

# Are Stoics Virtuous? Are they still Happy? Stoic Week 2017 Report part 2 (of 4) Tim LeBon

## Introduction

A strong positive relationship between Stoicism and well-being has been documented in [previous Stoic Week reports](#). This year the emphasis has shifted to quantifying the relationship between Stoicism and positive character traits. To this end we asked the thousands of people who took part in Stoic Week to complete the CIVIC character scale in addition to the four scales previously used. (2860 people filled in questionnaires measuring degree of Stoicism (SABS 3.0), Life Satisfaction, Positive and Negative Emotions and Flourishing. In addition, 820 people filled in the CIVIC questionnaire which gave us a large enough sample to draw meaningful conclusions.) This article analyses the findings from analysing questionnaires from the *start* of Stoic week. Future reports will discuss the effect of *taking part* in Stoic Week (part 3), summarise participant feedback and suggest future directions of research.

### Stoicism and Positive Character Traits

If you are a Stoic, you would certainly hope that there is a strong relationship between being a Stoic and having positive character traits. For the Stoics, *eudaimonia* is based on possessing core positive character traits called “virtues”, particularly the four cardinal virtues of wisdom, courage, justice and self-control (or moderation). If you are a Stoic you might well also *expect* there to be a strong relationship between being Stoic and having the virtues. However, to my knowledge this is the first time anyone has tried to show that this is actually the case.

[Peterson and Seligman’s VIA Classification](#) (Peterson and Seligman, 2004) is the most well-known contemporary measure of character strengths and virtues. After a comprehensive literature review, they arrived at 6 virtues and 24 more concrete traits they term “character strengths”. However Ng et al. (2017), whilst valuing the contribution of Peterson and Seligman, have proposed and validated an alternative measure, the CIVIC scale, which they argue provides “[a] comprehensive taxonomy of virtuous character complements existing personality models, giving a fuller account of what a person is by elucidating what a person can aspire to be” (Ng et al, 2017). We chose to use the CIVIC scale for our research this year and are grateful to its co-author, Vincent Ng for his co-operation and assistance.

The CIVIC Scale identifies 29 positive character traits (similar to Peterson and Seligman’s “strengths”) and 8 character cores (similar to virtues).

Table one below these character traits, along with an example item to illustrate its meaning.

Character Trait	Example Item
Gratitude	I appreciate the things I have.
Love	I care deeply about certain people in my life.
Appreciation of Beauty	I appreciate beautiful things.
Creativity	I am able to generate creative solutions to problems.
Curiosity	I am intrigued by new ideas.
Love of Learning	I enjoy the process of learning.
Hope	I remain hopeful about the future despite challenges.
Persistence	I am not a quitter.
Zest	I have great enthusiasm for life.
Humour	I frequently cause other people to laugh.
Leadership	I am good at helping people function well as a group.
Perspective	I am good at directing others toward wise actions.
Social Perceptiveness	I understand the motives of people around me.
Teamwork	I am considered a good "team player".
Authenticity	I don't pretend to be someone I'm not.
Bravery	I do not back down from doing the right thing even when people will disagree with me.
Humility	I try not to talk too much about my successes.
Trustworthiness	I am very dependable.
Carefulness	I always consider potential risks before taking actions.
Emotional Awareness	I have a good understanding of my motives and feelings.
Self-Control	I can resist temptation.
Forethought	I thoughtfully consider the potential long-term consequences of my actions.
Meaning/Purpose	I feel a strong sense of meaning in my life.
Spirituality	I feel connected to a higher power.
Fairness	I treat people fairly even when it does not benefit me.
Forgiveness	I can sometimes give a person a second chance when they have hurt me.
Kindness	I frequently help people in need.
Openness to Evidence	I am willing to revise my beliefs in light of new evidence.
Perspective-Taking	I am good at listening to people who have different opinions than me.

**Table 1 CIVIC's 29 Character Traits with example items**

Before you go any further, please take a moment to answer these 3 questions.

1. How many of these 29 character traits do you think are positively associated with Stoicism?
2. Which of these 29 traits do you think is *most* positively associated with Stoicism?
3. Which of the 29 traits do you think is *most negatively* associated with Stoicism?

I asked a number of experts on Stoicism these 3 questions. The consensus was as follows:-

1. Most if not all of these character traits will be positively associated with Stoicism.
2. Emotional Awareness is likely to be most positively associated with Stoicism. Fairness, Self-Control, Perspective-Taking, Gratitude, Bravery, Meaning/purpose and Persistence should also feature well.
3. Probably none are negatively related to Stoicism, though perhaps spirituality and humour might not be so closely linked as others.

Table 2 summarises our findings, ranked in order of positive association with Stoicism (as measured by the SABS scale).

Rank	CIVIC Character Trait	Correlation with Stoicism
1	Zest	0.45
2	Gratitude	0.43
3	Persistence	0.42
4	Bravery	0.41
5	Emotional Awareness	0.40
6	Forgiveness	0.40
7	Kindness	0.38
8	Fairness	0.38
9	Perspective-Taking	0.38
10	Self-Control	0.38
11	Perspective	0.36
12	Openness to Evidence	0.36
13	Hope	0.35
14	Forethought	0.35
15	Meaning/Purpose	0.34
16	Spirituality	0.32
17	Authenticity	0.32
18	Love of Learning	0.32
19	Leadership	0.31
20	Trustworthiness	0.31
21	Teamwork	0.29
22	Social Perceptiveness	0.28
23	Appreciation Of Beauty	0.25
24	Curiosity	0.23
25	Carefulness	0.23
26	Love	0.22
27	Creativity	0.22
28	Humility	0.22
29	Humour	0.10

Table 2: CIVIC character traits and their correlation coefficient with Stoicism (SABS total)

We found that

1. All of 29 positive character traits in CIVIC are positively associated with Stoicism
2. Zest is the character trait most positively associated with Stoicism
3. Trick question, they are all positively associated! Humour is the least positively associated but note that even the lowest ranking trait is still positively associated. This means that the caricature of the Stoic as dour and humourless is *not* supported. The more Stoic you are, the more humorous you are likely to be.

