was an optional additional resource and the View from Above was part of the programme for Sunday (Nature).

	How useful was this recording (on a scale of 0-5?)						Average Rating (out of 5)	No of people who listened to it (/294)
	0	1	2	3	4	5		
<b>Stoic Attitudes Meditation</b>	<b>2</b> (1.74%)	<b>1</b> (0.87%)	<b>6</b> (5.22%)	<b>17</b> (14.78%)	<b>45</b> (39.13%)	<b>44</b> (38.26%)	4	115
<b>Early Morning Meditation</b>	<b>2</b> (1.77%)	<b>2</b> (1.77%)	<b>7</b> (6.19%)	<b>21</b> (18.58%)	<b>42</b> (37.17%)	<b>39</b> (34.51%)	3.9	113
<b>Late Evening Meditation</b>	<b>2</b> (1.89%)	<b>2</b> (1.89%)	<b>4</b> (3.77%)	<b>18</b> (16.98%)	<b>45</b> (42.45%)	<b>35</b> (33.02%)	4	106
<b>View from Above</b>	<b>3</b> (2.70%)	<b>2</b> (1.80%)	<b>2</b> (1.80%)	<b>21</b> (18.92%)	<b>39</b> (35.14%)	<b>44</b> (39.64%)	4	111

**Table 1: Ratings of Audio recordings of Meditation Routine Audio Recordings, Stoic Week 2016**

All the recordings received good ratings, averaging around 4 out of 5. Similar numbers reported listening to each recording.

### How useful were the recommended Daily Stoic Exercises?

Table 2 below shows how highly participants rated each of the daily Stoic exercises as well as the number of people who completed each activity and their ratings of the exercises.

Daily Stoic Exercise	How useful was this exercise (leave blank if you did not do to it) on a scale from 0 (not at all useful) to 5 (extremely useful)?						Average Rating /5	No of people who did activity
	0	1	2	3	4	5		
<b>Stoic Self-Monitoring Record</b>	<b>1</b> <i>(0.74%)</i>	<b>1</b> <i>(0.74%)</i>	<b>13</b> <i>(9.56%)</i>	<b>30</b> <i>(22.06%)</i>	<b>57</b> <i>(41.91%)</i>	<b>34</b> <i>(25.00%)</i>	<b>3.8</b>	136 <i>(46%)</i>
<b>Monday: Life – writing your own meditations</b>	<b>1</b> <i>(0.46%)</i>	<b>1</b> <i>(0.46%)</i>	<b>12</b> <i>(5.56%)</i>	<b>37</b> <i>(17.13%)</i>	<b>84</b> <i>(38.89%)</i>	<b>81</b> <i>(37.50%)</i>	<b>4.1</b>	216 <i>(73%)</i>
<b>Tuesday :Control –What is in our control and wishing with reservation</b>	<b>0</b> <i>(0.00%)</i>	<b>1</b> <i>(0.42%)</i>	<b>7</b> <i>(2.92%)</i>	<b>23</b> <i>(9.58%)</i>	<b>113</b> <i>(47.08%)</i>	<b>96</b> <i>(40.00%)</i>	<b>4.2</b>	240 <i>(81%)</i>
<b>Wednesday: Mindfulness - Stoic Mindfulness and examining your impressions</b>	<b>0</b> <i>(0.00%)</i>	<b>0</b> <i>(0.00%)</i>	<b>6</b> <i>(2.50%)</i>	<b>25</b> <i>(10.42%)</i>	<b>115</b> <i>(47.92%)</i>	<b>94</b> <i>(39.17%)</i>	<b>4.2</b>	240 <i>(81%)</i>
<b>Thursday: Virtues: Virtue and values clarification</b>	<b>0</b> <i>(0.00%)</i>	<b>1</b> <i>(0.45%)</i>	<b>7</b> <i>(3.15%)</i>	<b>33</b> <i>(14.86%)</i>	<b>100</b> <i>(45.05%)</i>	<b>81</b> <i>(36.49%)</i>	<b>4.1</b>	222 <i>(75%)</i>
<b>Friday: Relationships: Relationships with other people and Society and the Circle of Hierocles</b>	<b>2</b> <i>(0.88%)</i>	<b>4</b> <i>(1.77%)</i>	<b>14</b> <i>(6.19%)</i>	<b>43</b> <i>(19.03%)</i>	<b>94</b> <i>(41.59%)</i>	<b>69</b> <i>(30.53%)</i>	<b>3.9</b>	226 <i>(77%)</i>
<b>Saturday: Adversity: Preparing for Adversity</b>	<b>0</b> <i>(0.00%)</i>	<b>2</b> <i>(0.91%)</i>	<b>10</b> <i>(4.57%)</i>	<b>37</b> <i>(16.89%)</i>	<b>92</b> <i>(42.01%)</i>	<b>78</b> <i>(35.62%)</i>	<b>4.1</b>	219 <i>(74%)</i>
<b>Sunday: Nature and the view from above</b>	<b>1</b> <i>(0.49%)</i>	<b>8</b> <i>(3.90%)</i>	<b>10</b> <i>(4.88%)</i>	<b>27</b> <i>(13.17%)</i>	<b>88</b> <i>(42.93%)</i>	<b>71</b> <i>(34.63%)</i>	<b>4</b>	205 <i>(69%)</i>

