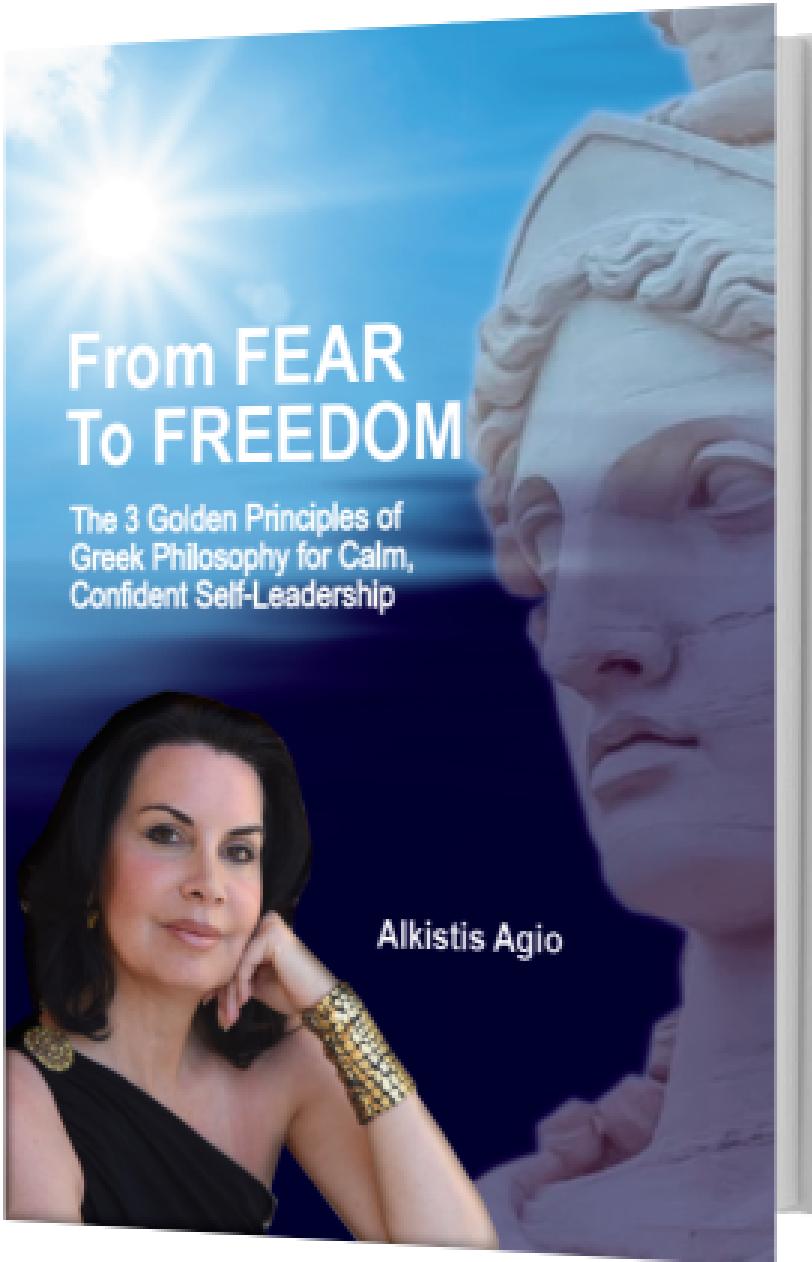


# From FEAR To FREEDOM

The 3 Golden Principles of  
Greek Philosophy for Calm,  
Confident Self-Leadership

Alkistis Agio



# From Fear to Freedom

I would like to express my deepest

## Gratitude

To Dimitris, my husband and my sister Matina,  
for their practical assistance and inspiration  
on every step of this exciting “Odyssey”.

To Stamos Triantafillou, my first mentor, and to my parents;  
Nicholas Agiorgiti & Kalliroe Piperigou,  
who gave me the gift of Life & Love.

August 2022

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*“We are affected not by events,  
but by the view we take of them.”*

- Epictetus, Greek Philosopher (circa 55 AD)

*‘When you change the way you look at things,  
the things you look at change.’*

-Max Planck, German Physicist (1858-1947)

# FROM FEAR TO FREEDOM

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Greek Philosophy for  
Calm, Confident  
Self-Leadership

By Alkistis Agio

## From Fear to Freedom

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## Introduction

*“No one can lead others,  
who cannot lead themself.”*

- Socrates

What goals would you set in your life right now, if you knew you couldn't fail? It's an old question but it allows us to see how much we are held back by our fears, beliefs and preconceptions. The fact is we could achieve many of the things we think are impossible, if only we could lead ourselves better. What do I mean by 'lead ourselves'?

