

# *THE STOIC TEACHER* by Ryan Racine

## **What Are Your Values?**

Use the chart below to brainstorm the values that are most important to you (i.e. being a good co-worker, being compassionate towards your students, etc.) If you want, you can reference and build off of the Stoic virtues discussed above. Clarifying your values can help to formulate strong why statements.

VALUES THAT ARE IMPORTANT TO ME	HOW THESE VALUES REINFORCE MY <i>WHY</i> FOR TEACHING

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## Expect the Worst

Use the chart below to premeditate on adversity. This is a chance to think about what has gone wrong in the past or any potential obstacles for the future. This allows you to think about how to handle those challenges. There's also a chance to think of some things that went well and practice gratitude!

<b>DATE</b>	<b>WHAT IS ONE THING YOU ARE GRATEFUL FOR?</b>
<b>LIST AT LEAST ONE THING THAT WENT WELL YESTERDAY IN THE CLASSROOM:</b>	
<b>LIST AT LEAST ONE THING THAT YOU COULD HAVE HANDLED BETTER:</b>	
<b>WHAT STRATEGIES CAN YOU USE TO IMPROVE AS A TEACHER AND AVOID THESE ABOVE ISSUES?</b>	
<b>PREMEDITATING ON ADVERSITY</b>	
<b>POTENTIAL ADVERSITIES</b>	<b>HOW I WILL RESPOND</b>

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## **Focus on what you can control**

Each morning, take time to separate what may be in your control that day from what is not. You can again use your journal or even write this exercise out on the chalkboard.

EVENT	WHAT ARE THE THINGS WITHIN MY CONTROL?	WHAT ARE THE THINGS OUTSIDE OF MY CONTROL?

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## **Goals You Can Control**

Try completing the exercise below. It involves getting you to practice reframing goals so that they are under your control. Then add goals you have now, and see if they need re-framing to become something you can control and therefore achieve.

INITIAL GOAL	REFRAMED GOAL
I will become the new program chair of my department.	I will complete the program chair application document to the best of my abilities.
I will get my students to behave appropriately during our second period assembly.	
My class will score high on the standardized test next week.	

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## **After-School Reflection and Reframe**

In the first column, write down any conflicts or issues from the day as objectively as possible. Next, examine your language and cross out any strong or biased words. In the middle column, record your initial judgement(s) to each of the events, no matter how harsh they may seem. In the third column, reframe each event in a more positive light. Look for silver linings, hidden possibilities, or how your own judgements could be mistaken. There's an example for you to read , then two for you to think about before recording your own examples.

FACTS OF THE DAY	MY INITIAL VALUE JUDGEMENT(S)	POSSIBLE REFRAMES
Brittany did not complete her homework.	Brittany is a lazy student.	Maybe Brittany was busy helping her mom at home last night.
Another teacher did not say "Hi" back to me in the staff room.		
After sitting in on one of my classes for an evaluation, my principal gave me a low score.		

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FACTS OF THE DAY	MY INITIAL VALUE JUDGEMENT(S)	POSSIBLE REFRAMES

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## Reframing and Focusing

Use the chart below to practice focusing on what you can change, anticipating obstacles, and reframing possible negative events.

1. Goal you have for this year:

Sign up to coach the school football team.

2. How could it go wrong?

Since I don't have much football experience, I can call the wrong plays during a game.

3. If it goes wrong, what would be under your complete control?

To remain calm during these situations and seek coaching advice from more experienced teacher.

4. How could this be a good thing?

I will inevitably improve as a coach by the season's end and possible build lasting relationships with my players.

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1. Goal you have for this year: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. How could it go wrong? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. If it goes wrong, what would be under your complete control? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. How could this be a good thing? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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## **Contemplate a Sage**

Take some time to come up with your own sage by listing people you admire and why. After you have chosen a sage, imagine that the person is sitting on your shoulder, watching what you do and giving you some honest feedback. Think back to a time when you did not behave as you may have liked at school. Think about how your sage would have acted in the same situation.

PEOPLE I ADMIRE	CHARACTERISTICS I ADMIRE IN THEM

EVENT	HOW DID I BEHAVE?	HOW WOULD MY SAGE HAVE RESPONDED?



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EVENT	HOW DID I BEHAVE?	HOW WOULD MY SAGE HAVE RESPONDED?

Then write out what aspect of your character you would like to improve upon. Next, reflect on what steps you have to put in place to strive towards cultivating some of the positive characteristics that your sage has.

### STEPS TO CULTIVATE YOUR SAGE'S POSITIVE QUALITIES

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## **Other People's Opinions**

Record times when you worried about another's opinion of yourself while at school. Consider the different reasons for why the person behaved this way. I have included my above example below to help illustrate the exercise:

EVENT	MY INITIAL INFERENCE	WHAT THE ACTUAL REASON MIGHT HAVE BEEN
A fellow staff member was not friendly with me while we passed each other in the hallway.	This person does not like me, perhaps because I am new.	She could be in a rush or is having a bad day at home and therefore does not want to be overly friendly.

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## **Seek Your Own Praise**

Complete the below exercise by thinking about when you can give yourself some praise and what you can say to yourself (this could be something like a maxim).

WHEN I COULD PRACTICE SELF-PRAISE	WHAT I COULD TELL MYSELF

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## **Reducing Stress**

Use the below prompts to help you see if you can reduce your obligations. This can help you minimize stress and maximize fulfillment. Instead of saying yes to everything and continuing on the path to burnout, take the time to reflect on what you can cut out.

Commitment: \_\_\_\_\_

Does it provide joy or meaning?      YES   NO

If no, what plan can you put in place to remove/adjust it within your schedule?

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Commitment: \_\_\_\_\_

Does it provide joy or meaning?      YES   NO

If no, what plan can you put in place to remove/adjust it within your schedule?

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Commitment: \_\_\_\_\_

Does it provide joy or meaning?      YES   NO

If no, what plan can you put in place to remove/adjust it within your schedule?

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## **Bucket List**

Imagine you had one year left to live: create a bucket list of the top five things you still want to do in your teaching career. Then, think about whether the schedule that you currently following will allow you to do these things or whether changes have to be made.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

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## **Adding Stillness to Our Days**

Need help deliberately carving out time in your day to relax or add stillness to your life? Coming up with cues can help to signal to yourself when it is time to abandon life's worries and just be with yourself can be useful. Use the below chart to help identify what cues can help you practice stillness (I have added my own example to get the ball rolling):

CUE	HOW I WILL GO ABOUT PRACTICING STILLNESS
When I approach the photocopier at the end of the school day.	Rather than photocopying for tomorrow's lessons right away, I will look out of the window and admire the neighbouring houses. I will try to stop thinking for two minutes and practice mindfulness.