

Modern Stoicism Press Release

New Findings: why Stoicism has nothing to do with having a 'stiff upper lip'

Recent research funded by Royal Holloway, University of London, has shown that the ancient philosophy of Stoicism has nothing to do with 'stiff upper lip' lower case stoicism. Stoicism properly understood has nothing to do with emotional suppression.

In May-June 2020, at the height of the lockdown in the UK, the non-profit organization Modern Stoicism ran a free four-week online course, 'Stoic Resilience and Mindfulness Training' (SMRT). Over 2500 people signed up (compared to c. 1500 when the course last ran in 2018).

Participants studied ideas and followed practices taken from the ancient philosophy of Stoicism to see if they might improve their daily lives and, in particular, to see if they might improve resilience.

By the end of the month, participants reported an average 13% increase in resilience, along with an increase in life satisfaction of 14%, an increase in positive emotions of 11% and a decrease in negative emotions of 15%.

Perhaps most interesting of all, the results showed a small *negative* correlation between the popular image of 'stiff upper lip' lower case stoicism and ancient Stoicism proper, and after a month of Stoic training, 'stiff upper lip' stoicism actually reduced, while attitudes of ancient Stoicism increased. This new study shows that ancient Stoic guidance about how to live does not encourage people to suppress their emotions in unhealthy ways, but it does significantly improve resilience in difficult circumstances.

This is an important result because many people remain suspicious about the benefit of Stoicism, due to the popular image of 'stiff upper lip' lower case stoicism, which is often confused with Stoicism proper. People looking to improve their resilience should look to Stoicism as a useful resource.

The full report detailing the results of SMRT 2020 can be accessed at <https://modernstoicism.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/SMRT-2020-Results-1.0.pdf>

Stoic Week 2020

Anyone curious to test this for themselves can do so via Stoic Week. This year Stoic Week runs 19th to 25th October.

Stoic Week is a global online experiment trying to see if people can benefit from following the ancient philosophy of Stoicism. Since its inception in 2012, over 20,000 people have signed up and so far the results have been consistently positive – people *do* benefit from 'living like a Stoic'. This is your opportunity to experience some of those benefits too.

The course is free and online, attracting participants from all over the world. There is a series of questionnaires to complete in advance, guided advice for each day of the week, and a second set of questionnaires at the end.

There is further information at <https://modernstoicism.com/stoic-week/>

What is Stoicism?

Here are some key Stoic ideas:

1. Acknowledge that you can't control much of what goes on in your life.
2. See that your emotions are the product of how you think about the world.
3. Accept that bad things are bound to happen to you from time to time, just as they do to everyone else.
4. See yourself as part of a larger whole, not an isolated individual; part of the human race, part of Nature.
5. Think of everything you have as not your own, but simply on loan, that one day will be taken back.

To read more about Stoicism see <https://theconversation.com/want-to-be-happy-then-live-like-a-stoic-for-a-week-103117>

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