**Table 2: Ratings of Daily Stoic Exercises in Stoic Week 2016 (294 respondents)**

The activities which had the highest rating and were also the most popular were **Tuesday - What is in our control** and **Wednesday - Stoic Mindfulness**. It should be noted that all the activities had a high approval rating (3.8 or more out of 5). A large percentage of participants completed each activity.

## In which areas of life was Stoic Week most helpful?

	How much has Stoic Week helped in this area? (leave blank if not relevant)						Average Rating /5 (2015 rating in brackets)
	0	1	2	3	4	5	
<b>Relationships (friendships, getting on with people)</b>	2 (0.75%)	9 (3.38%)	23 (8.65%)	77 (28.95%)	100 (37.59%)	55 (20.68%)	3.6 (3.6)
<b>Becoming a better person</b>	0 (0.00%)	7 (2.60%)	12 (4.46%)	52 (19.33%)	112 (41.64%)	86 (31.97%)	4 (3.9)
<b>Becoming wiser</b>	1 (0.37%)	3 (1.12%)	17 (6.34%)	52 (19.40%)	111 (41.42%)	84 (31.34%)	3.9 (3.9)
<b>Knowledge of Stoicism</b>	2 (0.73%)	5 (1.82%)	15 (5.47%)	43 (15.69%)	87 (31.75%)	122 (44.53%)	4.1 (4)
<b>Other</b>	1 (2.44%)	0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)	4 (9.76%)	11 (26.83%)	25 (60.98%)	4.4 (4.3)
<b>Overall</b>	0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)	8 (3.46%)	36 (15.58%)	107 (46.32%)	80 (34.63%)	4.1 4

**Table 3: Ratings of how useful Stoic Week was in various areas of life?**

As shown in table 3 (above), Stoic Week achieved an 82% usefulness rating overall (4.1/5). The area where Stoic Week was judged to be of most use was Knowledge of Stoicism, followed closely by becoming a better person and becoming wiser. Despite the theme of Stoic Week 2016 being love, relationships still received the lowest rating (3.6, the same as in 2015). The “other” ways in which Stoic Week helped people included “accepting myself”, “removing worrying thoughts”, “reducing anxiety”, “structuring a daily practice” and “handling adversity”.

Some participants provided further information about exactly how Stoic Week helped, for example

### **Relationships**

“definitely pausing before speaking more!”

“Being less critical”

“Letting go of the effects of awful people”

“My wife and I did it together this year”

“I don't usually think much about relationships, so this was all kind of new.”

### **Becoming a Better Person**

“Less impulsive”

“More introspective”

“Has helped me to not be emotionally hijacked in various social scenarios, thus allowing me more focus to be a better person.”

## How long did participants spend on Stoic Week each day?

The average time spent by participants came out as an impressive 37 minutes (very similar to last year's figure of 36 minutes). As shown in Figure 1 (below), most participants reported spending over half an hour on Stoic Week each day. A significant number of people spent longer each day.

