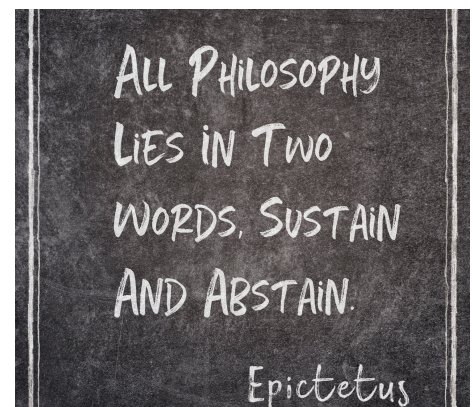




A Stoic's Guide To Content Marketing



The Connection Between Content Marketing And Philosophy

What's the connection between content marketing and philosophy? That's the question I asked myself when I started thinking about this white paper. Timelessness. That's the word that came to mind. The timelessness of grappling with the same ideas in new arenas.

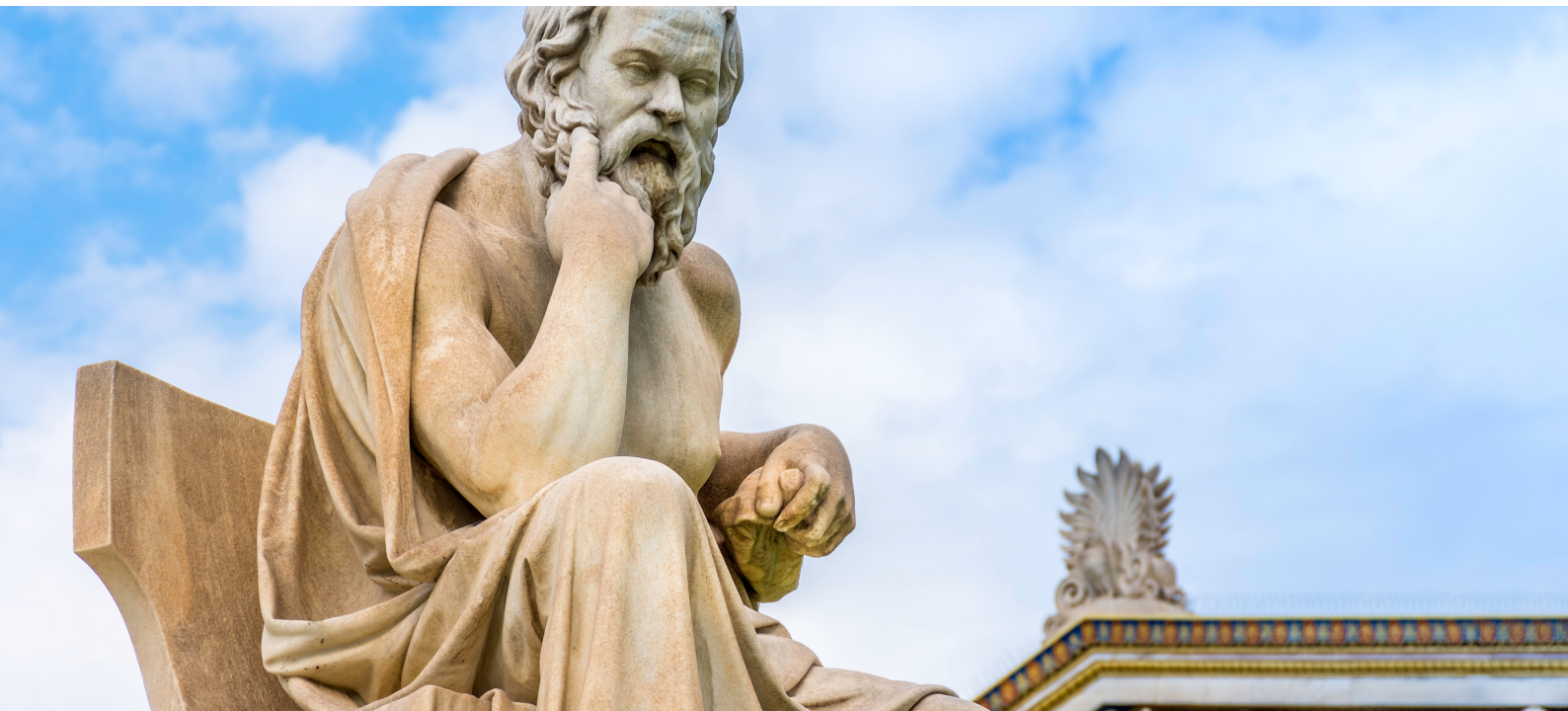
From the days of antiquity, people used philosophy to try and understand the world and people use it today to try to find answers to the same questions. Only it's not confined to physical spaces anymore. It's online. It's a digital search for meaning through brands sharing their own stories, ideas and values that resonate with our own.