## Stoic Zest?

So the Stoic experts got it right, mostly. Stoics are likely to possess more than the average person of all of these positive traits, and emotional awareness is amongst those most highly correlated with being Stoic. However none of the experts suggested “zest” would be strongly associated with Stoicism. This finding merits closer examination.

What exactly is meant by “zest”? The [dictionary](#) defines zest as “great enthusiasm and energy”. The CIVIC scale identifies zestful individuals using these 12 questions :-

- I typically look forward to each new day.*
- I feel excited to start each day.*
- I am brimming with excitement about life.*
- I always look forward to what the day brings.*
- I have great enthusiasm for life.*
- I eagerly anticipate each day's activities.*
- I try to live each day to the fullest.*
- I typically feel ready to take on what life has in store for me.*
- I hardly ever feel half-hearted about my activities.*
- I typically don't dread starting my daily activities.*
- I generally approach my daily activities with energy.*
- I have enthusiasm for my daily activities.*

These questions seem to capture very well both enthusiasm and energy, perhaps with a touch of joy and resilience thrown into the mix. Significantly, zest has been identified as one of the more important character traits, being positively associated with life satisfaction, positive emotion, engagement and flow and meaning (LeBon (2014), p. 71).

We have, of course, identified a correlation, rather than a causal connection, so we cannot say whether being Stoic causes great enthusiasm and energy, or vice-versa, or perhaps something else causes both Stoicism and zest. The next report, on the impact of Stoic week, may shed some light on whether Stoicism plays a causal role in increasing zest. If so, this would be a significant and novel finding.

# Stoicism and the Virtues

CIVIC also measures 8 broader character qualities, which they call “character cores”, which have a number of constituent character traits, as described in table 3 below:

<b>Character Core (and its meaning)</b>	<b>Character Trait</b>
<b>Appreciation</b> <i>Savouring and valuing life</i>	Gratitude Love
<b>Intellectual Engagement</b> <i>Proactive intellectual and emotional engagement with the world</i>	Appreciation of Beauty Creativity Love of Learning Curiosity
<b>Fortitude</b> <i>Determination marked by the optimism and energy needed to support staying power</i>	Hope Persistence Zest
<b>Interpersonal Consideration</b> <i>Capacity to get along with others well</i>	Humour Leadership Perspective Social Perceptiveness Teamwork
<b>Sincerity</b> <i>Resolute dependability and genuineness</i>	Authenticity Bravery Humility Trustworthiness
<b>Temperance</b> <i>Controlling short-term impulses to attain long-term goals</i>	Carefulness Emotional Awareness Self-Control Forethought
<b>Transcendence</b> <i>Connection to something larger than the self</i>	Meaning/Purpose Spirituality
<b>Empathy</b> <i>Balanced and benevolent discernment</i>	Fairness Forgiveness Kindness Openness to Evidence Perspective-Taking

Table 3: CIVIC character cores and their constituent character traits

Some of these CIVIC character cores clearly bear some resemblance to the Stoic cardinal virtues, though this resemblance should not be overstated. All of these character cores were found to be quite strongly and positively with Stoicism.

Rank	CIVIC Character Core	Association with Stoicism
1	EMPATHY	0.51
2	FORTITUDE	0.48
3	TEMPERANCE	0.46
4	SINCERITY	0.43
5	APPRECIATION	0.39
6	INTERPERSONAL CONSIDERATION	0.37
7	TRANSCENDENCE	0.35
8	INTELLECTUAL ENGAGEMENT	0.34

Table 4: CIVIC character cores and their correlation coefficient with being Stoic, as measured by SABS 3.0

Stoicism, then appears strongly positively associated with each positive character traits as well as every broader character cores (virtue). There remains the question of whether Stoicism is strongly linked with virtues in general. A correlation coefficient of .6 was found to exist between SABS scores (measuring the degree of Stoicism) and an overall measure of character or virtue (as measured by adding up a participant's CIVIC item scores). This compares favourably with the correlation coefficients for life satisfaction, emotions and flourishing, which in past years have been found to be .37, .42 and .46 respectively. It may be fairly objected that this high correlation (.6) is inflated because the SABS scale already includes some items that measure virtues (for example item 27 measures courage). For this reason, the correlation coefficient was recalculated using an adjusted SABS scale that removed 10 items that relate to virtues and so might result in double counting (see Appendix A for details). Even using this adjusted SABS scale, a correlation coefficient of .55 was found to exist, confirming the strong link between Stoicism and virtue.

A final question worth asking is this: which element of Stoicism is most associated with virtue? This can be answered by calculating the correlation coefficient between each SABS item and the total CIVIC score. Table 5 below lists the results. Items connected with Stoic Mindfulness (Items 23 and 24) as well as contemplation of the sage (item 19) score well. The highly correlated SABS items may be qualities to emphasise when teaching Stoicism if we want people to be more virtuous, although once again a causal relationship is at this stage speculative.

