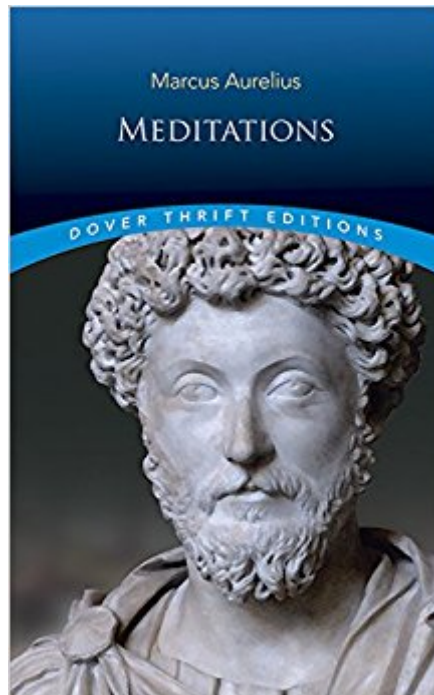


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Meditations (Dover Thrift Editions)



Synopsis

One of the world's most famous and influential books, *Meditations*, by the Roman emperor Marcus Aurelius (A.D. 121–180), incorporates the stoic precepts he used to cope with his life as a warrior and administrator of an empire. Ascending to the imperial throne in A.D. 161, Aurelius found his reign beset by natural disasters and war. In the wake of these challenges, he set down a series of private reflections, outlining a philosophy of commitment to virtue above pleasure and tranquility above happiness. Reflecting the emperor's own noble and self-sacrificing code of conduct, this eloquent and moving work draws and enriches the tradition of Stoicism, which stressed the search for inner peace and ethical certainty in an apparently chaotic world. Serenity was to be achieved by emulating in one's personal conduct the underlying orderliness and lawfulness of nature. And in the face of inevitable pain, loss, and death • the suffering at the core of life • Aurelius counsels stoic detachment from the things that are beyond one's control and a focus on one's own will and perception. Presented here in a specially modernized version of the classic George Long translation, this updated and revised edition is easily accessible to contemporary readers. It not only provides a fascinating glimpse into the mind and personality of a highly principled Roman of the second century but also offers today's readers a practical and inspirational guide to the challenges of everyday life.

Book Information

Series: Dover Thrift Editions

Paperback: 112 pages

Publisher: Dover Publications (July 11, 1997)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 048629823X

ISBN-13: 978-0486298238

Product Dimensions: 5.5 x 0.3 x 8.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 2.4 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.3 out of 5 stars 1,588 customer reviews

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Humanities > History > Ancient #1 in Books > Literature & Fiction > Ancient & Medieval

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Customer Reviews

One measure, perhaps, of a book's worth, is its intergenerational pliancy: do new readers acquire it and interpret it afresh down through the ages? The *Meditations of Marcus Aurelius*, translated and introduced by Gregory Hays, by that standard, is very worthwhile, indeed. Hays suggests that its most recent incarnation--as a self-help book--is not only valid, but may be close to the author's intent. The book, which Hays calls, fondly, a "haphazard set of notes," is indicative of the role of philosophy among the ancients in that it is "expected to provide a 'design for living.'" And it does, both aphoristically ("Think of yourself as dead. You have lived your life. Now take what's left and live it properly.") and rhetorically ("What is it in ourselves that we should prize?"). Whether these, and other entries ("Enough of this wretched, whining monkey life.") sound life-changing or like entries in a teenager's diary is up to the individual reader, as it should be. Hays's introduction, which sketches the life of Marcus Aurelius (emperor of Rome A.D. 161-180) as well as the basic tenets of stoicism, is accessible and jaunty. --H. O'Billovich --This text refers to an alternate Paperback edition.

Here, for our age, is [Marcus's] great work presented in its entirety, strongly introduced and freshly, elegantly translated. Robert Fagles --online --This text refers to an alternate Paperback edition.

lumps different translations together as merely variations on how the book is delivered. In this case, the Hays translation is the hardcover, while the authors who translated the paperback and Kindle versions aren't specified. So use the tools available (look inside, free sample) to get an idea of the language used by the author and see if it's something you'd like to read, or if a different translation suits you better.

I don't know who did the translation for this one but I found it very difficult to follow. This prompted me to look around and I found another translation by George Long (*Thoughts of Marcus Aurelius Antoninus* 1862). Even though it's not a recent translation, Long's version is often easier to understand. Compare the translations of the first paragraph for example: This version: Of my grandfather Verus I have learned to be gentle and meek, and to refrain from all anger and passion. From the fame and memory of him that begot me I have learned both shamefastness and manlike behaviour. Of my mother I have learned to be religious, and bountiful; and to forbear, not only to do, but to intend any evil; to content myself with a spare diet, and to fly all such excess as is incidental to great wealth. Of my great-grandfather, both to frequent public schools and auditories, and to get me good and able teachers at home; and that I ought not to think much, if upon such occasions, I were at excessive charges. George Long's version: From my grandfather Verus I learned good

morals and the government of my temper. From the reputation and remembrance of my father, modesty and a manly character. From my mother, piety and beneficence, and abstinence, not only from evil deeds, but even from evil thoughts; and further, simplicity in my way of living, far removed from the habits of the rich. From my great-grandfather, not to have frequented public schools, and to have had good teachers at home, and to know that on such things a man should spend liberally. Having said this however, it's still worth comparing both translations which are free on the Kindle.

Meditations by Marcus Aurelius – “The happiness of your life depends upon the quality of your thoughts: therefore, guard, accordingly, and take care that you entertain no notions unsuitable to virtue and reasonable nature.” Before I get into details, I must say that reading Meditations was one of the hardest, but most rewarding experiences in my own personal growth. The book has done so much to ferment my prior beliefs and has helped a lot to broaden my mind and encourage me to be all that I can be. It is very difficult in today's world to believe in anything, whether it be divine beings, other people, or even ourselves. It is an epidemic that buries potential and love deep down and leaves anger and frustration to dictate life. There is no reason to feel unhappy, unfulfilled, or unappreciated, and Meditations by Marcus Aurelius offers advice to anyone who is looking for self help, self love, and a rational way of directing life. Before reading this book it is interesting to know the man that wrote it. Marcus Aurelius was the last of The Five Good Emperors of Ancient Rome. He took the title of Augustus after the death of his adopted father, Antoninus Pius, the adopted son of the late Emperor Hadrian. However Marcus Aurelius had tried to pass on the emperorship, for he preferred a much more simple philosophic lifestyle. He accepted the honor with the sole demand that Lucius Verus, his adopted brother, would share the seat with him. Sharing his seat of power is the one move that summarizes Marcus Aurelius's entire life; the fear of power and the duty embedded in him through his interest in Stoicism, a philosophy that grounds itself on self-restraint, reason, and fate. His work is a reflection of his life, and the words inscribed in Meditations are the product of his own thoughts and his own experiences. While reading this book good feelings will begin to surface through introspection, and in turn bad feelings will be expelled. In my everyday life quotes from his book swim in my mind when I am met with difficult situations, and they enable me to make smarter more thought out and rational decisions. It is fascinating and rewarding each time I don't simply act on impulse. This book is not for entertainment, not for adventure, and it is definitely not a “light read.” It is a book that will help those who seek help, irritate

those who don't, and fascinate those who wish to learn and grow.

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