On the outside, we may *appear* strong, successful and confident, but on the *inside* we often feel frustrated and anxious, overwhelmed by life's details, problems, options and considerations. Even after years of effort and hard work, many times we still haven't found the freedom and fulfillment we're longing for.

We think to ourselves:

- Is it too late to have what I really want ?
- How can I break free from my limiting beliefs and fears?
- How can I find fulfillment and freedom?

The answer has always been **Self-Leadership**.

Self-Leadership means having:

- A developed sense of *who* you are, *what* you want, why you want it as well as...

- The ability to formulate a *strategy* and *influence* and *inspire* yourself and others to follow it through.

Self-Leadership is probably the most important skill you can ever develop as a person and as a professional.

But it's not that simple to lead yourself, is it? It can be very tricky, like navigating a stormy sea.

*If you would like to change the world,  
first change yourself." - Socrates*



Image: Odysseus and the Sirens. (Source-Wiki Commons)

The importance of self-leadership has been taught since the beginning of history, when the ancient Greek sages recited *The Odyssey*, the story of King Odysseus setting out on a journey to return to his homeland after the end of the Trojan war.

He famously faces countless dangers and hardships - monsters like the Cyclops, the Scylla and Charybdis, enchantresses like Queen Circe and the Sirens, but he never loses hope or focus, no matter how big the obstacles, because he knows what he wants. He wants to return home to his wife and family. To his kingdom, *Ithaca*.

It doesn't matter that the gods, the winds and the sea are all against him. He conquers his inner demons, adapting to changes, keeping his course, fighting through storms and monsters, to the very end, **because his goal is clear**, virtuous and heartfelt, and it gives him the strength and purpose he needs.

*“The first and greatest victory is to conquer yourself;  
to be conquered by yourself is of all things most  
shameful and vile.” - Plato*

What about you? Are you ready to find your truth? Are you ready to free yourself from your illusions, your deepest fears, and unleash the best version of yourself? Are you ready to understand what's important and make decisions that will lead you to authentic success, fulfillment and freedom?

If so, then you're at the right place, at the right time

In a moment, I will reveal to you one of the most powerful methods in the world for self-leadership, based on ancient Greek philosophy. But first, I would like to share some of my journey with you. I promise, I will be mercifully brief.

## How I Stumbled Upon Greek Philosophy

I was born on May 22, 1968 in Athens, Greece during an oppressive military dictatorship... When I was only eight months old, my family escaped to Montreal, Canada as political refugees to avoid persecution and torture.

I was introduced to Greek philosophy by my parents, who wanted their children to connect with their Greek heritage. Instead of fairy tales like Cinderella and Sleeping Beauty, my parents would read us bedtime stories from Aesop's Fables, The Iliad and The Odyssey.

Fast-forward to when I'm in my early twenties. I've returned from studying at the Chartered Institute of Bankers in London and I'm working at an international bank in Athens in the corporate finance department.

On the outside, I seem to have it all: an executive position, a great salary, designer clothes, hanging out with a cosmopolitan group of friends on the weekends.

On the inside however, I feel frustrated and anxious about my career path. Why? Because although I love psychology, I'm stuck in a career in banking, mainly to please my father.

Whenever I express my desire to leave my bank job, my father lectures me about the necessity of a safe job and good pay. He keeps saying '*My dear daughter, life is so harsh, full of unforeseeable challenges, when I was fifteen, the Nazis burned our village and I joined the resistance, later we had civil war in Greece, and then came the dictatorship, we had to flee*'.

My desperation to make my father proud is short-lived though. I feel trapped in a 'golden cage'. I become more and more frustrated and depressed. At work, I can't focus, and an itchy rash begins growing all over my body.

One day, I'm called to the bank headquarters to do an important presentation in front of the board of directors. I'm *petrified*, I feel like an imposter as I'm not prepared at all. The presentation doesn't go well. I feel so *humiliated* as I muddle through the presentation in front of this group of old men. At the end of the day, I face my deepest fears and hand in my resignation.