<b>SABS Item No</b>	<b>SABS Statement (Items in <i>italics</i> are reverse scored)</b>	<b>Correlation with total CIVIC score</b>
23	I make an effort to pay continual attention to the nature of my judgments and actions.	0.44
27	I do the right thing even when I feel afraid.	0.43
24	When an upsetting thought enters my mind the first thing I do is remind myself it's just an impression in my mind and not the thing it claims to represent	0.43
19	I try to contemplate what the ideal wise and good person would do when faced with various misfortunes in life.	0.42
31	When making a significant decision I ask myself "What really matters here?" and then look for the option that a good and wise person would choose.	0.42
28	I care about the suffering of others and take active steps to reduce this	0.41
26	Recognising that only virtue matters enables me to face life's transience and my approaching death	0.39
25	Viewing other people as fellow-members of the brotherhood of humankind helps me to avoid feeling anger and resentment	0.39
14	The cosmos is a single, wise, living thing	0.39
18	I am good at controlling my urges and impulses when that's better for me in the long run [this item is excluded from SABS total as items 32 and 33 better measure a specifically <i>Stoic</i> concept of self-control]	0.38
11	I think about my life as an ongoing project in ethical development	0.37
13	I consider myself to be a part of the human race, in the same way that a limb is a part of the human body. It is my duty to contribute to its welfare.	0.37
17	<i>If I was honest I'd have to admit that I often do what is enjoyable and comfortable rather than doing what I believe to be the right thing</i>	0.36
22	<i>I spend quite a lot of time dwelling on what's gone wrong the past or worrying about the future</i>	0.35
5	Peace of mind comes from abandoning fears and desires about things outside our control.	0.34
37	<i>There's no overall plan to the universe.</i>	0.33
15	I try to anticipate future misfortunes and rehearse rising above them	0.32

21	I treat everybody fairly even those I don't like or don't know very well	0.32
33	My beliefs about what is best determine my wishes and motives	0.32
1	As long as you have the right attitude, you can lead a good life even in the worst of conditions, such as being tortured or being held prisoner	0.31
32	I sometimes have thoughts or urges it would be unwise to act on, but I usually realise this and do not act on them	0.29
16	I often contemplate the smallness and transience of human life in relation to the totality of space and time.	0.28
2	It doesn't really matter what other people think about me as long as I do the right thing	0.27
10	Virtue (or human excellence) consists in perfecting our rational nature, through cultivating wisdom	0.27
12	To flourish as a human being all you need is rationality and a good character; things like money, status, health and good luck are not essential	0.20
8	The only things truly under our control in life are our judgements and voluntary actions	0.19
6	<i>If bad things happen to you, you are bound to feel upset</i>	0.18
29	<i>Happiness depends on things going well for me and my family</i>	0.15
4	<i>It's more important to feel good than to do good.</i>	0.15
20	<i>It is possible to control how other people behave towards you</i>	0.12
35	<i>My good name and what other people think about me matters a lot.</i>	0.10
30	<i>We have to accept that some things that matter a lot for our happiness are outside our control</i>	0.09
9	<i>You should go wherever your emotions leads you</i>	0.02
3	<i>It can sometimes be a good thing to get angry when people are really rude, selfish or inconsiderate</i>	0.02
7	<i>What is called "morally right" and "morally wrong" is in reality just a matter of personal or cultural opinion</i>	0.00
36	<i>I am upset when I hear of the suffering of others</i>	-0.18
34	<i>When making an important decision I try to predict the consequences of my actions and aim to balance the long-term happiness of myself and others</i>	-0.37

Table 5: SABS items and their correlation coefficient with total CIVIC score

## Stoicism and Well-Being

The relationship between Stoicism and well-being has been well documented in previous reports. This section summarises the findings and answers questions that interested readers are likely to ask.

Q: In the past you've found significant correlations between Stoicism (as measured by SABS) and the various well-being measures. Has this been replicated?

A: Yes, indeed it has.

	<b>Flourishing</b>	<b>Emotions (SPANE)</b>	<b>Life Satisfaction (SWL)</b>	<b>Average well-being</b>
<b>STOIC ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOURS</b>	0.47 (.46)	0.43 (.42)	0.36 (.37)	0.48 (.42)

**Table 6 Overall association of Stoic Attitudes and Behaviours with various scales**

Table 6 above gives the overall correlations between total SABS scores and the various well-being scales (2016 results are in brackets). This result has now been replicated with large samples over 4 years.

Q: OK, so that looks like a solid finding, at least for the sort of people who take part in Stoic Week. Stoics are still happy. I remember that in previous years you also listed how Stoicism was associated with particular emotions, as measured in the SPANE scale. What were these results this year?

<b>Emotion</b>	<b>Correlation with Stoic Attitudes and Behaviours 2017</b>	<b>2016 Comparison</b>
Negative	-0.36	-0.29
Contented	0.33	0.35
Good	0.32	0.32
Positive	0.32	0.31
Pleasant	0.32	0.30
Bad	-0.32	-0.28
Happy	0.29	0.28
Sad	-0.28	-0.26

Joyful	0.28	0.26
Angry	-0.27	-0.24
Unpleasant	-0.27	-0.24
Afraid	-0.23	-0.26

**Table 7 : Correlation of SABS 3.0 scores and emotions**

As in 2016, there is a significant positive association between Stoicism and each positive emotion and a negative correlation between every negative emotion and Stoicism. There is some variation between this year and last in terms of the relative size of the correlation for each emotion, so we should not be too confident in saying which emotions are most associated with Stoicism, though it seems pretty clear that the association is large for contentment and relatively small for fear.

Q: All this talk of correlation coefficients is a bit confusing for me. Can you just tell me how much difference it makes to my happiness whether I am Stoic or not?

A: Remember that these findings do not necessarily imply causation, so we can't say that being more Stoic makes you more happy. However we can look at the group of people who are in the top and bottom 10% in terms of Stoicism and compare their well-being scores on the various scales. Table 8 gives this information

	SABS	SWL	SPANE	Flourish	Average wb
average top 10% SABS	203.4	26.9	10.0	46.8	27.9
average bottom 10% SABS	129.3	18.7	-1.6	33.6	16.9
average top 10% SABS	203.4	26.9	10.0	46.8	27.9

**Table 8: Top and Bottom 10% in Stoicism and their scores in various scales**

As can be seen, those in the top 10% score significantly higher than the average in all scales, whilst those in the lowest 10% score significantly lower.

