

Taking a stoic approach is a mind trick. Philosopher Massimo Pigliucci explains why changing how you see things is important.

The stoic's guide to happiness

A lot of the day-to-day **hardships** are the result of the fact that we tend to get things out of proportion. We think that minor inconveniences are somehow these big obstacles and of course in thinking that way we make the big obstacles.

The approach of **stoicism** is what you might consider a **mind trick**, meaning that it is about changing your perspective, changing how you see things.

Talking about mind tricks might seem like it's not really something serious, but how we perceive reality is a mind trick. We make judgements about what happens to us all the time.

The stoic approach is to say, look, the train is going to be five minutes late. The judgement that it is a catastrophe, that this is really horrible, that's just **your own doing**. It's nothing to do with the world as it is, it's your perception.

Try to divide every situation into two components:

'What is it I can do?' and

'What is it that is outside of my control and therefore I don't really need to worry about it?'

At some point your parents are **gonna** die, some of your friends are gonna die.

Certain things are not under your control, and if they are not under your control the only choice you have is either to **endure** them or **despair**. But if you despair you are wasting a lot of your energy and it doesn't do you any good, in fact you make your situation worse.

The idea is to **shift** our emotional spectrum away from destructive emotions such as **anger** and **fear** and **hatred**, and towards cultivating positive emotions such as love and joy and a sense of justice.

Thinking about these things **ahead of time** prepares your mind to **deal with** them as best as you can.

Which is correct A or B

Term	A	B
Hardship	Suffering/difficulty	Happiness/prosperity
Stoicism	Kick up a fuss, protest	resignation, acceptance, patience
Mind trick	illusion	The real thing
Your own doing	Not your fault, nothing to do with you	Be entirely responsible
endure	Go through, cope	Rebel, fight against
despair	Be Pessimistic, lose hope	Be optimistic, full of hope
shift	Move	Keep still
anger	Pleasure, good mood	Annoyance, irritation, rage
fear	Calmness, confidence, courage	Terror, fright, alarm, horror
hatred	intense dislike, hate, detestation	Love, like, desire
Ahead of time	Late, after the time expected, behind schedule	in advance, being prepared, beforehand
Deal with	Handle, manage a situation, do business with:	Not being able to control, impossible to cope with