PRAISE FOR *A FIELD GUIDE TO A HAPPY LIFE*

"Pigliucci reimagines Epictetus's *Handbook* (a.k.a. the *Enchiridion*) and updates it for the twenty-first century. The result is a work more timely than ever, for it warns us of the dangers of superstition while it reminds us that reason and virtue are essential to happiness. Pigliucci speaks directly to us as readers and justifies his updates along the way. He thereby invites us to treat Epictetus and this very book as a reasonable guide rather than as an oracle from on high."

—Brian E. Johnson, Fordham University

"This is a bold, contemporary updating of Stoicism for the present day. Taking the ancient Stoic Epictetus as his inspiration, Pigliucci has rewritten Epictetus's *Handbook* in order to update it, make it more relevant to a modern

audience, but also to ensure that the core Stoic ideas shine through. The result is what Pigliucci calls Stoicism 2.0. This is a manual for living for those who approach the ancient Stoics as guides, not masters."

—John Sellars, author of *Stoicism*

"An engaging introduction to the Stoic life through an updated version of Epictetus's *Handbook*. An unusual and helpful feature is an appendix in which Pigliucci highlights his modifications of the original Stoic text to take account of modern thinking."

—Christopher Gill, author of *Greek Thought*

A FIELD GUIDE TO A HAPPY LIFE

53 BRIEF LESSONS FOR LIVING

MASSIMO PIGLIUCCI

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New York

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To my wife, Jennifer, whose love and support are making it easy to live a happy life.

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PART I

BETTING ON THE PHILOSOPHER-SLAVE

I.1

EPICTETUS AND ME

My life changed instantly, and for the better, in the fall of 2014.[1] At least, an important, impactful, and positive change began then, and is continuing now. The trigger was my first reading of a philosopher I had never heard of, despite the fact that he was a household name for eighteen centuries or thereabout: Epictetus. The words in questions were,

> I have to die. If it is now, well then I die now; if later, then now I will take my lunch, since the hour for lunch has arrived—and dying I will tend to later.[2]

It blew my mind. Who the heck was this first-century guy who in two sentences displayed both a delightful sense of

humor and a no-nonsense attitude toward life, and death? We don't really know much about him. Not even his real name. "Epíktetos" (ἐπίκτητος) in Greek simply means "acquired," since he was a slave, born around the year 55 in Hierapolis (modern-day Pamukkale, in western Turkey). He was bought by Epaphroditos, a wealthy freedman and secretary to the emperor Nero.

Sometime after moving to Rome, Epictetus began to study Stoic philosophy with the most prestigious teacher of the time, Musonius Rufus. That may have helped him on the occasion of a defining episode in his life, when he became crippled. Origen tells us how Epictetus handled it:

> Might you not, then, take Epictetus, who, when his master was twisting his leg, said, smiling and unmoved, "You will break my leg;" and when it was broken, he added, "Did I not tell you that you would break it?"[3]

Eventually Epictetus obtained his freedom and began to teach philosophy in Rome. At first, it didn't go too well. Referring to an episode that happened to him while he was expounding philosophy in the streets of the imperial capital, he recounted to one of his students,

> You run the risk of [someone] saying, "What business is that of yours, sir? What are you to me?" Pester him further,

> and he is liable to punch you in the nose. I myself was once keen for this sort of discourse, until I met with just such a reception.[4]

Apparently, he wasn't annoying just to people in the street. Like many other Stoics before and after him, he had a dangerous tendency to speak truth to power, so the emperor Domitian exiled him in the year 93. Undaunted, he moved to Nicopolis, in northwestern Greece, and established a school there. It became the most renowned place to learn philosophy in the entire Mediterranean, and a later emperor, Hadrian, stopped by to visit and pay his regards to the famous teacher.

Epictetus, just like his role model, Socrates, did not write anything down, focusing instead on teaching and talking to his many students. Thankfully, one of them was Arrian of Nicomedia, who later became a public servant, military commander, historian, and philosopher in his own right. The only two sets of teachings we have from Epictetus are Arrian's notes, collected in four books of *Discourses* (half of which are unfortunately lost) and a short handbook, or manual, known as the *Enchiridion*.