	SABS	SWL	SPANE	Flourish	Average wb
average top 10% SABS	203.4	26.9	10.0	46.8	27.9
average bottom 10% SABS	129.3	18.7	-1.6	33.6	16.9

Q: Last year you found quite a strong relationship between age and Stoicism - the under 18s were by far the least Stoic and Stoicism increased gradually with age, with the over-55s being the most Stoic. Has this been replicated?

A: This relationship has been repeated in 2017, although the under 18s are not quite as un-Stoic as they were last year, as illustrated in Table 9 below.

This year we also looked at the average well-being of each age group. A similar pattern emerges, with the over-55s being the happiest and the under 18s being the least happy. The average SABS and well-being scores for each age group are as follows:

Age	Average SABS score 2017	2016 Comparison	% size of sample	Average well-being
over 55	169	169	16.9	24
46-55	167	165	17.8	22
36-45	163	165	22.3	22
26-35	163	162	26.6	22
18-25	160	159	15.1	22
Under 18	155	148	1.4	20

**Table 9: Relationship between Age and degree of Stoicism**

**Q:** Last year the USA proved to be the most Stoic and the UK least. Is this still true in 2017?

**A:** Once again the Americas proved to be the most Stoic, though (admittedly from a small sample) South America took over No. 1 spot from USA. The UK and Europe is a few points behind. To put this into context, the difference between regions is not that great, as shown in table 10.

Region	Average SABS score	2016 Comparison	%	Average well-being
South America	170	165	2	23
USA	166	166	44	22
Canada	165	164	10	23
Australia	166	161	5	23
Europe	162	162	19	22
Africa	162	161	1	21
UK	161	159	15	22
Asia	159	160	3	20

**Table 10: Relationship between geographic region and degree of Stoicism**

**Q:** Have gender differences changed at all?

Data from 2016 suggested that men were marginally more Stoic, averaging 164.5 on the SABS scale as opposed to 161.5 for women. In 2016 this gap of 3 points had reduced to 2 – the figures in 2017 were 165 and 163 respectively

**Q:** Finally, in the past you've told provided a big table suggestive of the "active ingredients" of Stoicism. Did you do that again?

**A:** Yes, the full details are in Appendix E. These are the most active Stoic ingredients in terms of correlation with average well-being.

SABS Item Number	SABS Item	Average well-being
22	<i>I spend quite a lot of time dwelling on what's gone wrong the past or worrying about the future</i>	0.52
24	When an upsetting thought enters my mind the first thing I do is remind myself it's just an impression in my mind and not the thing it claims to represent	0.37
27	I do the right thing even when I feel afraid.	0.36
31	When making a significant decision I ask myself "What really matters here?" and then look for the option that a good and wise person would choose.	0.36
19	I try to contemplate what the ideal wise and good person would do when faced with various misfortunes in life.	0.31
25	Viewing other people as fellow-members of the brotherhood of humankind helps me to avoid feeling anger and resentment	0.31
28	I care about the suffering of others and take active steps to reduce this	0.30

**Table 11: Most active SABS ingredients in terms of average well-being**

Again rumination comes top. It's interesting to see how this compares with the active ingredients when it comes to positive character traits. (given in full in table 6 above). Item 24, Stoic Mindfulness, is important for both virtue and well-being.

SABS Item No	SABS Statement (Items in <i>italics</i> are reverse scored)	Correlation with total CIVIC score
23	I make an effort to pay continual attention to the nature of my judgments and actions.	0.44
27	I do the right thing even when I feel afraid.	0.43
24	When an upsetting thought enters my mind the first thing I do is remind myself it's just an impression in my mind and not the thing it claims to represent	0.43
19	I try to contemplate what the ideal wise and good person would do when faced with various misfortunes in life.	0.42
31	When making a significant decision I ask myself "What really matters here?" and then look for the option that a good and wise person would choose.	0.42
28	I care about the suffering of others and take active steps to reduce this	0.41

**Table 12: Most active SABS ingredients in terms of positive character traits (CIVIC score)**

## Conclusions

These findings replicate previous research about the relationship between Stoicism, life satisfaction, flourishing and the emotions. For the first time we can also say that there is evidence to support the view that Stoicism is associated with virtues and positive character traits, as measured on a validated contemporary scale, the CIVIC. A surprising, but very positive, result is that zest turns out to be the character trait most associated with being Stoic.

## Appendices

### Appendix A The Stoic Attitudes and Behaviours Scale SABS 3.0

SABS ITEM	Stoic Week 2017 Start average score	Positive (+), reverse-scored (-) or not scored (=)*	Correlation with SABS as a whole	Adjusted Sabs (without 10 virtue items)
1. As long as you have the right attitude, you can lead a good life even in the worst of conditions, such as being tortured or being held prisoner	5.2	+	.5	Y
2. It doesn't really matter what other people think about me as long as I do the right thing	5.7	+	.5	Y
3. It can sometimes be a good thing to get angry when people are really rude, selfish or inconsiderate	4.0	-	.4	Y
4. It's more important to feel good than to do good.	5.4	-	.4	Y
5. Peace of mind comes from abandoning fears and desires about things outside our control.	6.1	+	.4	Y
6. If bad things happen to you, you are bound to feel upset	3.8	-	.46	Y
7. What is called "morally right" and "morally wrong" is in reality just a matter of personal or cultural opinion	3.9	-	.2	Y
8. The only things truly under our control in life are our judgements and voluntary actions	6.0	+	.4	Y
9. You should go wherever your emotions leads you	5.5	-	.3	Y
10. Virtue (or human excellence) consists in perfecting our rational nature, through cultivating wisdom	5.7	+	.5	Y