Content marketing has become a vehicle in which we all express our personal philosophies online and offline. For me, the philosophy of Stoicism has helped in my role as a content marketer and it could do the same for you. (Fate permitting).

In this white paper, you'll learn what Stoicism is, how to apply it to your job as a content marketer and pick up tips and resources from ancient Stoics who were creating their own brand tone of voice before it was cool.

What Is Stoicism?

The popular definition of a stoic is someone who suppresses their emotions. Think Mr Spock or a robot. This is considered little 's' stoicism, a character trait rather than a philosophy that has existed for 2000 years and promotes positive emotions, resilience and a healthy outlook on mental health.



"The only true wisdom is in knowing you know nothing." - Socrates

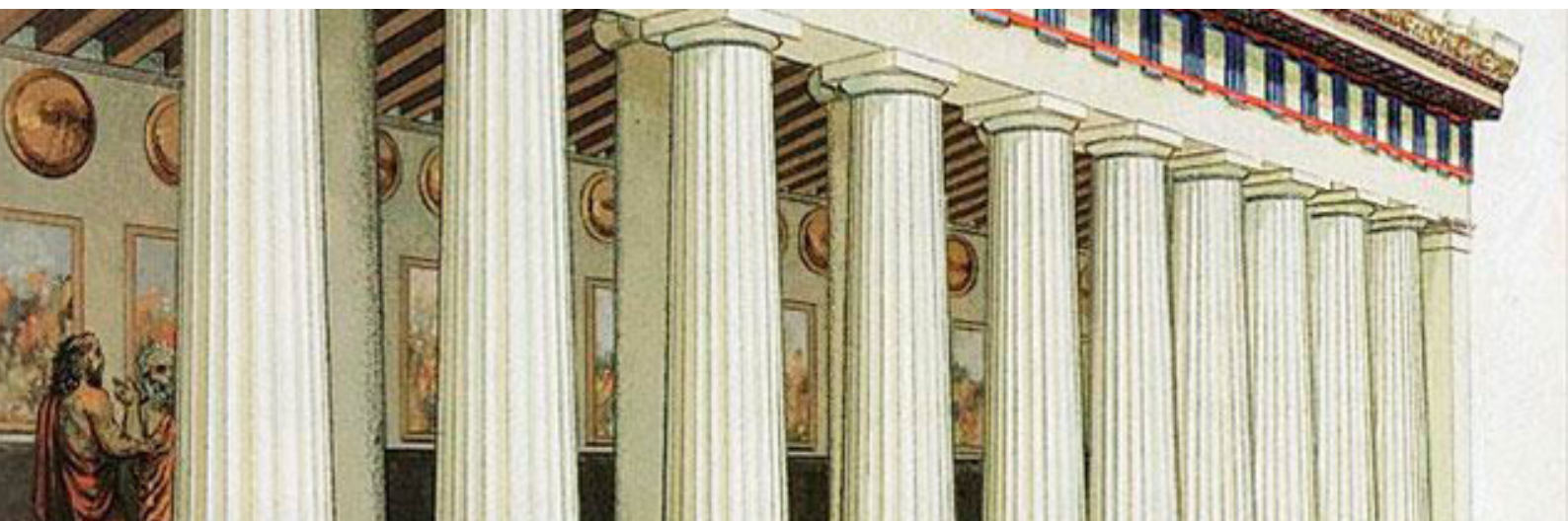
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IT ALL STARTED WITH A SHIPWRECK....