Epictetus lived a simple life, unmarried and owning few things. In his old age he adopted a friend's child, who would have otherwise been "exposed" to death, and raised him with the help of a woman. He died around 135 CE, approximately

eighty years old—a remarkable age for the time, or any time, really.[5]

Back to my own discovery of Epictetus. I was positively stunned. Why had I never come across his writings before? Or even his name (such as it is)? I was fairly well acquainted with the other major Stoics, particularly Seneca and Marcus Aurelius, but Epictetus didn't come up even during my graduate studies in philosophy! His star may have been eclipsed among modern professional philosophers, occupied as they too often are in precisely the sort of logical hairsplitting that the sage from Hierapolis disdained.[6] But his influence has been constant throughout the centuries, and continues to grow.

Not only did the writings and teachings of Epictetus, and in particular his handbook, influence the last of the Roman Stoics, the emperor Marcus Aurelius, but the *Enchiridion* was translated and updated by Christians throughout the Middle Ages, and used as a manual of spiritual exercises by monks in monasteries. The first printed edition, translated in Latin, was the work of Angelo Poliziano in 1479, who dedicated it to the Medici of Florence. The book arguably reached its popular height in the period 1550 to 1750, between the Renaissance and the Enlightenment. The first English translation (based on a French original) was by James Sandford in 1567. The Jesuit missionary Matteo Ricci translated it in Chinese in the early seventeenth century. John Harvard

bequeathed a copy to his newly founded college in 1638, and Adam Smith, Benjamin Franklin, and Thomas Jefferson all had copies in their personal libraries.

But Epictetus's manual appears in unexpected places throughout history. Shakespeare has Hamlet declaim, "There is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so" (Act 2, Scene 2), which is a slight paraphrase of *Enchiridion* 5. Epictetus is also mentioned in François Rabelais's *Pantagruel*; in *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman* by Laurence Sterne; in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* by James Joyce; and he is paraphrased by John Milton.

More recently, David Mamet and William H. Macy, who introduced the acting method known as practical aesthetics, list Epictetus among their sources. And so does Albert Ellis, the founder of rational emotive behavior therapy, the forerunner of cognitive behavioral therapy, the most successful evidence-based modern type of psychotherapy.

The 1998 novel *A Man in Full*, by Tom Wolfe, features a character whose life (in prison) is turned around by reading the *Enchiridion*. James (Bond) Stockdale, a fighter pilot who served and was captured in Vietnam, received the Medal of Honor, and later ran as vice president of the United States in 1992, tells us in his memoir that Epictetus saved his life during his years of imprisonment, torture, and solitary confinement in the infamous "Hanoi Hilton."

And have you heard of the Serenity Prayer? It was written in the early part of the twentieth century by the American theologian Reinhold Niebuhr, and is commonly adopted by twelve-step organizations like Alcoholics Anonymous. It goes like this:

> God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change,
> Courage to change the things I can,
> And wisdom to know the difference.

The same idea is also found in Solomon ibn Gabirol, an eleventh-century Jewish philosopher, as well as in Shantideva, an eighth-century Buddhist scholar. The earliest known version of it is from the very beginning of the *Enchiridion*, as we shall see shortly.

Arrian, the student of Epictetus to whom we owe both the *Enchiridion* and the *Discourses*, wrote to his friend Lucius Gellius,

> When [Epictetus] was speaking, he plainly had no other aim than to move the minds of those who were listening toward what is best. . . . When Epictetus himself was speaking, the listener was compelled to feel just what Epictetus wanted him to feel.[7]

The world is a better place because Arrian preserved Epictetus's teachings. Countless have benefited from his insights into how the cosmos work and how to behave toward others. More broadly, the endurance of Stoicism across the millennia is a testimony to the basic pragmatism of its doctrines and to the usefulness of adopting Stoic philosophy as our compass to live a eudaemonic life, a life worth living.

I'm sure Arrian sought to preserve Epictetus's words in part out of respect, love even, for his master. Nineteen centuries later, it is the same respect and (indirect) love that move me to propose this Field Guide, an attempt to update the *Enchiridion* and, with it, the entire Stoic system. My hope being that countless more people may benefit from the power of this philosophy to change lives for the better.

Some people will reasonably disagree with my proposed updates, just as the ancient Stoics disagreed among themselves about what was and was not entailed by their philosophy. Naturally, even this current version will eventually be made obsolete and in need of further changes by the continuous expansion of human understanding. Which is what the Stoics themselves predicted and welcomed.