11. I think about my life as an ongoing project in ethical development	5.5	+	.6	Y
12. To flourish as a human being all you need is rationality and a good character; things like money, status, health and good luck are not essential	4.8	+	.5	Y
13. I consider myself to be a part of the human race, in the same way that a limb is a part of the human body. It is my duty to contribute to its welfare.	5.6	+	.5	Y
14. The cosmos is a single, wise, living thing	4.2	+	.3	Y
15. I try to anticipate future misfortunes and rehearse rising above them	4.7	+	.4	Y
16. I often contemplate the smallness and transience of human life in relation to the totality of space and time.	5.1	+	.4	Y
17. If I was honest I'd have to admit that I often do what is enjoyable and comfortable rather than doing what I believe to be the right thing	3.3	-	.4	N
18. I am good at controlling my urges and impulses when that's better for me in the long run	4.2	=	.4	N
19. I try to contemplate what the ideal wise and good person would do when faced with various misfortunes in life	4.7	+	.6	Y
20. It is possible to control how other people behave towards you	5.1	-	.3	Y
21. I treat everybody fairly even those I don't like or don't know very well	5.1	+	.4	N
22. I spend quite a lot of time dwelling on what's gone wrong the past or worrying about the future	3.4	-	.5	Y
23. I make an effort to pay continual attention to the nature of my judgments and actions.	5.1	+	.5	Y
24. When an upsetting thought enters my mind the first thing I do is remind myself it's just an impression in my mind and not the thing it claims to represent	4.0	+	.6	Y
25. Viewing other people as fellow-members of the brotherhood of humankind helps me to avoid feeling anger and resentment	4.7	+	.6	Y
26. Recognising that only virtue matters enables me to face life's transience and my approaching death	4.4	+	.6	Y
27. I do the right thing even when I feel afraid.	4.7	+	.5	N
28. I care about the suffering of others and take active steps to reduce this	5.2	+	.4	N
29. Happiness depends on things going well for me and my family and friends	3.6	-	.5	Y
30. We have to accept that some things that matter a lot for our happiness are outside our control	2.8	+	.3	Y
31. When making a significant decision I ask myself "What really matters here?" and then look for the option that satisfies the things that are most important.	4.9	+	.5	N
32. I sometimes have thoughts or urges it would be unwise to act on, but I usually realise this and do	5.1	+	.3	N

not act on them				
33. My beliefs about what is best determine my wishes and motives	5.2	+	.3	N
34. When making an important decision I try to predict the consequences of my actions and aim to balance the long-term happiness of myself and others	2.6	-	-.3	N
35. My good name and what other people think about me matters a lot	3.5	-	.4	Y
36. I am upset when I hear of the suffering of others	2.5	-	.06	N
37. There's no overall plan to the universe	3.2	+	.3	Y

\*|

Table A Stoic Attitudes and Behaviours Scale 3.0 (SABS v3.0)

In Table A, those items indicated as positively scaled and marked with a + are marked on an 7 point Likert scale from Strongly Agree (7) to Strongly disagree (1) as follows:

Strongly Agree 7

Agree 6

Slightly Agree 5

Neither agree or disagree 4

Slightly disagree 3

Disagree 2

Strongly Disagree 1

Those marked “ - “ are reverse-scored and are marked from Strongly Agree (1) to Strongly disagree (7).

Strongly Agree 1

Agree 2

Slightly Agree 3

Neither agree or disagree 4

Slightly disagree 5

Disagree 6

Strongly Disagree 7

The one item marked as = (item 18) is marked as 0 regardless of score. i.e. Strongly Agree 0 ... Strongly Disagree 0

This item is retained as a measure of non-Stoic (rather than anti-Stoic) self-control, and has been supplanted by item 31 which measures Stoic self-control.

Total scores range from 36 (lowest and least Stoic) to 252 (highest possible and most Stoic)

In Stoic Week 2017 (at the start) a score of

193 or above would place you in the top 10%

182 or above would place you in the top 20%

175 or above would place you in the top 30%

169 or above would place you in the top 40%

164 or above would place you in the top 50 %

158 or below would place you in the bottom 40%

152 or below would place you in the bottom 30%

147 or below would place you in the bottom 20%

140 or below would place you in the bottom 10% in terms of degree of Stoicism

The average SABS score at the start of Stoic Week 2017 was 164.2

### **Each item explained**

#### **1. As long as you have the right attitude, you can lead a good life even in the worst of conditions, such as being tortured or being held prisoner**

Since, for the Stoics, being virtuous is all that really matters it follows that you can lead a good life in the worst of conditions

#### **2. It doesn't really matter what other people think about me as long as I do the right thing**

What matters to the Stoics is not what other people think but whether you actually are or aren't virtuous

#### **3. It can sometimes be a good thing to get angry when people are really rude, selfish or inconsiderate**

This is a non-Stoic attitude and so is reverse-scored. The Stoics don't think that anger can ever be a good thing; they would say that indignation leading to virtuous action is far

preferable to angry feelings which can have enormous costs both to oneself and others

**4. *It's more important to feel good than to do good.***

This is a non-Stoic attitude and so is reverse-scored. The Stoics believe that doing good is always more important than feeling good. Feeling good is something "nice to have" (the technical term is "preferred indifferent")

**5. *Peace of mind comes from abandoning fears and desires about things outside our control.***

The Stoics believe that if we stop concerning ourselves with what is outside our control, which we should do because all we should really care about is being virtuous, then we will achieve peace of mind.

