

MARCUS AURELIUS  
**MEDITATIONS**

A NEW TRANSLATION, WITH AN INTRODUCTION, BY  
GREGORY HAYS





# Meditations



**LIVE IN THE MOMENT**

**FOLLOW YOUR NATURE**

**LIVE ACCORDING TO PRINCIPLES**

**OVERCOME FALSE PRETENSES**

**USE YOUR MIND**

**EVERYTHING WILL PERISH**



# Live In The Moment



## BE INTENTIONAL

- Concentrate every minute on doing what's in front of you with precise and genuine seriousness, tenderly, willingly, with justice and remove yourself from all of the distractions.
- Do everything as if it were the last thing you're doing in life.
- Nothing has meaning to my mind except its own actions, which are within its own control.
- If you don't have a consistent goal in life, you can't live it in a consistent way.

## THERE IS NOTHING OTHER THAN THE NOW

- The present is the same substance, the same form as the beginning and as it will be forever. All things are connected, related, and implicated in one another.
- Everything is interwoven and the web is Holy. None of the parts are unconnected. They are comprised harmoniously and together they compose the world.
- To follow reason in all things is to be relaxed and energetic, joyful and serious at once.
- We have the potential to live a good life if we can learn to be indifferent to what makes no difference.

## ANALIZE THE PRESENT

- It never ceases to amaze me: we all love ourselves more than other people, but care more about their opinion than our own.
- Sanity means understanding things – each individual thing – for what they are.
- The past and the future have no power over you. Only the present.



# Follow Your Nature



## BE CONNECTED

- The world is a living being – one nature, one soul. Everything feeds into a single experience and moves with a single motion. Everything helps produce everything else.
- Nature of any kind thrives on forward progress.
- Celebrate behaving like a human – however in perfectly – and fully embrace the pursuit that you've embarked on.
- Philosophy requires only what your nature already demands.
- Everything is here for a purpose. Why were you born?
- We have three relationships: 1) with the body we inhabit 2) with the divine, the cause of everything and all things 3) with the people around you.
- The natural can never be inferior to the artificial; art imitates nature, not the reverse.

## FREE YOURSELF

- Things gravitate toward what they were intended for.
- Joy for humans lies in human actions: kindness to others and observations of nature.
- We should prize in ourselves to do, and not to do, what we were designed for.
- If you can't stop prizing menial things you will never be free, independent, and imperturbable.
- Can any vital process take place without something being changed? It is the same with you – and just as vital to nature.
- Characteristics of the rational soul: self-perception, self-examination, truthfulness, humility, affection, and the power to make of itself whatever it wants.





# Live According to Principles



## DIVINELY INSTILLED VALUES

- If you live in a principled way, with diligence, energy and patience, keeping free of distractions, without fear, as nature intended, and in truthfulness, then your life will be happy.
- Qualities that allow a person's nature to fulfill its self: justice, generosity, self-control, sanity, prudence, honesty, humility, and straightforwardness.
- God sees all our souls freed from their fleshy containers. He grasps with his intelligence alone what was poured in, channeled from himself into them.
- Stop talking about what the good man is like, and just be one.
- Investigate and analyze, with understanding and logic, the principles we ought to live by.
- One world, made up of all things. One divinity, present in all of them. One substance and one law and one truth.

## BE A LIGHT

- So other people hurt me? That's their problem. Their character and actions are not mine.
- Humans were made to help others. When we do, we perform our function.
- The only thing that isn't worthless: to live this life out truthfully and rightly. And be patient with those who don't.
- Perfection of character: to live your last day, every day, without frenzy, or sloth, or pretense.
- Work to win your freedom. Hour by hour. Through patience, honesty, humility.
- What doesn't transmit light creates its own darkness.
- Devote yourself completely to achieving the goodness that is uniquely yours.

# Overcome False Pretenses



## MASTER PAIN

- If you desire to master pain, unroll this book and read with care, and in it find abundantly and knowledge of things that are, those that have been, and those to come.
- Things have no hold on the soul. Disturbance comes only from within our own perceptions.
- It can ruin your life only if it ruins your character. Otherwise I cannot harm you inside or out.
- Nothing can happen to me that isn't natural. I can keep from doing anything that God and my own spirit don't approve. No one can force me.
- Pain is neither unbearable nor unending, as long as you keep in mind it's limits and don't magnify them in your imagination.
- Stop perceiving the pain you imagine and you will remain completely unaffected.
- Nothing happens to anyone that he can't endure.

## YOU CONTROL YOUR THOUGHTS

- Stop allowing your mind to be a slave, to be jerked about selfish impulses, to mistress the future, and to kick against the present.
- Stop being aimless, stop letting your emotions override what your mind tells you. Stop being hypocritical, self-centered, irritable. Do this to live a satisfying and reverent life. If you can manage to, that's all even the gods can ask of you.
- If you won't keep track of what your own soul's doing, how can you not be unhappy?
- External things are not the problem. It's your assessment of them.
- Things have no hold on the soul. They have no access to it, cannot move or directed it.

# Use Your Mind



## BE PURPOSE DRIVEN

- My mind. What is it? What am I making of it? What am I using it for?
- People who labor all their lives but have no purpose to direct every thought and impulses toward are wasting their time, even when hard at work.
- The human soul degrades itself when it allows its actions and impulses to be without purpose, to be random and disconnected.
- The mind is the ruler of the soul.
- God gave each of us, to lead and guide us, a fragment of himself. Which is our mind, our logos.
- Intelligence is uniquely drawn toward what is a kin to it, and joins with it inseparably, in shared awareness.
- No blood, or birth, but mind links one human being to all humans.

## CREATE YOUR DESTINY

- “States will never be happy until rulers become philosophers or philosophers become rulers.” - Plato
- Nothing is so conducive to spiritual growth as the capacity for logical and accurate analysis of everything that happens to us.
- It's time you realize that you have something in you more powerful and miraculous than the things that affect you and make you dance like a puppet.
- The things you think about determine the quality of your mind. Your soul takes on the color of your thoughts.
- One who keeps the eyes of his mind shut is blind.
- Complete tranquility: Nowhere you can go is more peaceful – more free of interruptions – than your own soul.
- You have to assemble your life yourself – action by action.





# Everything Will Perish



## ONLY ONE CHANCE

- You cannot lose another life than the one you're living now or live another one than the one you are losing.
- We need to hurry, not just because we move daily closer to death but also because our understanding may be gone before we get there. A healthy mind should be prepared for anything.
- Serve justice in all you do, realizing that at some point you will have to abandon mankind and leave all this behind.

## THE NATURAL CYCLE OF LIFE

- Everything you see will soon alter and cease to exist. The world is nothing but change.
- A thoughtful person should await death: not with indifference, not with impatience, not with disdain, but simply viewing it as one of the natural things that happens to us.
- There is nothing major He loves more than to alter what exists and to make new things like it. All that exists is the seed of what will emerge from it.
- Everything is destined is to change, to be transformed, to perish. So that new things can be born.

## LIVE GRACEFULLY

- Spend the time you have left in tranquility, and kindness, and at peace with the spirit with in you.
- To be sent away from life by nature, who first invited you in, why is that so terrible?
- Your life length is fixed by the power that directed your creation, and now directs your dissolution. So make your exit with grace - the same grace shown to you.