One thing that hasn't changed much, though, is human nature itself, which is why words written for and by people who lived two millennia ago still resonate so clearly with us today. Those people did not have smartphones and social

media, airplanes and atomic weapons. But they loved, hoped, feared, lived, and died pretty much like we do today. And so long as those basic facts about humanity stay true, Stoicism will remain one of our most powerful tools for enduring life's inevitable setbacks and for enjoying more deeply life's many gifts—if we use humility and wisdom as our guides.

I.2

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

This *Field Guide to a Happy Life* is a *vademecum*; that is, it falls into a long tradition of portable books that people would want to "carry with them" (the literal translation of the Latin: *vade* = go; *mecum* = with me). I chose the title "Field Guide" because life happens "in the field," so to speak, not in the peace and quiet of libraries or one's own living room.

The first section of the book, which you are reading now, is meant as a general introduction to Stoicism and to Epictetus in particular. Use it whenever you need a quick refresher of the basic ideas.

The most crucial section is the central one, the actual Field Guide, which you can read with no background at all about Stoicism, Epictetus, or even philosophy. It comprises

fifty-three units, each paralleling a similar unit of the original manual. In a number of cases, the substance of my version is not different from that of Epictetus's version, in which case what you get is simply Epictetus rendered in modern language, and using more relatable examples.

But there are also twenty-seven units, that is, just about 50 percent of the total, in which my thinking diverges more or less sharply from that of Epictetus. Those are the crucial bits where I gradually carry out my project of updating Stoicism for the twenty-first century and beyond, what I ambitiously call Stoicism 2.0. The topics treated in the diverging units are still those with which Epictetus was concerned, but the way I approach them is different.

How different? I will discuss that in the third and last section of the Guide. Think of that section as a handy summary of how modern Stoicism—at least in my version—diverges from the "original," while of course keeping in mind that Stoicism has constantly been altered and updated, through the centuries and the millennia.

1.3

STOICISM 101

The story of Stoicism begins near the closing of the fourth century BCE, when a Phoenician merchant by the name of Zeno of Citium loses everything in a shipwreck and arrives at Athens. Diogenes Laertius tells us what happened next:[1]

> [Zeno] was shipwrecked on a voyage from Phoenicia to Piraeus with a cargo of purple. He went up into Athens and sat down in a bookseller's shop, being then a man of thirty. As he went on reading the second book of Xenophon's Memorabilia, he was so pleased that he inquired where men like Socrates were to be found. Crates passed by in the nick of time, so the bookseller pointed to him and said, "Follow yonder man." From that day he became Crates's pupil.

Xenophon's *Memorabilia* is a book about the life of Socrates, and Crates of Thebes was a prominent Cynic philosopher. That word, "Cynic," did not mean what it means today (neither did "Stoic," for that matter), but rather indicated a philosophy dedicated to a minimalist lifestyle and the cultivation of virtue, or the excellence of one's moral character. Zeno studied with Crates and a number of other philosophers, eventually deciding, around 300 BCE, to begin teaching on his own. He purposely chose to teach in an open space lined by columns, just off the main Athenian marketplace, the Agora. The space was known as the Stoa Poikile, or painted porch. Hence the term still used today: "Stoicism."

Zeno's new philosophy taught that we should live "according to nature," meaning not that we should run naked into the forest to hug trees (though there is nothing wrong about that), but rather that we should take human nature seriously. According to the Stoics, the most important characteristics that distinguish the human species from every other organism on earth are that we are capable of reason (which doesn't mean that we are always, or even often, reasonable) and that we are highly social. From these observations they derived the fundamental axiom of their philosophy: a good human life, what the ancients called a eudaemonic life, is one that is lived by applying reason to the betterment of society.

Consequently, the Stoics were cosmopolitan, thinking of the entirety of the human race as one big brotherhood and sisterhood. Unlike most other philosophical schools of their time, the Stoics believed that women's intellectual capacities were equal to those of men. They developed a very practical philosophy of life, an approach that is sometimes referred to as "the art of living."