**6. *If bad things happen to you, you are bound to feel upset***

This is a non-Stoic attitude and so is reverse-scored. The Stoics believe that you will not get upset if remind yourself that the bad things are outside your control and that experiencing bad things doesn't mean you can't be virtuous.

**7. *What is called "morally right" and "morally wrong" is in reality just a matter of personal or cultural opinion***

This is a non-Stoic attitude and so is reverse-scored. The Stoics are not relativists, they believe that actions are objectively good and bad and not just a matter of personal opinion.

**8. *The only things truly under our control in life are our judgements and voluntary actions***

The Stoic believe that there are lots of things we can't really control, like the past, other people and the environment. However we can control our judgements and actions and therein lies our freedom.

**9. *You should go wherever your emotions leads you***

This is a non-Stoic attitude and so is reverse-scored. The Stoics are not Romantics, and they believe that going where your emotions tell you to go can get you into serious trouble. You should go where reason tells you to go.

**10. *Virtue (or human excellence) consists in perfecting our rational nature, through cultivating wisdom***

The Stoics believe that wisdom and rationality are the foundations of virtue.

**11. *I think about my life as an ongoing project in ethical development***

The Stoics view their live as an ongoing process of developing themselves morally. Marcus Aurelius's *Meditations* were undoubtedly written for this purpose.

**12. *To flourish as a human being all you need is rationality and a good character; things like money, status, health and good luck are not essential***

The Stoics believe that rationality and good character are all you need to flourish; everything else is a "nice thing to have" or "preferred indifferent"

**13. I consider myself to be a part of the human race, in the same way that a limb is a part of the human body. It is my duty to contribute to its welfare.**

The Stoics believe that we are all connected and part of a larger brotherhood or sisterhood and this informs their view that we have a duty to help others.

**14. The cosmos is a single, wise, living thing**

The idea that the cosmos is a single wise, living thing was a part of Stoic metaphysics.

**15. I try to anticipate future misfortunes and rehearse rising above them**

The Stoics practice rehearsing what might go wrong - "Negative Visualisations"- as they believed this inoculated us from being so distressed when bad things actually do happen

**16. I often contemplate the smallness and transience of human life in relation to the totality of space and time.**

Some Stoics practised meditations like the "View from Above" to get a better perspective on the insignificant and shortness of their life. This can help one see one's troubles as relatively insignificant.

**17. If I was honest I'd have to admit that I often do what is enjoyable and comfortable rather than doing what I believe to be the right thing**

This is a non-Stoic attitude and so is reverse-scored. The Stoics were not short-term hedonists; they believed in doing the right thing, not the merely pleasurable thing or the easy option.

**18. I am good at controlling my urges and impulses when that's better for me in the long run**

This is classified as a neutral item, as the Stoic notion of self-control is better measured by *item 32. It sometimes have thoughts or urges it would be unwise to act on, but I usually realise this and do not act on them.*

**19. I try to contemplate what the ideal wise and good person would do when faced with various misfortunes in life**

Many Stoics suggested we imagine the Stoic "Sage on our shoulder", or an ideal Stoic advisor to guide us at difficult moments.

**20. It is possible to control how other people behave towards you**

This is a non-Stoic attitude and so is reverse-scored. The Stoics had no such expectation; how other people behave is outside one's control.

**21. I treat everybody fairly even those I don't like or don't know very well**

Fairness and justice was one of the main Stoic virtues - treating other people fairly regardless of how one feels.

***22. I spend quite a lot of time dwelling on what's gone wrong the past or worrying about the future***

This is a non-Stoic behaviour and so is reverse-scored. The past and the future are outside one's control and we should focus instead on the present moment and what is in one's control.

***23. I make an effort to pay continual attention to the nature of my judgments and actions.***

Stoic Mindfulness is an important Stoic habit, to enable one to challenge irrational judgements and replace them with rational judgements and then virtuous behaviour.

***24. When an upsetting thought enters my mind the first thing I do is remind myself it's just an impression in my mind and not the thing it claims to represent***

Cognitive distancing, the ability to notice an upsetting thought and then treat it as just a thought and not an objective fact, is an important Stoic technique.

***25. Viewing other people as fellow-members of the brotherhood of humankind helps me to avoid feeling anger and resentment***

One of the ways to reduce anger and irritation, mentioned by Marcus Aurelius amongst others, is to view other people as our fellow fallible human beings, like a brother or a sister.

***26. Recognising that only virtue matters enables me to face life's transience and my approaching death***

One of the ways to reduce death anxiety, mentioned by Marcus Aurelius amongst others, is to realise that virtue is the only thing that matters, since death cannot stop us being virtuous. Indeed death provides us with the opportunity to behave well in the face of death.

***27. I do the right thing even when I feel afraid.***

Courage was an important Stoic virtue. Courage is not about not feeling afraid; courage is feeling afraid and still doing the right thing.

***28. I care about the suffering of others and take active steps to reduce this***

Compassion is an important virtue relating to the Stoics' caring for others as brothers and sisters. However, notice that for Stoics, compassion is about caring about others and taking action rather than getting upset by suffering, which forms part of other ideas of compassion.

***29. Happiness depends on things going well for me and my family and friends***

This is a non-Stoic attitude and so is reverse-scored. The Stoics believed that happiness (or flourishing) depended on being virtuous, not on circumstances.

***30. We have to accept that some things that matter a lot for our happiness are outside***

### ***our control***

This is a non-Stoic attitude and so is reverse-scored. The Stoics believed that happiness (or flourishing) depends only on being virtuous, which is under our control.

### **31. When making a significant decision I ask myself “What really matters here?” and then look for the option that a good and wise person would choose.**

This is a Stoic version of the virtue of practical wisdom. For the Stoics, wisdom was not purely theoretical, it was about doing the thing that the Stoic sage, the good and wise person, would choose to do.

