



# SMART Recovery San Diego

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FUNCTIONALITY

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# SMART Recovery San Diego

## Discussion Topic: Stoicism in SMART

By Megan Goodrich, 2024

Stoicism is an ancient philosophy founded in Athens in the early 3rd century BC. This school of thought is known for its practical approach to life, providing guidance on how to live a virtuous and fulfilled existence. Many Stoic principles can be applied to the challenges of addictive behavior. Here are some Stoic ideas and how they might be relevant to overcoming problematic behaviors:

**Mindfulness and Awareness:** Applied to addictive behaviors, this involves being conscious of your thoughts, emotions, and actions related to substance use. Mindfulness can help you identify triggers and make more intentional choices.

**Acceptance of Impermanence:** Stoicism teaches that everything is temporary. This concept can be applied to addictive behaviors by acknowledging that cravings, emotions, and difficult situations will pass. Recognizing the impermanence of these challenges can help you endure them with greater resilience.

**Developing Virtues:** Stoicism emphasizes cultivating virtues such as courage, wisdom, and self-discipline. Developing these virtues can empower you to face the challenges of addiction, make more helpful choices, and build a more fulfilling life.

**Visualizing Future Consequences:** Stoicism encourages individuals to consider the potential consequences of their actions. In the case of addictive behaviors, this means reflecting on the long-term impact of substance use on physical health, relationships, and overall life satisfaction.

**Practicing Gratitude:** Stoicism encourages gratitude for what you have in the present moment. By focusing on positive aspects of your life, you can counteract negative thoughts and emotions that might contribute to addictive behaviors.

**Epictetus' Dichotomy of Control:** Epictetus, a Stoic philosopher, introduced the idea of the dichotomy of control. Distinguishing between things you can control (your thoughts, actions) and things you cannot (external events, other people's actions). Applying this concept to addictive behavior involves focusing on changing your own behavior rather than trying to control external factors.

**Learning from Setbacks:** Stoicism encourages viewing setbacks as opportunities for learning and growth. Instead of dwelling on relapses or mistakes, use them as lessons to refine your strategies and strengthen your commitment to overcoming your unhelpful habits.

### Questions:

- Can you think of a time when you practiced one of these elements of Stoicism in your own change process and can you tell us about it?
- Are there any Stoic ideas that you were surprised by?
- Talk about the difficulties or negative opinions people might have when using Stoic ideas to overcome unhelpful behaviors.
- Did you think of any related SMART tools while reading the information above? Which one(s)?
- What else would you like to talk about?

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