Minutes per day	%	No of people
Less than 5 minutes	12%	5
5 -15	12%	33
15 -30	28%	77
30-45	27%	73
35-60	13%	35
More than an hour	19%	51

**Table 4: How long did you spend on Stoic Week activities each day?**

## Which formats for the Stoic Week Handbook proved to be most popular?

As shown in table 5 (below), 39% of participants reported using the website, 36% of participants used the pdf booklet. whilst 10% used Kindle and 13% epub.<sup>2</sup> Compared with 2015, this shows a small but definite shift away from the pdf booklet towards epub and html.

Format	%	2015 comparison
1. HTML / Website (Modern Stoicism or other)	39	32
2. EPUB	13	8
3. PDF	36	49
4. MOBI (Kindle)	10	10
Other	2	2

**Table 5: What was the main format you used for accessing Stoic Week?**

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<sup>2</sup> Epub is an open standard used for example on iBooks on Apple devices and Google Books on Android.

## Which of these formats would be useful for you in accessing Stoic Week?

Format	%	2015 comparison
Android App	34	37
IOS App	37	36
Mobi format booklet	12	12
Epub format booklet	15	12
Other	2	2

**Table 6: Which formats would be useful for accessing Stoic Week?**

When participants were asked which formats would be useful, a sizeable number of people requested an App, with Android and IOS in roughly equal demand. About a third as many people would like to see a booklet made available in mobi or epub format. It is debatable as to how much added value an App would bring. One view is that what people really value is push notifications which could be provided in other ways (e.g. by text or email). Your further thoughts would be valued.

## Feedback on the Questionnaires

Some people appreciated having the feedback from the SABS questionnaire, which can provide pointers about areas of Stoicism to work on. There were also some criticisms as detailed below.

- It would be good to have a list of the stoic attitudes published online
- Found a few questions ambiguous. Also easy to game if you were so inclined.
- It was informative
- Personally would appreciate more distinction between what I BELIEVE vs what I PRACTICE. I believe in Stoicism but have a hard time practicing and some questions made it unclear whether it was referencing what I believe or what I actually practice.
- They are useful but SABS is far too long (though assume you are looking to select items that "work"). The positive and negative affect measures refer to the previous 4 weeks so will pick up feelings before Stoic Week even when measured afterwards - hence diluting the effect. For people (such as myself) who already practice Stoicism, I wouldn't expect Stoic Week to have much effect - so seems important to control for level of previous practice when analysing the effects.
- Pretty good questions related to Stoicism.
- Its interesting to gauge ones qualities and understanding
- Useful

There is room for refinement of the questions so they are in some cases clearer and less ambiguous. The SABS questionnaire is long but as the commentator realised, this is deliberate as we are in the process of working out which questions are most relevant. The final version to be used with the general public should be shorter and in more simple a language. The suggestion about controlling for previous level of Stoicism is a good one. This could be done by looking at the scores of those who were the least Stoic at the beginning of Stoic week and/or who had not done Stoic week or attempted to practice Stoicism before.