One way to begin to think, and act, like a Stoic is by using the so-called cardinal virtues as a moral compass for everything you do. There are four cardinal virtues: practical wisdom, courage, justice, and temperance. They are defined in the following way:

Practical wisdom is the knowledge of what is truly good for us, as well as what is truly bad for us. For the Stoics, this boils down to the understanding that the only thing that is good is virtue, or excellence of character, and the only thing that is bad is vice, or defect of character. Everything else—including the sort of things most people desire, such as health, wealth, fame, and so forth—is "indifferent," meaning that they may be reasonably "selected," or preferred, but are morally neutral. In other words, being wealthy may be nice, but it does not make you a good person; being poor may be

uncomfortable, but it doesn't make you a bad person; or vice versa.

Courage is the propensity to act morally in the face of danger, or in situations where one would rather stay put and not expose oneself to criticism or retaliation.

Justice means acting in a way that is fair toward other people, treating them as you would want to be treated by them, and always respecting their dignity as human beings.

Temperance is the inclination to do things in right measure, neither too little nor too much.

One crucial aspect of Stoic doctrine is that the four virtues are highly interdependent, because they are all aspects of a more fundamental virtue, which can simply be referred to as wisdom (in the broad sense). One cannot, for instance, be courageous and yet unjust. If you brave a dangerous or uncomfortable situation for the wrong reason, you are not being morally courageous, you are just engaging in braggadocio, or worse.

For example, let's say that you witness your boss at work harassing a coworker. Should you intervene? The Stoic approach is to deploy the four virtues simultaneously. Practical wisdom reminds you that to intervene in this sort of situation is good for your character, while nonintervention

is bad for your character, so that's a yes vote. Courage demands that you step in despite the fact that your boss may retaliate against you. Justice says that you would not want to be harassed, and that you would appreciate someone else's taking your defense. So logic demands that you do the same for others. Finally, temperance suggests the proper way to respond to your boss: neither by quietly whispering your objection under your breath (too little), nor by charging at him and punching him in the face (too much).

While the Stoics devised a number of specific practical exercises[2] to become better human beings—from journaling to meditating to engaging in mild forms of temporary self-deprivation—a constant, mindful application of the four virtues gets you a long way toward improving your character and being helpful to what the Stoics call the human cosmopolis.

1.4

EPICTETEAN PHILOSOPHY 101

Epictetus lived several centuries after Zeno, and he introduced a number of innovations in Stoicism, including a radically new way of practicing it. This should not be surprising, as philosophies (and, indeed, even religions) are dynamic sets of ideas that are constantly challenged internally and externally. Consequently, all philosophies change and adapt themselves for practical use and relevance in their own time.

In fact, just two generations after Zeno, Chrysippus of Soli, one of the greatest logicians of the ancient world, had made so many adjustments to the original Stoicism that Diogenes Laertius comments, "But for Chrysippus, there had been no Porch," meaning that he significantly transformed

and improved the Stoic system.[1] Both before and after that the Stoics were challenged by the Epicureans and by the Academic Skeptics, and saw the evolution of three major periods of their philosophy (rather unimaginatively referred to as the early, middle, and late Stoa).

One of the innovations that Epictetus brought to Stoicism is the development of a sophisticated "role ethics," an approach to ethics based on taking seriously the different roles we all play in life: the general role of a human being in society at large; roles that we choose for ourselves, such as being a father, or a friend; and roles that the circumstances assign to us, such as being a son or daughter. Epictetus's role ethics was in turn an elaboration and advancement on a similar concept developed by Panaetius, a philosopher of the middle Stoa, who lived from 185 to 109 BCE.

There are two crucial aspects of Epictetean philosophy that I wish to focus on here, because they are pivotal to understanding, and properly using, this Field Guide: the so-called dichotomy of control and the three disciplines of Stoic practice.[2]

The dichotomy of control is introduced by Epictetus right at the beginning of the *Enchiridion*:

> Some things are within our power, while others are not. Within our power are opinion, motivation, desire, aversion, and, in a word, whatever is of our own doing; not within our

> power are our body, our property, reputation, office, and, in a word, whatever is not of our own doing.

In modern language, this boils down to the notion that we are in charge only and exclusively of our deliberate judgments, our endorsed opinions and values, and our decisions to act or not to act. Nothing else. We do not even control much of our mental life, which is largely automatic, according to modern cognitive science. Everything else—especially externals like health, wealth, reputation, and so forth, we can try to influence, but ultimately depend on a combination of other people's actions, as well as on the circumstances. Just like the abovementioned Serenity Prayer says, then, the fundamental insight here is that we need to cultivate the wisdom to be able to distinguish between what is and what is not under our control, the courage to tackle the first, and the equanimity to accept the second.

