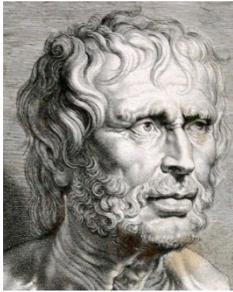


## Measuring Your Stoic Ideals



Seneca (4 BC - 65 AD)

*"Choose someone whose way of life as well as words, and whose very face as mirroring the character that lies behind it, have won your approval. Be always pointing him out to yourself either as your guardian or as your model. This is a need, in my view, for someone as a standard against which our characters can measure themselves. Without a ruler to do it against you won't make the crooked straight."* — Seneca, *Letters From a Stoic*

As the above quote from the Stoic philosopher Seneca suggests, the Stoics, like CBT therapists, encouraged practitioners to use thought exercises to train their minds toward positive, practical, and beneficial outcomes. Reframing a situation in order to not be swamped by an emotion, for example—like imagining that a driver who cuts you off is rushing home to an emergency instead of just being mean and aggressive—is a little thought practice or exercise a Stoic teacher like Epictetus might recommend to curb your road rage and prevent a self-caused disaster.

So, here is a typical Stoic exercise for your reflective pleasure.

***DIRECTIONS:*** Describe someone you know (or know about) who best embodies the Stoic ideals that we investigated in this section of the course, like virtuousness in everyday living, rational decision making, self-control with flexibility, insightfulness, leadership—especially in emergencies—problem solving, success in life and not just material success, ability to be happy in good times and bad, ability to find the positive aspect of negative situations, and so forth ... aspects about that person that you admire. 300-350 words, paragraphed.

**SUGGESTION:** Check out [9 Stoic Principles](#) for a little refresher on the basic virtues of Stoicism. It is best if the person who you think embodies Stoic ideals is someone you know personally (you don't need to reveal their identity if you don't want to), but it could also be a public figure or someone you know about and admire and want to emulate. I will leave that up to you. I look forward to reading your insightful post.