The story of Stoicism began in the 4th century BCE by a Phoenician (Cyprian) merchant named Zeno of Citium, who was shipwrecked on his way to Athens and lost everything. Unsure of where to turn, Zeno found himself at a bookshop and started reading Xenophon's *Memorabilia*, a book Xenophon wrote about his teacher Socrates.



This Socrates bloke sounds like he knows what he's talking about. Zeno thought to himself, "Where can men like this Socrates be found?" He asked the book seller. As he spoke these words, resident Cynic Crates of Thebes happened to be passing by and the bookseller pointed him out as someone to follow. From that day, Zeno became Crates' student.



Learning from Crates, Zeno found himself drawn to the minimalistic lifestyle of the Cynics and combined those teachings with the lessons of other philosophers. Around 300 BCE, he set off on his own and started speaking in the Agora, the Athenian marketplace. This space was known as the Stoa, or the painted porch, where Stoicism takes its name from.

Zeno's philosophy became built on 'living in accordance with nature' (No. Not running naked through the trees). He meant living according to human nature, respecting each other, the environment and working towards the betterment of society across four cardinal virtues:

THE 4 STOIC VIRTUES



1. Wisdom: Having the wisdom to know what is truly good and what is truly bad for us i.e. what is good is excellence of character and what is bad is defect of character.

Everything else e.g. money, fame, health is a 'nice-to-have' but it doesn't make you a good person. Being poor may be uncomfortable but it doesn't make you a bad person and vice versa.



"Sometimes even to live is an act of courage." - Seneca

2. Courage: To act morally in dangerous situations or in scenarios where you would rather not open yourself up to criticism or retaliation.



3. Justice: To be able to act fairly to all people regardless of background and treat them with dignity.



4. Self-mastery/Temperance: To find the right balance in all your daily activities.

"No man is free who is not master of himself." - Epictetus

How To Apply Stoicism To Content Marketing

From a content marketing perspective, Stoicism has a lot of practical benefits:

- Improve your focus on key content creation tasks
- Get better at dealing with difficult clients and negative feedback
- Build a foundation for developing new content marketing strategies
- Become a better communicator

While we are
postponing
life speeds by.
Seneca



6 Stoic Practices To Apply To Content Marketing

1. Focus on what you can and can't control

A guiding principle of Stoicism is determining what you can and can't control and it can be applied in various situations. Maybe a client has asked you for multiple edits for a blog and you feel frustrated. Or you're chasing feedback and haven't heard back in a while.

What you control is how you react to these events. Taking the time to assess the situation can put things into perspective and help to overcome challenges.

2. Take The View From Above with clients

The View From Above is a Stoic technique that calls for you to take a bigger, objective view of the world. This can involve imagining looking at yourself from a distance and moving out until you see yourself from above.

This technique may be useful for overcoming challenges with a difficult client, as it acts as a reminder that all situations are small compared to a big picture view.

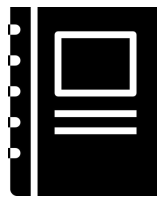
3. Practice the premeditation of adversity

The premeditation of adversity is useful for preparing for setbacks and involves imagining some of the worst possible scenarios on a daily basis. This isn't a pessimistic exercise because it's learning how to prepare for the worst so you can be primed to respond better in the likelihood of the rehearsed scenario.

For example, you might have an upcoming meeting with a client and your copy is key to the big pitch. You could imagine yourself being face to face with the client and them asking you different questions about the direction of a campaign.

You could then create content that solves these challenges before they arrive.

4. Start a journal



Ancient Stoics like Seneca and Marcus Aurelius regularly journaled and reflected on their day. Starting your own journal is great for indulging your creativity and finding new ways to improve.

This might involve writing down new content ideas, creating reminders of important tasks, positive quotes or anything that makes you more reflective.

5. Collaborate and be cosmopolitan

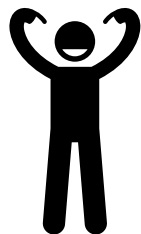


Whether you're a freelancer or you work in an agency, content marketing doesn't have to be a one-man (or woman) show. It's easy to be stoic and not talk about any problems you're facing with a brief, misgivings about clients etc.