The dichotomy of control was not Epictetus's original invention, although he made it into the centerpiece of his brand of Stoicism. Compared to his predecessors, Epictetus articulated the dichotomy of control most clearly, dedicated time to exploring its consequences, and consistently applied it to his teachings. But one can find earlier versions of the notion in Seneca, whenever he contrasts virtue (which is up to us) with externals (which are up to Fortune).[3] The dichotomy of control is also implied in Cicero's *On the Ends of Good and*

Evil. While Cicero—who lived between 106 and 43 BCE—was an Academic Skeptic, not a Stoic, he was sympathetic to Stoicism and learned about it firsthand from the middle Stoic Posidonius. Indeed, Cicero proposed what I think is still the best metaphor I've come across to properly understand the dichotomy of control:

> If someone were to make it their purpose to take a true aim with a spear or arrow at some mark, their ultimate end, corresponding to the ultimate good as [the Stoics] pronounce it, would be to do all they could to aim straight: the person in this illustration would have to do everything to aim straight, yet, although they did everything to attain their purpose, their "ultimate end," so to speak, would be what corresponded to what we call the Chief Good in the conduct of life, whereas the actual hitting of the mark would be in our phrase "to be chosen" but not "to be desired."[4]

Consider carefully what is and is not under the archer's control. She is in complete charge of selecting and taking care of the bow and the arrows; of practicing shooting at a target; of selecting the precise moment in which to let the arrow go. After that, however, nothing is under her control: the target, an enemy soldier, say, may become aware of the arrow and move out of range; or a sudden gust of wind may ruin the most perfect shot.

It comes naturally to think that the dichotomy is too strict: surely there are a number of things that fall in between the two "control" and "no control" categories. This led modern Stoic William Irvine to propose a "trichotomy" comprising control, influence, and no control.[5] To my mind, this suggestion is a mistake, one that could end up destroying one of the foundations of Stoicism. Think of it this way. As clearly illustrated in Cicero's passage, everything we influence can in turn be broken down into the two components of control and no-control: practicing archery belongs to the first, a gust of wind to the second; the choice of when to let the arrow go to the first, a sudden evasive maneuver by the target to the second. And so on. Indeed, when we say that we can "influence" an outcome what we mean is precisely that *some components* of the action are up to us and some are not—by breaking our understanding of things into parts, we see that just what Epictetus stated is true.

The most important passage in Cicero's metaphor is the very last one: hitting the mark is to be chosen, but not to be desired. Obviously, the archer intends to hit the target, that's the whole point. Similarly, we prefer to be healthy rather than sick, wealthy rather than poor, and so forth. But because these outcomes are not entirely under our control—and assuming we have done our best regarding what is under our control—then our self-worth should not depend on hitting the target (or being healthy, wealthy, etc.). In life, sometimes

we win and sometimes we lose, so equanimity toward outcomes (we "choose" them but we don't "desire" them) is the only reasonable attitude to cultivate.

The second crucial aspect of Epictetus's philosophy with which we will concern ourselves here comprises his so-called **three disciplines**, which essentially substitute for the four virtues discussed above as our moral compass in life. The three disciplines are as follows:

The discipline of desire (and aversion)

According to the Stoics, we have a tendency to desire (and have aversion to) the wrong things, and this is a major cause of our unhappiness.[6] Specifically, we desire the by now familiar set of externals, including health, wealth, reputation, and so on. That is, we desire things that are, ultimately, not under our control. Similarly, we are averse to losing those same things. The problem is, Seneca reminds us, that by desiring what is not under our control, we put our happiness in the whimsical hands of Fortune.

