***Using Journaling to Make Philosophical Ideas Relevant – Alfredo Mac Laughlin – AAPT 2021***

**Handout 5: THE STOIC JOURNAL**

The goal of this activity is to journal the experience of trying to live during a week practicing some of the Stoics’ tenets and techniques. You should choose a time to begin that is convenient, and try as much as you can to journal through seven consecutive days. (If you miss one day then continue, until you have seven days total).

The activities consist in (a) filling up a self-monitoring sheet (with at least one reflection per day, though you can add more), and (b) attempting some specifically Stoic-type decisions that set aside pleasure and comfort to reflect on them.

(a) Self-monitoring: At some time during the day, you should reflect on some situation that caused in you some distress or upsetting feelings, and remember what feelings that situation created, and what thoughts accompanied those feelings. Then reflect on whether this is something under your control or not (is it “up to you” or not?), and think of the actions you took to face that situation.

[*To find about this activity go to modernstoicism.com and look for the “Stoic Week Handbook”*; the original material is copyrighted and I don’t want to go over the author’s rights]

When turning in the Journal, you should turn in too some version of this record sheet.

(b) Try every day to put yourself in a situation in which you are denying yourself common pleasures and comfort. (Don’t do something that will get you sick, like going out without a coat when it is very cold.) Write about them, and how it went and what you learned, in a different place (i.e. not in the record sheet). You will have to turn in a version of this, so if you write in a notebook with other reflections, scan/print or photocopy before turning it in.

Here are some ideas for Stoic-like activities:

* Get up of bed with a jump as soon as the alarm wakes you up.
* When going to Cosgrove for lunch, plan to eat from, say, “the second tray in the pizza stall” before knowing what they are offering. Or put on the plate everything from the left side of the salad stall and nothing from the right. Stick to your decision once you find out and finish your plate.
* Sit in the first open place you find next to someone else, even if you don’t know the other people, and strike a conversation with them.
* Call and talk with someone with whom you find it difficult to do so. (Don’t tell them you are doing this because of a Stoic thing!)
* Put on the clothes on the top of your drawer and wear those during the day, even if they don’t match. Don’t worry about what people say.
* Use cold water instead of hot when taking a shower.
* Take stairs instead of the elevator if you don’t often do so. Walk to the grocery store instead of driving.
* Spend ten minutes in silence in a retired place surrounded by nature.
* Organize your stuff instead of watching a show.