### **32. I sometimes have thoughts or urges it would be unwise to act on, but I usually realise this and do not act on them**

This is the Stoic version of the virtue of self-control. The Stoic sage would get very few of these and would never act on them; those progressing in Stoicism (the *prokopton*) would get fewer of such thoughts and resist more of them as they progressed.

### **33. My beliefs about what is best determine my wishes and motives**

This is a corollary to item 32 (Stoic self-control). The Stoic sage or one who has progressed a lot in Stoicism has wishes and motives in line with wisdom and virtue, so they don't really need self-control. If you genuinely score highly on this item you have made good progress.

### **34. When making an important decision I try to predict the consequences of my actions and aim to balance the long-term happiness of myself and others**

This is the Utilitarian rather than Stoic version of practical wisdom and so is reverse-scored. For the Stoic, you act according to the virtues (item 31) rather than balance happiness. In practice, Stoics score quite highly on this item (the only reverse-scored item about which this is true), so future versions of SABS may revise use of this item.

### **35. My good name and what other people think about me matters a lot.**

For the Stoic, reputation matters a lot less than doing the right thing, so this item is reverse-scored.

### **36. I am upset when I hear of the suffering of others**

Whilst the Stoic would rather others do not suffer it is outside their control and so they would avoid being upset. The Stoic would be concerned and try to alleviate the suffering but would not add to the suffering by getting upset. Consequently this item is reverse scored. For the Stoic idea of compassion, see item 28.

### **37. There's no overall plan to the universe.**

The Stoics believed there was a plan to the universe (even though they did not believe in a God in the Christian sense) - universe behaves according to a rational and providential order. Consequently this item is reverse-scored.



## Appendix B The Satisfaction with Life scale

The SWLS is a short 5-item instrument designed to measure global cognitive judgments of satisfaction with one's life. This scale is widely used as part of the measure of Subjective Well-being (also known as happiness).

Question	Theme
Q1. In most ways my life is close to my ideal	Life is ideal
Q2. The conditions of my life are excellent	Externals met
Q3. So far I have got the important things I want in life.	Needs met
Q4. I am satisfied with my life	Satisfaction
Q5. If I could live my life over, I would change almost nothing	Acceptance

Using a 1-7 scale, users score between 35 (extremely satisfied) and 5 (extremely dissatisfied)

The SWL scale was developed by Ed Diener, Robert A. Emmons, Randy J. Larsen and Sharon Griffin as noted in the 1985 article in the *Journal of Personality Assessment*. See <http://internal.psychology.illinois.edu/~ediener/SWLS.html>

## Appendix C The Flourishing Scale

The Flourishing Scale is a brief 8-item summary measure of the respondent's self-perceived success in important areas such as relationships, self-esteem, purpose, and optimism. The scale provides a single psychological well-being score. This scale was developed by Ed Diener and associates to measure a broader conception of well-being than purely subjective life satisfaction and the presence of positive and absence of negative emotions.

Flourishing Scale Item	Theme
1. I lead a purposeful and meaningful life.	Purpose and meaning
2. My social relationships are supportive and rewarding.	Relationships
3. I am engaged and interested in my daily activities.	Flow & interested
4. I actively contribute to the happiness and well-being of others.	Benevolent
5. I am competent and capable in the activities that are important to me.	Competent
6. I am a good person and live a good life.	Ethically Good
7. I am optimistic about my future.	Optimism
8. People respect me.	Respected

Reference: Diener, E., Wirtz, D., Tov, W., Kim-Prieto, C., Choi, D., Oishi, S., & Biswas-Diener, R. (2009). New measures of well-being: Flourishing and positive and negative feelings. *Social Indicators Research*, 39, 247-266.  
<http://internal.psychology.illinois.edu/~ediener/FS.html>

## Appendix D The Scale of Positive and Negative Emotions (SPANE)

The SPANE is a 12-item questionnaire which includes six items to assess positive feelings and six items to assess negative feelings. For both the positive and negative items, three of the items are general (e.g., positive, negative) and three per subscale are more specific

(e.g., joyful, sad). Along with the Life Satisfaction scale, presence of positive and absence of negative emotions forms the other part of Subjective Well-being. Users are asked to select a number between 1 (very rarely or never) and 5 (very often or always) to indicate how often they have experienced the emotion in the last 4 weeks.

### **Positive Emotions**

Contented  
Joyful  
Positive  
Good  
Pleasant  
Happy

### **Negative Emotions**Unpleasant

Bad  
Negative  
Angry  
Afraid  
Sad

Three scores are derived: SPANE-P – some of positive emotions SPANE-P – sum of negative emotions – SPANE –B Balance of positive and negative.

Reference: Diener, E., Wirtz, D., Tov, W., Kim-Prieto, C., Choi, D., Oishi, S., & Biswas-Diener, R. (2009). New measures of well-being: Flourishing and positive and negative feelings. *Social Indicators Research*, 39, 247-266.