That is not a smart gamble. Far better it is to redirect our desires toward the things that we actually control, in other words, our considerate judgments. Why? Because that way our chances of living a eudaemonic life are left entirely to our own efforts, not to the vagaries of Fortune. We can still sensibly prefer to be healthy, wealthy, and so forth, but we accept the basic reality that—regardless of our efforts—sometimes

we get those things and sometimes we don't. And even when we do get them, such possession is transitory, because everything changes all the time.[7]

How on earth do we begin to realign our desires and aversions so drastically? By way of the two basic steps of Stoic practice, which have also been the inspiration for modern cognitive behavioral therapy: a deliberate, reasoned decision (the cognitive step), and the implementation of changes in our life aimed at habituating ourselves to the new pattern (the behavioral step). For instance, every time you face a challenging task or situation, make a habit to reflect on it and write down a list of aspects of the task or situation that are under your control, as well as a list of those that are not under your control. Then, use the lists to guide your attention, time, and efforts on elements of the first list: aspects of the task or situation that are under your control. Remind yourself, by way of a short mantra, if need be, that elements you've assigned to the second list are not up to you. Just like with anything else, from driving a car to playing an instrument, to going to the gym, mindful efforts do the trick over time: the more you do it, the easier it gets.

The discipline of action

A fundamental aspect of human nature, according to the Stoics, is that we are eminently social beings. We can survive, under extreme circumstances, on our own, but we don't

thrive other than in relation to others. Indeed, a major source of well-being for humans is found in meaningful relationships we have with fellow members of the cosmopolis—the worldwide community of all human beings—particularly with friends and family. The discipline of action, then, is concerned with learning how to properly act in the world, both toward ourselves and toward others.

Here is where the abovementioned role ethics of Epictetus becomes relevant, as we go through life learning how to balance the various roles we play in society. A typical pertinent Stoic exercise is the evening philosophical diary, a way to develop the habit to reflect on where we have gone wrong, what we have done well, and what we could improve.

Epictetus explicitly advises us in this respect: "Admit not sleep into your tender eyelids till you have reckoned up each deed of the day—How have I erred, what done or left undone? So start, and so review your acts, and then for vile deeds chide yourself, for good be glad."[8] The goal is to implement the same two steps, cognitive and behavioral, with the aim of becoming better human beings, which means becoming more thoughtful and more helpful to society at large, the human cosmopolis.

The discipline of assent

There is an important way in which the discipline of desire and action connect: they both require good judgment on our

part. Accordingly, the third discipline, of assent, is meant to improve our faculty of judgment, what Epictetus refers to as *prohairesis*. In a sense, in fact, the major goal of Epictetus's version of Stoic training is to improve our capacity to arrive at good judgments. The reason for this goes back to the early Stoa. Both Cleanthes (the second head of the Stoic school) and Chrysippus (the third) had put forth the notion that wisdom *is* the ability to properly assess our impressions. "Impression" is a technical Stoic term meaning our first take on either our sensorial perceptions or our internal thoughts and feelings.

For instance, if I'm strolling down the old streets of Rome and I see some gelato in a shop window, my first impression will likely be that the gelato is good and that I *need* some of it. Right now. However, my *prohairesis* immediately kicks in and says to the impression, "Hold on a minute here, maybe you are not what you pretend to be, let's consider things for a moment, before we act." Indeed, upon reflection, I find a number of good reasons not to walk into the shop to get the gelato: it isn't going to be good for my waistline, and therefore my health; and moreover, I am on my way to dinner with my wife, and I certainly don't want to spoil my appetite. As a result of this more careful consideration of the impression, I decide to forgo the gelato. (I must immediately admit, however, that sometimes the initial impression trumps my *prohairesis*. As it turns out, I'm not a sage yet!)

The situation I just described is precisely how we practice refining our judgment: We take the course of action that is the opposite of the message in the famous commercial. We don't "just do it," we pause, think about it, and we'll likely see that we don't actually need to "do it." Again, implement these steps over and over and you'll get better at your judgment calls. Which in turn will make it easier for you to realign your desires, as well as to properly interact with other people. The three disciplines, while they are presented sequentially for pedagogic purposes, in reality always act in concert: in life you simultaneously have to deal with your desires and aversions, to act in the world, and to arrive at the best judgments you can.

Not at all coincidentally, the central part of this book, which you are about to read, is largely organized along the three disciplines of Epictetus. Section 1 of the Field Guide introduces the dichotomy of control; sections 2–29 deal with the discipline of desire and aversion; sections 30–41 with the discipline of action; sections 42–45 with the discipline of assent; sections 46–52 concern more generally how to live philosophically; and section 53 presents a short selection of my favorite quotes from Epictetus.