Remember this is the bad kind of little 's' stoicism. Big 'S' Stoicism teaches that we need to feel our emotions, react appropriately and ask for help when necessary. As Marcus Aurelius said in *The Meditations*:

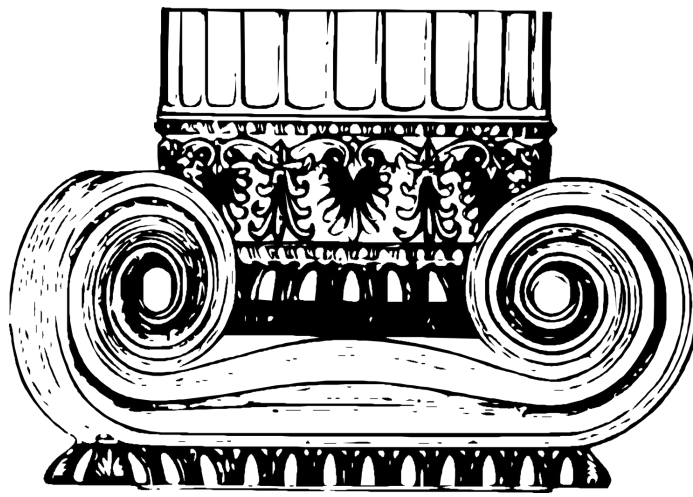
"Don't be ashamed of needing help. You have a duty to fulfill just like a soldier on the wall of battle. So what if you are injured and can't climb up without another soldier's help?"

6. Ego is the enemy

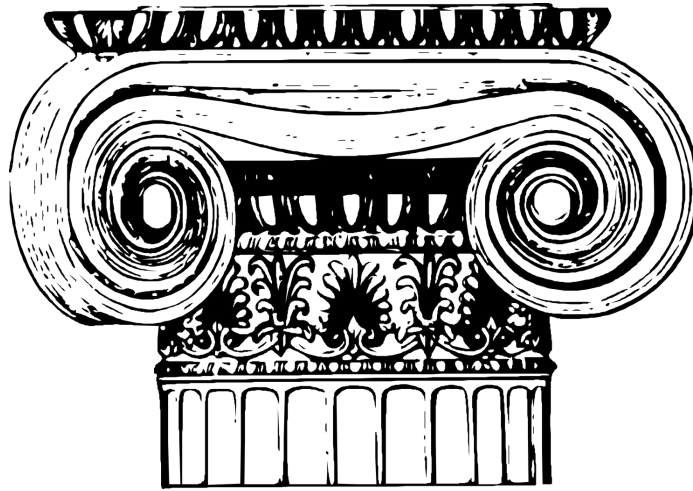


A Stoic content marketer takes their ego out of the equation. It's about writing the content that is appropriate for the brief and the situation. It's about working with people who know more than you and asking for their help. It's about showing up and doing the work and fulfilling the role that has been given to you that day.

It won't always be easy and it won't always be fun. It will be the way to grow as a person and become better at your craft.



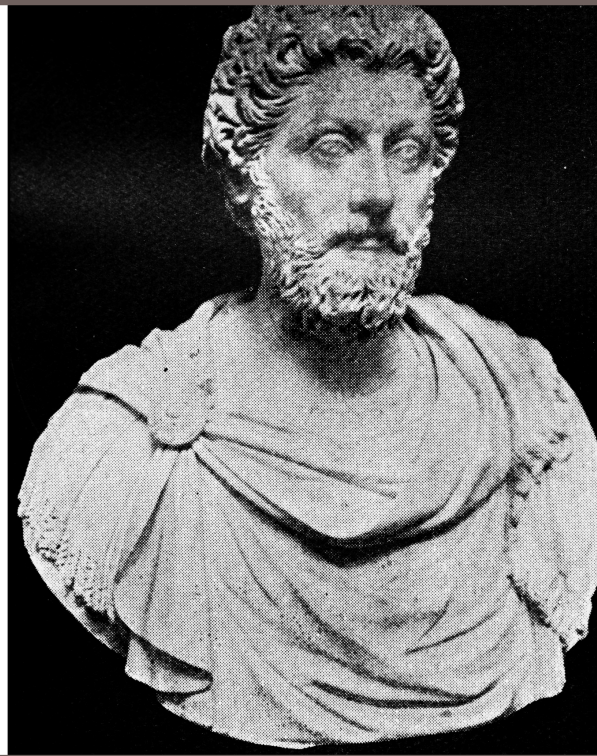
Content Marketing Strategies From Ancient Stoics



Brand tone of voice is a vital part of content marketing and all brands have a personal philosophy. It's how they tell their story, how they present their mission statement, how they choose to connect with customers, how they treat employees and how they stand out in a world filled with companies vying for the same audience.