Did things get better after that? Of course not. They get *much worse*; I have a dramatic argument with my father, who is so angry and disappointed, that he throws me out of our family home. As I'm shaking on the staircase, he calls after me, *I Tan I Epi Tas*. This ancient Spartan motto translates into, 'Return with your shield or on it!' Essentially, '*Do or die*.'

Without a plan, I pack a bag and fly to Istanbul. I travel eastwards into Turkey with a knapsack all the way to Mt. Nemrut and Ararat, near the border with Syria and Iraq. There, I meet a group of Italians who are headed to Rome and impulsively, I tag along with them.



(Image: Alkistis Walking through Cappadocia, Turkey)

In Rome, my money runs out. I find work in various low-paying jobs like waitressing, living in constant *anxiety* about money and my future; my rash gets worse. I begin taking antidepressants, that leave me feeling numb. I've hit rock-bottom.

Then one day, a very interesting thing happens. On the bus, I start talking with a woman who's working at a top, international leadership training firm... In tears, I share with her my story and she tells me that she's leaving her job to get married in Canada, and she's looking for a replacement who is a native English speaker with some experience in the corporate world. If she doesn't find a good replacement by tomorrow, the deadline, she will be penalized two months salary for breaking her contract. She tells me that *I'm the person she has been looking for*. She offers me her job on the spot and I accept. What a stroke of luck!

My whole reality changes. I'm given a training manual and as I start training managers in '*Leadership Training Skills*', in English. It's *the best job I've ever had* and the feedback from the seminar participants is very positive. I'm getting paid a great salary, for doing what I really love and I even get a chauffeur to drive me in a Mercedes to various training facilities in northern Italy. I get to stay

at beautiful hotels in Venice, Tuscany and Lake Como. Even my rash has disappeared.

Not only that - the founder of the system I was teaching, Dale Carnegie, was an ardent admirer of Greek philosophy. In his famous world-wide bestseller “*How To Win Friends & Influence People*”, he devotes a whole chapter to Socrates, openly admitting that he borrowed his ideas from the Master of Greek philosophy:

***“The ideas I stand for are not mine.  
I borrowed them from Socrates....”*** - Dale Carnegie

*Finally I have found a job that I really, really love...*

*Now... I want to turn back to you and your story, because I wouldn't recommend that you follow my example...*

Why?

**Because it's a great example of what you shouldn't do.**

I was *lucky*. Making such dramatic changes in your life without having a clue as to where you are headed and what you want, and without any proper tools to help you along the way, is foolish, ineffective and can even be downright dangerous.

It's like getting in your car without a destination or a GPS and then just driving off... A cliff, usually.

What if I told you though, that there *is* a type of GPS that can help get you to a place of thriving, happiness and freedom? A GPS inspired by the works of Socrates and Aristotle.

As mentioned above, through my work in leadership training, I was introduced to the works of the ancient Greek philosophers. They were eye-opening. One in particular stood out to me - Aristotle's timeless manual on the Art of Persuasion: “***The Rhetoric***”.

In it, Aristotle explains that there are three basic ‘traits’ an orator, a leader, *anyone like you and me*, must develop in order to influence and persuade others.

1. **Ethos**, which addresses the truth, credibility and integrity of the speaker.
2. **Pathos**, which addresses their emotional intelligence and use of imagination.
3. **Logos**, which addresses the logic, reason and common sense of their arguments.

Over two millennia after he wrote it, Aristotle's system is *still* the cornerstone of modern leadership skills training; His system is taught in MBA programs at top universities like Harvard, Stanford, Columbia, Yale and INSEAD. It is through Aristotle that the world's top CEOs are initiated into the **priceless 'Art of Influence and Persuasion'**.



Yale University

Dartmouth



COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY  
IN THE CITY OF NEW YORK



Penn  
UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA



BROWN



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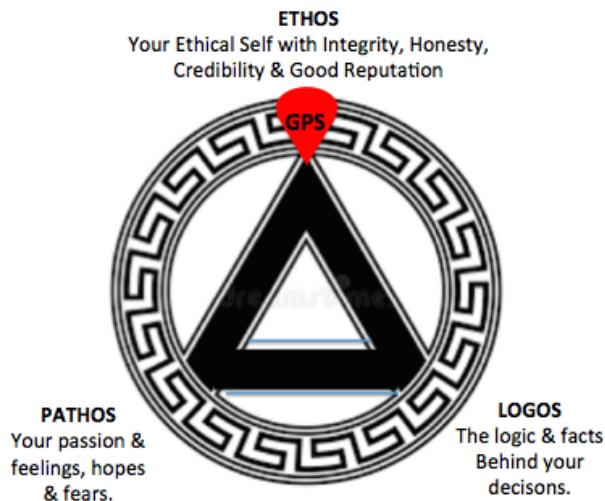
PRINCETON  
UNIVERSITY