## How can we improve Stoic Week?

- Just keep doing it!
- Obviously, this is an introduction to living like a Stoic and in that regard it's very well done. But if someone actually wants to begin living like a stoic, they wouldn't try to do it all in one week. Folks should probably master one technique before moving on to incorporate another and a week is too short to do that. So I wouldn't change it per se, but just be more explicit about that.
- Maybe more focus on use of impressions, since that is such a major part of Stoicism. Like more training for how to do that throughout the week.
- Short video perhaps, on any of the topics -- more than one medium is always welcome. From participating twice previously in your stoic courses I was familiar in general with the idea of stoicism. So this time I picked three concrete things to work on before the stoic week even started (kind and fair towards others especially when challenged, focus on doing my duty without procrastination, and controlling my specific unhealthy food cravings). I was trying to relate all lessons and my actions around these three focal points. I believe I now have more awareness and am more in control when these situations present themselves. It is still a work in progress for me and I will continue working actively on these three areas after the week is done. I believe it is helpful to focus on no more than 1 to 3 concrete behaviours that one wants to change or fine tune in order to see real results and real change in ones attitudes... and then once a good progress was made, pick and tackle another one or two to work on.. Thank you for organizing stoic courses and stoic week: every time I understand and remember more.
- Would be nice to get German audio recordings
- There didn't seem to be much activity this year, just a few FB posts mixed in (and tending to get lost in) the FB group, which is already very lively. In previous years, the organisers led off specific discussions each day on the various platforms (FB, Stoicism Today blog) and there was also a bit of external media activity as I recall. I didn't have the same sense of overall structure this year.
- The main thing this year seemed to be Stoicon in NYC, which is obviously not accessible to most people (tho I'm biased, being UK based). It had a lot of publicity thanks to Massimo, so I was quite surprised that "only" 300 people attended (and mostly men). The London mini-conference this year was a good idea but sold out fast.
- So... for next year I would put more emphasis on the week itself and the daily content of the handbook. Would also prefer a separate discussion place to FB (or a dedicated FB group for the week). Also I'd suggest more local initiatives - this was done to some extent and it looks like more is planned for the future. For the conference(s), would be great to have at least audio (and slides posted online) from all sessions.
- Emphasize the broad appeal of Stoicism by promoting the philosophy to groups that may not otherwise consider it relevant (women, non-whites, working class). Consider adaptations accessible to people whose reading skills in English might be limited.
- Include a proforma for each days activities, like a log book to complete
- The theme wasn't strongly emphasized this year, but I'm not sure that matters too much. I use it as a "booster shot" for practice each year, and would probably do it even if nothing changed.
- A daily email prompting the work would be awesome, but I realize that would be a lot to set up.
- Just improve the presentation of the PDF version of the handbook. It is not very friendly to read. Some sentences are also too long and hard to understand for a new comer to Stoicism. Please simplify it, and make the content more presentable, like having better fonts, having good margins, and so on. Thank you.
- I would like a google chat with other learners during Stoic week.

- Keep website up to date. Create more of a visible community. The purported theme was not referenced much nor visibly relevant in any particular way. You should consider stressing on one or few specific practices for the whole week, e.g. the Monday theme of thinking and writing about qualities of people would have been a great exercise to continue for 2-3 days.
- Could there be an audio version of the handbook as well, I found the audio recordings to be really relaxing and easy to follow?
- I was expecting regular emails during the week, at least to remind me. or mention of what was going to be happening each day. I did end up missing most of it simply because I forgot even though I read some of the handbook etc.
- I suspect you have good reason for holding stoic week at this time of year, but this is not a great time for uni students living in Australia. Stoic week was in the last weeks of semester, so I had no time to do anything much other than assignments. Right now I'm filling this form in during a break from writing an essay on Foucault.
- Make the registration / login procedure more user friendly - maybe have a process bar of steps at the top, like when you're booking a flight.
- I think a quick overview document that can be read or shared beforehand could help get others interested in joining. Or some quick FAQs so you can explain to other people what it is, perhaps suggested tweets to spread the word. I like the interviews in the run up but they seemed to all come at the same time - perhaps a more spread out social media plan would be helpful rather than feeling I had to read everything as the week was starting.
- the website was difficult to use and I felt that it would be better to have a stand-alone microsite for Stoic week.
- Have a space that you could interact with others on the course that wasn't so public i.e. Facebook.

### **Other Qualitative Feedback provided**

Participants were also given the opportunity to make other comments and suggestions about Stoic Week. Below is a sample of feedback provided

- Honestly, I thought it was excellent
- This was only my second Stoic week but so far ...the best. The week's topic and daily meditations were perfect for me and greatly advanced my knowledge and practice of Stoicism. Great job!
- Activities could be in a list and more concise to avoid page turning and missing things. A checklist could help.
- Great Handbook. I really liked the 2013 version better however. Please italicize the quotes from the authors or off set them in quotes.
- I'd like to see the texts for reflection changed up a bit. It's all Marcus, which I'm assuming was intentional, but as the week is really an introduction to Stoicism, it might serve to work in Epictetus and Seneca a bit more.
- I think "Today's Summary" should be at the beginning of the day. I Monday I was completely confused.
- The text on the kindle version was very small -- I had to increase the Kindle text size from the second smallest to the fifth smallest for it to be the same size as the text in most books are on the 2nd smallest size.
- Love this event. Cannot wait till next year. The event helped me cope with an especially difficult stretch
- Very impressed. Gets better every year.
- Very useful for me. I'm not well-lettered and this was a good resource for me.