<http://internal.psychology.illinois.edu/~ediener/SPANE.html>

## Appendix E: Correlation of Specific Stoic Attitudes and Behaviours with various scales

SABS Item Number	SABS Item	CIVIC character traits	Average well-being	Life Satisfaction	SPANE Positive Emotions	SPANE Negative Emotions	SPANE overall Emotions	Flourishing	SABS whole scale
1	As long as you have the right attitude, you can lead a good life even in the worst of conditions, such as being tortured or being held prisoner	0.31	0.20	0.16	0.17	0.15	0.17	0.19	0.50
2	It doesn't really matter what other people think about me as long as I do the right thing	0.27	0.21	0.15	0.17	0.18	0.19	0.20	0.50
3	<i>It can sometimes be a good thing to get angry when people are really rude, selfish or inconsiderate</i>	0.02	0.11	0.08	0.09	0.17	0.15	0.07	0.38
4	<i>It's more important to feel good than to do good.</i>	0.15	0.10	0.08	0.05	0.08	0.07	0.11	0.40
5	Peace of mind comes from abandoning fears and desires about things outside our control.	0.34	0.18	0.13	0.17	0.14	0.17	0.18	0.41
6	<i>If bad things happen to you, you are bound to feel upset</i>	0.18	0.23	0.18	0.20	0.26	0.26	0.17	0.46
7	<i>What is called "morally right" and "morally wrong" is in reality just a matter of personal or cultural</i>	0.00	0.04	0.04	-0.01	0.04	0.01	0.05	0.21

8	The only things truly under our control in life are our judgements and voluntary actions	0.19	0.14	0.12	0.10	0.12	0.12	0.14	0.38
9	<i>You should go wherever your emotions leads you</i>	0.02	0.04	0.01	0.01	0.10	0.06	0.03	0.31
10	Virtue (or human excellence) consists in perfecting our rational nature, through cultivating wisdom	0.27	0.17	0.11	0.14	0.14	0.16	0.18	0.50
11	I think about my life as an ongoing project in ethical development	0.37	0.23	0.15	0.20	0.14	0.19	0.26	0.56
12	To flourish as a human being all you need is rationality and a good character; things like money, status, health and good luck are not essential	0.20	0.20	0.18	0.16	0.17	0.18	0.16	0.51
13	I consider myself to be a part of the human race, in the same way that a limb is a part of the human body. It is my duty to contribute to its welfare.	0.37	0.28	0.20	0.23	0.15	0.21	0.33	0.50
14	The cosmos is a single, wise, living thing	0.39	0.11	0.04	0.13	0.05	0.10	0.12	0.33
15	I try to anticipate future misfortunes and rehearse rising above them	0.32	0.23	0.18	0.18	0.14	0.18	0.24	0.45
16	I often contemplate the smallness and transience of human life in relation to the totality of space and time.	0.28	0.14	0.12	0.13	0.09	0.12	0.13	0.41

17	<i>If I was honest I'd have to admit that I often do what is enjoyable and comfortable rather than doing what I believe to be the right thing</i>	0.36	0.29	0.22	0.18	0.22	0.23	0.32	0.38
18	I am good at controlling my urges and impulses when that's better for me in the long run [this item is excluded from SABS total as items 32 and 33 better measure a specifically Stoic concept of self-control]	0.38	0.41	0.33	0.29	0.33	0.35	0.41	0.39
19	I try to contemplate what the ideal wise and good person would do when faced with various misfortunes in life.	0.42	0.31	0.22	0.26	0.19	0.25	0.33	0.57
20	<i>It is possible to control how other people behave towards you</i>	0.12	0.05	0.03	0.02	0.03	0.03	0.06	0.33
21	I treat everybody fairly even those I don't like or don't know very well	0.32	0.26	0.17	0.18	0.23	0.23	0.29	0.45
22	<i>I spend quite a lot of time dwelling on what's gone wrong the past or worrying about the future</i>	0.35	0.52	0.42	0.43	0.54	0.54	0.41	0.48
23	I make an effort to pay continual attention to the nature of my judgments and actions.	0.44	0.28	0.18	0.23	0.18	0.23	0.33	0.53
24	When an upsetting thought enters my mind the first thing I do is remind myself it's just an impression in my mind and not the thing it claims to	0.43	0.37	0.28	0.32	0.30	0.35	0.35	0.63

	represent								
25	Viewing other people as fellow-members of the brotherhood of humankind helps me to avoid feeling anger and resentment	0.39	0.31	0.23	0.27	0.23	0.28	0.30	0.56
26	Recognising that only virtue matters enables me to face life's transience and my approaching death	0.39	0.28	0.21	0.22	0.22	0.25	0.26	0.64
27	I do the right thing even when I feel afraid.	0.43	0.36	0.27	0.25	0.24	0.27	0.40	0.53
28	I care about the suffering of others and take active steps to reduce this	0.41	0.30	0.22	0.22	0.14	0.20	0.37	0.37
29	<i>Happiness depends on things going well for me and my family</i>	0.15	0.17	0.14	0.15	0.21	0.20	0.13	0.51
30	<i>We have to accept that some things that matter a lot for our happiness are outside our control</i>	0.09	0.10	0.09	0.07	0.10	0.09	0.07	0.26
31	When making a significant decision I ask myself "What really matters here?" and then look for the option that a good and wise person would choose.	0.42	0.36	0.28	0.27	0.23	0.28	0.37	0.55
32	I sometimes have thoughts or urges it would be unwise to act on, but I usually realise this and do not act on them	0.29	0.26	0.20	0.17	0.18	0.20	0.28	0.33

33	<b>My beliefs about what is best determine my wishes and motives</b>	0.32	0.28	0.22	0.21	0.16	0.21	0.30	0.34
34	<b><i>When making an important decision I try to predict the consequences of my actions and aim to balance the long-term happiness of myself and others</i></b>	-0.37	-0.31	-0.25	-0.22	-0.17	-0.22	-0.33	-0.31
35	<b><i>My good name and what other people think about me matters a lot.</i></b>	0.10	0.12	0.10	0.11	0.18	0.16	0.06	0.41
36	<b><i>I am upset when I hear of the suffering of others</i></b>	-0.18	-0.02	-0.03	-0.03	0.12	0.05	-0.08	0.06
37	<b><i>There's no overall plan to the universe.</i></b>	0.33	0.13	0.09	0.13	0.05	0.10	0.14	0.28

**TABLE E: Correlation of Specific Stoic Attitudes and Behaviours with various scales**

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