As I taught Aristotle's method, I began to realize, there is another dimension to these three principles; like a treasure hidden in plain sight. The inspiration actually came to me in a dream, where the goddess Athena showed me how **Ethos, Pathos and Logos can serve** as a golden 'compass' or G.P.S. **to lead ourselves**. To help us navigate through **our own** life's endless challenges with stoic calm and certainty.

As we'll see in the next chapter, by applying them, we can attain Self-Leadership, and take charge of *ourselves* and *our* lives.

This realization that Aristotle's method for leading others could also be applied to leading one's self, transformed my way of thinking. It was the tool I wish I had when I started out on my chaotic, desperate

and dangerous journey. And interestingly enough, it *does* look like the “shield” my father told me to return with!



Today, The ALKISTIS Method® seminars, training, and e-courses are offered to both companies and the public at large, all over the world, demonstrating how these golden principles can transform frustration, anger and anxiety into calm, confident self-leadership.



Alkistis appeared on popular TV shows, became known as “The Positive Energy Coach” during the financial crisis, inspiring and motivating millions of Greeks.

Dear Reader, by reading this book and putting these ideas to practice, I’m certain that you can also be inspired to become the outstanding, radiant, thriving person you truly are.



*“The ALKISTIS Method resonates deeply with me... The Virtues and character traits such as Honesty, Truthfulness, Integrity, Courage and Industriousness that are enshrined in 'The ALKISTIS Method', are all familiar values which the United Nations proudly represents on a global level.”*

Maria - Threase Keathing, UK Country Director,  
**United Nations Development Programme**



## OVERVIEW

This book is divided into 4 sections

- **The first section** of this book is an explanation of the **Core Concepts** of The ALKISTIS Method®.
- **The second section** contains the **six basic exercises** (also referred to in Greek as “Askesis”) of The ALKISTIS Method®, which can empower you to gain clarity, make decisions, combat anxiety, plot your path and program your subconscious to get the results you want.
- **The third section** contains the **Philosophical Foundations**, a brief discussion of the philosophers and ideas that formed the backbone of the insights presented in The ALKISTIS Method®.
- **The fourth section** ties everything you have learned in The ALKISTIS Method® with the relevant **Scientific** discoveries and approaches of the twenty-first century.

At the end you will find useful links to life-long learning and how you can apply the method in your organization or how you can get qualified as a practitioner and trainer, so that this knowledge is spread and replicated throughout the world and benefits as many people as possible.

# SECTION 1

## The ALKISTIS Method

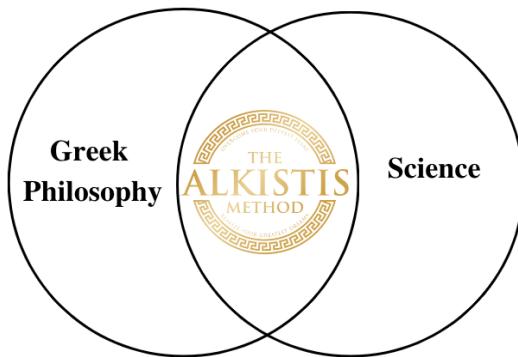


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## Core Concepts

The ALKISTIS Method® is the first-ever method of self-leadership development that effectively integrates the ageless wisdom of (Classical) Greek philosophy with modern science.

Applied in practice, The ALKISTIS Method® leads to calm, confident, self-leadership for both personal happiness and professional excellence, something the ancients called “*Aristeia*”.