- Three of us got together every evening to reflect and discuss the topics. We are also continuing into the week after and may even continue for another week. One week doesn't seem to be enough and one topic a day is a lot. I'd suggest this be a 7 week course where each topic is used per week.
- Getting emails and or triggers would stimulate participation
- Lovely book. I had it printed, and will be repeating the Stoic Week independently a few times.
- I learned the distinction between stoic practices, as against just reading about stoicism.
  
- **Thank you all who worked on this! You have done much good to me, thank you!**
- **Thank you for the course. It was interesting to do it a second time**
- **Some of the quotes about god and the gods i did not find useful**
- **Thank you! This was fun and informative. You've done me a great deal of good.**
- **I am thankful to you who organize this event, and to my son that gave me the link to the Stoic week.**
- **Thank you!**
- **THANKS--i AM AN OLD AGE PENSIONER -PLEASE INDICATE WHAT AN APPROPRIATE AMOUNT WOULD BE TO SUPPORT YOUR PROJECT**
- **thank you for your good work, it is inspiring and (may be) it helps to change the wordl (amor fati)**
- **I now have a routine the helps me a lot with the help of this course. I wake every morning meditate for 5 minutes, read a stoic writing (usually Markus ), contemplate what it means and how I may apply it during my day. Then at night I meditate for 10 minutes again. I'd like to add journaling to my nightly routine as well. Thank you!**
- **Thank you.**
- **This is a great program, and the structure helped a great deal in practicing Stoicism. Many kudos for organizing it!**
- **Thank you for offering this free to anyone who finds it. I've been reading about stoicism and different authors and found a way through use of the stoic week practices to implement ideas from both the blog and the writings of ancient stoics. It helped me adapt and adopt my own personal techniques in my daily life. I look forward to next year! Although, I may start the month long one that I've seen.**
- **Thank you so much for all your hard work and time. I like to tell myself a job is worth doing if it helps even one person. And stoic week helped me make more sense of my studies of stoic philosophy.**
- **Stoic week is fantastic, please keep it up. I'm pushed for time filling this out (timed computer) so I can't gush too much, but it's really useful and allowed me to put my knowledge into practice.**
- **Great job**
- **Just wanted to thank the organizers and anyone that helped bring SW together. I'm facing certain challenges and was feeling very anxious and depressed. Therefore, was not going to enroll as I did not think I would give it the attention it deserves but I did at the last minute, thinking this is precisely the time to make use of good Stoic practices. I'm so grateful And joyful that I did. I'm still facing the same challenges but making better decisions, with a more optimistic outlook, feel stronger in myself and my anxiety has been dramatically reduced. Just by answering the questionnaires I can see I change in my attitude and outlook on life. I love the structure of the handbook with daily quotes, meditations and exercises and I'm planning on continuing it for every week. Following the progress and questions of others on the Facebook group also helped a lot. Looking forward to the next one :) Thank you!**

