

Book Recommendation:**A Guide to the Good Life: The Ancient Art of Stoic Joy*****William Braxton Irvine. Oxford University Press. 2008.****Aybala Yağmur Yılmaz and İpek Hadim | Bilkent University*

Philosophy professor William B. Irvine has published several books about stoic philosophy regarding the emotions and challenges of a stoic life, and with this book, he comes up with a comprehensive study promoting a stoic lifestyle that he argues will bring happiness to individuals. In the book, the author shares people's most scary thoughts about living life in a misguided way. According to him, to avoid a misspent life, people should follow a stoic life. Stoicism as a philosophy of life requires practice, and this book aims to be a guideline for those willing to practice Stoic philosophy. Briefly, Irvine argues that tranquility is the aim of practicing this way of living and it is about getting rid of bad emotions and becoming wiser with virtues. If a person is free from emotional suffering, practical wisdom will be achievable.

Modern individuals are deprived of having philosophical ideas and practices as a way of life because of the chaos in present-day conditions. This book is a great start to have philosophical ideas about how to live. Stoic ethics is contentious for some, however; for having a comparative perspective this book would be helpful. Although some Stoic ideas are questionable, life cannot be philosophized without dealing with questionable ideas. The author claims that all in all, Stoic philosophy is preferable because its practices are universally convenient. Overall, Irvine's book is a thought-provoking and well-written summary of applied Stoic philosophy.

At the beginning of the book, the author briefly presents the ancient history of Stoicism and the different philosophical schools of Ancient Greece. Later, he provides various methods and strategies to apply Stoic views into one's life. While talking about strategies, he gives examples from famous Stoics such as philosopher Epictetus and Roman emperor Marcus Aurelius, which makes the book connect with original thinkers of Stoicism. In the later part of the book, the chapters are designed to answer some common problems that prevent people to become happy such as the death of a loved one, desire for fame and anger. Irvine claims that none of these problems have the power to disrupt someone's tranquility. He does so by raising awareness of one's inner power to deal with the sadness that prevents one's happiness. In this way, he promotes the idea that the sources of sadness cannot have the power to harm people and people's reactions to them can be totally under the control of themselves. Therefore, by applying some methods a person can have the correct attitude to the

incidents and be affected less. In the last part, the author responds to critics regarding human psychology and so-called rivalry with Stoics.

At first sight, one may think about how this book differs from other best-seller self-help books. What this book differs from other well-being books is that it tries to show that a life spent in progressing toward truth and virtue is a happily spent life. In following this purpose, one's tranquility cannot be easily disrupted. Another strength of the book is that it uses a simple language and has a clear structure that makes it easier to read. The author also successfully parries some of the critics about the issue of believing fate. In sum, this is an excellent book for beginners who have difficulties finding peace in the modern world and searching for philosophical answers.