The ancient Stoics were adept at creating their own brand of philosophy and here's a look at the brand tone of voice of Marcus Aurelius and Seneca through analysing their written work:

Marcus Aurelius



"The happiness of your life depends upon the quality of your thoughts."

Tone

- Serious
- Professional
- Thoughtful
- Funny
- Conversational

Cadence

- Abrupt
- Urgent
- Multiple grammar contractions indicate conversational tone
- Passages from The Meditations arranged into lists reveal a precise, orderly personality

Language

- Vivid
- Colourful
- Descriptive
- Educated

What makes your company unique?

What unique value do you offer your customers?

What is your company's culture like?

How do you present yourself to customers?

What are the key messages you need to get across?

HOW TO WRITE LIKE A ROMAN EMPEROR



- 1. Use vivid imagery to make your point:** Marcus liked to use metaphors and symbolism to break down technical information to himself and drive home simple messages too.
- 2. Strike a conversational tone:** In *The Meditations*, Marcus constantly addresses himself as 'you' and this technique makes the reader think he is also addressing them and it creates a stronger connection.
- 3. Create lists:** When explaining complicated information or summing up points, write your content as bullet points to save time. Marcus loved making lists.
- 4. Write punchy sentences:** Marcus wrote many short sentences to remind himself of key points. This approach can also be used to convey the right information to your readers.

Seneca



"It is the power of the mind to be unconquerable."

Tone

- Witty
- Aphoristic
- Erudite
- Polished
- Resonant

Cadence

- Punchy
- Flowing
- Twisting and turning
- A strong focus on multiple themes and backtracking
- Relatively free with grammar across his writing

Language

- Vivid
- Specific
- Cultivated
- Self-deprecating

"WE SHOULD
ALWAYS ALLOW
SOME TIME
TO ELAPSE,
FOR TIME
DISCLOSES
THE TRUTH."

WRITING TIPS FROM SENECA



1. Use rhetoric: Seneca was a master of using rhetoric in his speeches and letters. This is the art of persuasive writing that can evoke certain emotions and thoughts within a reader and is great for developing a personal connection.



2. Crack jokes: Seneca was a self-deprecating writer, unafraid of poking fun at himself to elicit a response in the reader. Experiment with humour in your work and make sure it comes off as natural in your own tone of voice.



3. Tell a narrative: Seneca's writing style is packed with flowing sentences that wind back on each other. Building a narrative creates anticipation and makes the reader want to continue with your content.

Modern Stoic Marketers

Today, Stoicism has experienced a resurgence. There are several people within the space who are worth learning from to bring philosophy into your marketing strategies:



Ryan Holiday

<https://dailystoic.com>

Credited with being a modern populariser of Stoicism, Ryan Holiday is an author, entrepreneur and podcast host.

Key works:

- The Daily Stoic Podcast
- The Obstacle Is The Way
- Lives Of The Stoics
- Courage Is Calling: Fortune Favours The Brave

Donald Robertson

<https://donaldrobertson.name>

Cognitive behavioural therapist and author Donald Robertson explores the connections between philosophy and psychology in his writing.

Key works:

- How To Think Like A Roman Emperor: The Stoic Philosophy Of Marcus Aurelius
- Verissimus: The Stoic Philosophy Of Marcus Aurelius



Sharon Lebell

<https://www.sharonlebell.com>

A musician, philosopher and composer, Sharon Lebell has written several books on philosophy that need to be read:

Key works:

- A Manual For Living
- The Music Of Silence: A Sacred Journey Through The Hours Of The Day
- The Art Of Living: The Classical Manual On Virtue, Happiness And Effectiveness

Kathryn Koromilas

<https://kathrynkoromilas.com>

Kathryn Koromilis is an author and educator who views Stoicism through the lens of writing, creative practices and self-healing.