- I wish there were Stoic Meetup Groups on Meetup.Com, don't seem to be any in North America. I might have to start one! Are there any frameworks or guidelines for Stoic Meetups? Thanks, this was my first one. I thought it was great.
- Many thanks that you provided the material! Very helpful and as mentioned above very well translated [into German].
- I look forward to Stoic Week each year for personal reasons and that I love using it as an extra credit assignment for my ancient Greek and Roman philosophy course, which I teach every fall. Keep it up!
- Excellent experience!
- Great job, thanks for all your efforts to bring it to everyone!
- I have been reading everything I can find about Stoicism and been trying to practice it for the past two years. I teach Lifelong Learning classes at a University. I was asked to teach another class and since I was studying Stoicism, I decided to teach a class on Stoicism (although I didn't really feel qualified). I told my students about Stoic week and a few of them read the handbook and listened to the recordings. They told they they found it very helpful in better understanding Stoicism and that it cleared some things up for them. For me, since I was already doing the practices, I found it to be more of a reinforcement of what I was already doing, which is also helpful. Anyway, thanks for putting Stoic Week together.
- I greatly enjoyed participating in Stoic Week, the morning meditations and evening meditations were excellent. I truly think it helped me become a better, happier, more content person, at least made me less negative and less angry or upset. I plan on continuing trying to live like a stoic, and I look forward to Stoic Week next year. Perhaps if I keep it up, I won't need stoic week, as my life will be one continuous stoic week. Either way, thank you to all who organized this and did all the work to make this happen.
- Coincidentally I was diagnosed with a rare form of cancer early October. Stoicism helped me to prepare for major surgery - my attitude astounded me to be honest. I contemplated my own death and it had a hugely calming effect on me. I am recovering slowly and stoic week was tailored made for me - I had the time to digest the different chapters and trust me lying awake in a hospital bed at night concentrates the mind wonderfully. I think you should emphasize more the importance of the morning meditation. This is key to good training. I had printed out the booklet as no wifi in hospital (just occasional use of iPhone) so didn't listen to recordings so can't comment on them. But a huge thank you for the effort, preparation and hard work put into the week. I am truly grateful.
- I am not sure if this falls under the umbrella of Stoicism but I had a sort of 'mystical' experience during my Thurs evening meditation. While thinking, the realization that first 'It is in my nature to seek wisdom', followed by 'It is in my true nature to live with wisdom' came into my head. It was a very emotional experience, very positive, but not what I expected. I'm not sure what to think of it, although I do value it.
- I found that while I was participating, I was a lot less stressed out by things that I had no control over, for example our horrid traffic. By the end of the week, I was swearing at other drivers a lot less and reminding myself that getting angry won't change a thing. I was a lot more patient and gracious in other aspects of my life, too. I hope we still have access to the online material, including the audio recordings, as for some reason they did not download. I also find the Self-Monitoring record really helpful, and something I will continue to use. I will likely repeat the week a few more times.
- I'm not much of a stoic but I do like to attempt to be. Stoic week gives me a most welcome kick-start each year, almost a mini retreat. I do find it difficult to keep focus on the whole week but this year I have managed to keep on track and follow most of the exercises. I don't know whether this is due to a change in my own

**circumstance or demonstration of the cumulative positive effect of the exercise but I favour the latter explanation.**

- **I would have liked to have joined in more with other participants but was very much put off by the lack of anonymity (does this make me a poor stoic? ; ) ). Closed groups on Facebook for example would have been much more comfortable for me.**
- **Overall I would like to sincerely thank the team that work hard to bring us Stoic Week. I do believe it's having an effect on my thinking and I welcome that. I look forward to participating next year.**
- **Just a big thank you for making this week happen**
- **I would like to take this opportunity to pass on my thanks, gratitude and appreciation to all the people involved in setting up this excellent course. I found it a fantastic thought provoking resource and it allowed me to gain some knowledge and get a better understanding of Stoicism that has now opened up my mind to look at things differently that hopefully will help make me a better person in this world. I need to continue to expand and deepen my knowledge on this subject and practically apply what works for me on a consistent basis.**
- **Thank you for this ongoing service to the Stoic community! Very helpful!**
- **The nightly evaluation of my day really helped me to get in front of some the behaviors that have been hampering me and ultimately effecting my usefulness and self esteem. Time wasters mostly. It also helped me to see that I have focusing to much attention and energy on things that are outside of my control, especially other peoples opinions.**
- **Thank you for taking the time to create this platform for people to be able to get an opportunity at self - betterment.**

## Overall Conclusions and Recommendations

Drawing together the above feedback with the findings report in the first 3 parts of these report, the most significant findings from Stoic Week 2016 are as follows:

- Demographics.
  - 77% of respondents were participating in Stoic Week for the first time.
  - The ratio of males to females was 66% to 33%
  - Over 43% of respondents were from USA
  - Less people completed the initial set of questionnaires compared to 2015 (1798 down from 2503) although the numbers registering for Stoic Week actually increased (3365 up from 3080)
- Analysis from initial set of questionnaires taken at the start of Stoic Week
  - There is a correlation coefficient of .4 between Stoicism and well-being. Given the size of the sample (nearly two thousand), the chances of this association being accidental is less than one in a million.
  - Stoicism does go with positive emotions as much as with the reduction of negative emotions.
  - There is only a weak association between stated knowledge of Stoicism and average well-being (a correlation coefficient of about .1), whereas it's nearly four times higher for people who practise Stoicism.
  - The over 55s were the most Stoic and in general the older people are, the more Stoic they are.
  - The Americas win the contest for most Stoic geographic areas The UK (stiff upper lip notwithstanding) trails the field.
  - SABS with by far the strongest association with well-being (however it is measured) item 22, asking about ruminating and worrying. Stoic virtues also do very well, with courage, practical wisdom, compassion, self-control and fairness all scoring highly. Cognitive distancing (item 24) scores well, as does using the Stoic Ideal Advisor and items to do with seeing humanity as connected and Stoic Cosmopolitanism.
- Analysis from second set of questionnaires taken at the end of Stoic Week
  - For the fourth year running, taking part in Stoic Week led to a significant increase in well-being on all measures. The results were remarkably similar to 2015.
  - The SABS items that showed the biggest increase, cognitive distancing and reducing rumination, are both significantly related to improvements in mental health as well as well-being.
  - Those who change most in their degree of Stoicism changed substantially more in terms of well-being than those who changed least in their degree of Stoicism. This supports the hypothesis that the change in well-being is largely attributable to participant's being more Stoic.
  - A cause for concern is the reduced number of participants completing the questionnaire after Stoic Week.
- Summary of qualitative feedback
  - Most participants gave a high rating to experience overall and the materials used, including the audio recordings and daily exercise.
  - Participants additionally reported Stoic Week to be helpful in helping them to be better people, to become wiser, with relationships and to become more knowledgeable about Stoicism.
  - There was a slight shift away from using the pdf booklet towards using other formats

- There were some specific suggestions to improve formatting and structure of the handbook
- There was a desire expressed to be notified more on a daily basis during Stoic Week
- Some people would like the opportunity to interact more within a more private network group
- Many participants were very grateful for the opportunity to take part in Stoic Week and described the ways in which they had benefited

Pulling these ideas together, there follows some recommendations for future Stoic weeks

- Repeat the experience - a lot of people took part and benefited
- There is a case for doing something different so that people who participated in previous years will learn something new. Perhaps a Stoic handbook based on Seneca could be developed
- There is a good case for longer experiences of Stoicism than one week. The SMRT course already addresses this, and this should be run again and incorporate the same research that is used for Stoic week.
- In addition, it would be desirable to do a follow-up (e.g. 3 or 6 months) to see if the benefits have been maintained or not. This would be particularly relevant for the SMRT course.
- There was an issue this year with some people not receiving notifications on a daily basis. In fact, mails were sent automatically, so it is not clear why they were not all received. Perhaps there was an issue with spam filters which needs to be addressed. Perhaps there are other “push notification” options available from WordPress other than email.
- People should be encouraged to use formats other than pdf unless printing, as pdf is designed mainly for printing.
- Regarding the questionnaires, there was a much reduced number of people filling in the questionnaires at the end of the week. This may have been partly due to people not receiving daily emails, or perhaps for other unknown reasons. There is a case for ensuring we can notify people about filling in the questionnaire, which we cannot do at present if they provide only a pseudonym and have not registered with Stoicism Today.
- The SABS questionnaire should be continued to be developed and the feedback provided to people is thought useful. However there is scope for the questions to be less ambiguous in some cases.
- Some thought should be given to how to make Stoic week more known or more appealing to those who do not take part so much currently
- As technology changes, there will be scope for integrating new opportunities (e.g. private social media groups, videos, push notifications so people can be reliably informed each day) and these should be investigated