Key works:

- The Stoic Salon podcast
- The Joyful Practice Of Stoic Death Writing

The Art of Living

The Classical Manual on Virtue, Happiness, and Effectiveness



THE

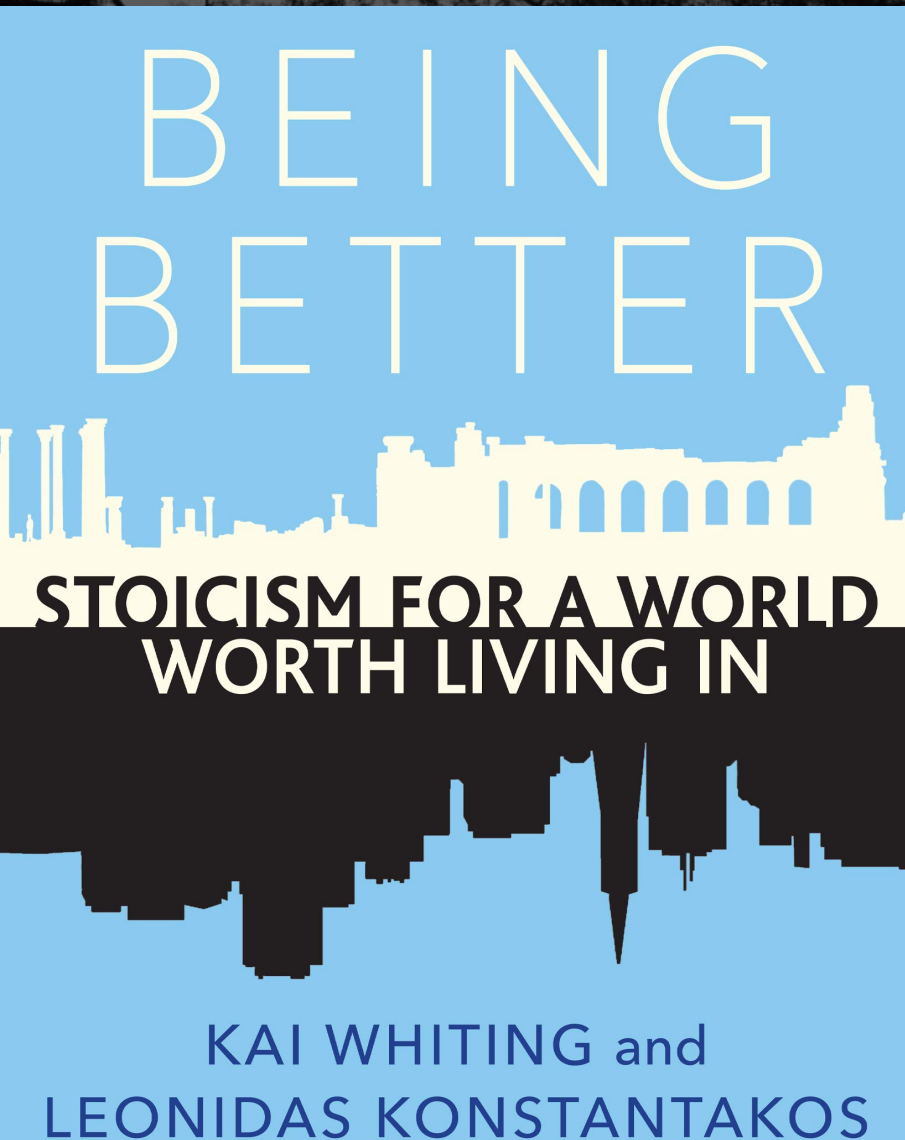
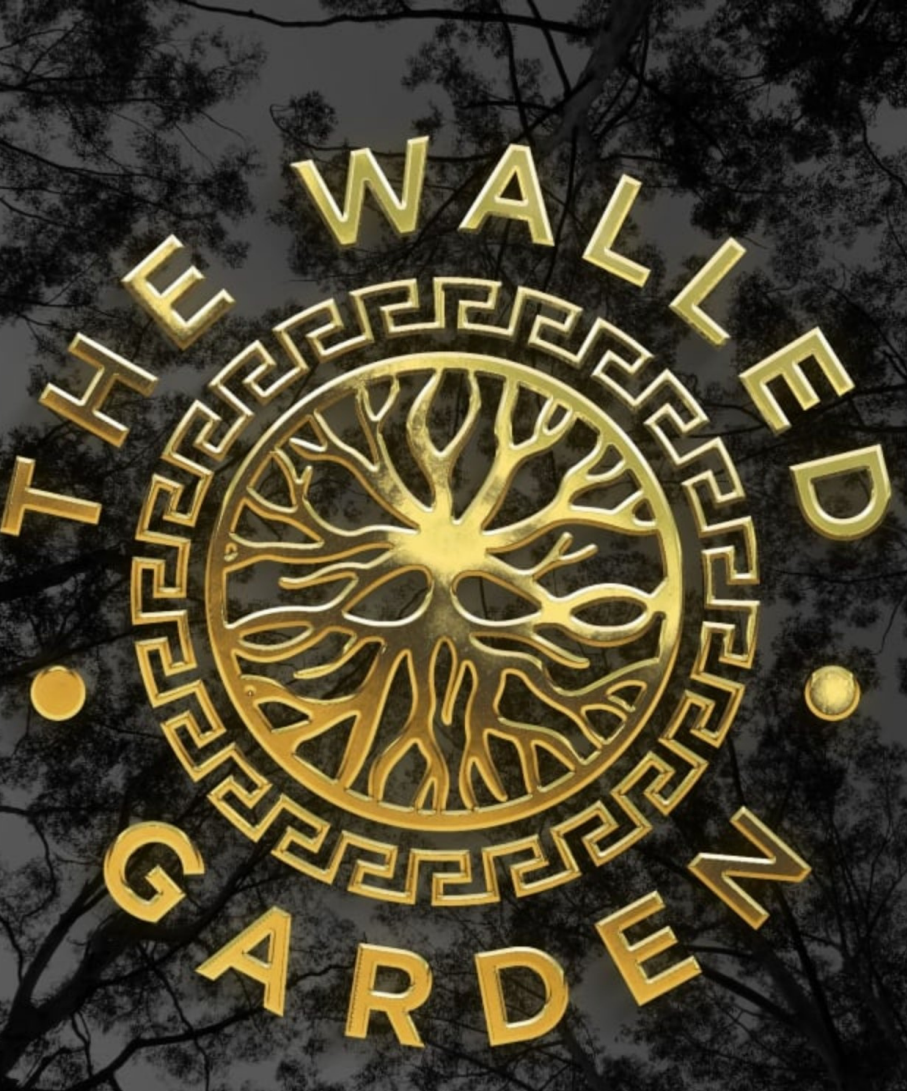
STOIC

SALON

PODCAST

Life, love, work, play,
the universe, & Stoicism

LISTEN NOW



Simon Drew

<https://thewalledgarden.com>

Simon Drew is a musician, author and host of The Walled Garden podcast, a place for sharing creative ideas and embracing philosophy across different mediums.

Key works:

- The Walled Garden Podcast
- The Poet And The Sage

Kai Whiting

<https://stoickai.com>

Kai Whiting is a Stoic researcher and lecturer with a focus on sustainability and using philosophy to address 21st century challenges.

Key works:

- Being Better: Stoicism For A World Worth Living In with Leonidas Konstantakos
- The Walled Garden Podcast with Simon Drew and Sharon Lebell



Key Takeaways

- **Content marketing and philosophy are interconnected:** Every business has their own philosophy and content marketing helps to build a foundation for expressing it across multiple formats.
- **Stoicism can make you a better content marketer:** From Taking The View From Above to practicing the premeditation of adversity, applying Stoic techniques can make you more thoughtful in your work and strengthen how you connect with clients.
- **Philosophy is timeless:** Through the work of philosophers like Zeno, Marcus Aurelius, Seneca and countless others, the same ideas have been applied for centuries and they work for a reason.



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