Following is an overview of the core concepts. *The philosophical and scientific foundations are presented in finer detail in the third and fourth sections of this book.*

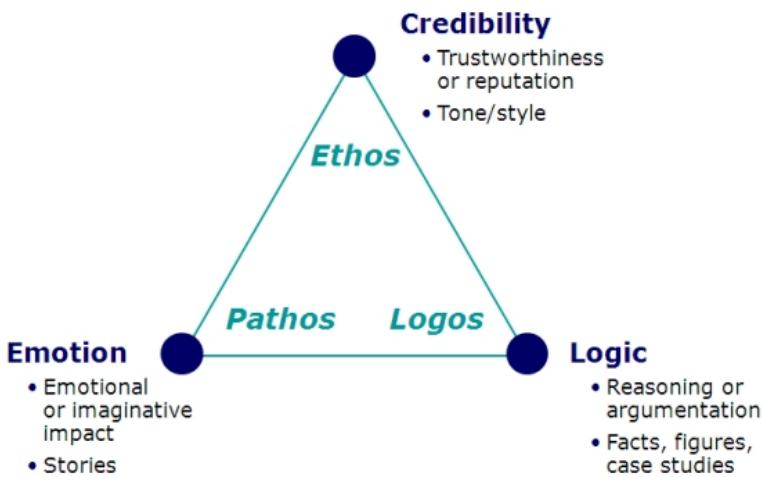
### We Begin Where Aristotle Left Off...

The first book in history on the art of persuasion, *The Rhetoric*, was written by the ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle. In his book, he presents the concepts of *Ethos* (credibility), *Pathos* (emotion, imagination) and *Logos* (logic, reason), as the three traits an orator must have in order to influence and persuade his audience.

These three concepts are still the cornerstones of modern leadership today. Let us look at them in more detail:

- **Ethos** refers to the authority or credibility of the presenter; the moral values he embodies and shares with his audience. For example, being a notable figure in the field in question, or being introduced by one.
- **Pathos** refers to the audience's emotions and imagination; their hopes and fears. It can be particularly powerful if it agrees with the underlying values of the audience. Pathos also reflects the emotion or passion expressed by the speaker.
- **Logos** refers to the facts, data and evidence presented to support the claims, thesis or position of the speaker. The word “*logic*” is derived from the Greek word, *Logos*.

This is the basic diagram showing Aristotle's system “The Rhetorical Triangle”, as it is known:



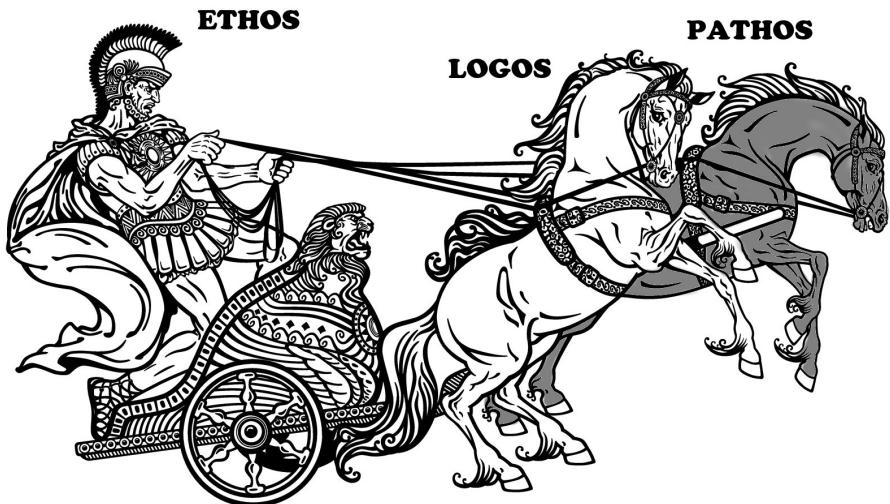
Additionally, there are two more, lesser known traits identified by Aristotle - **Telos** and **Kairos**. **Telos** (end / destination / outcome), addresses the end-goal, purpose or attitude of a speech, and **Kairos** (timing), addresses the particular setting, context, atmosphere, time, and place that a speech occurs in. We will not consider these separately, but rather include them in **Logos**, as they address the real, ‘logical’ considerations we must take into account to make our campaign a success.

For Aristotle, Ethos, Pathos and Logos, address the qualities that transform an ordinary person *into a great influencer, someone who can inspire and lead others.*

**The unique approach of The ALKISTIS Method® is that these same traits are applied to oneself.**

**You** will become the outstanding leader and influencer and you will apply these insights to lead *yourself*, to take charge of your life and guide yourself to fulfillment.

The ALKISTIS Method® refocuses Aristotle's insights and broadens their scope. It includes such things as making well thought out, balanced decisions and mastering your thoughts and emotions to command your psycho - physiological 'state' .



## The Charioteer of The ALKISTIS Method®

To better visualize the core concepts of Self Leadership as set out in The ALKISTIS Method®, we will borrow the metaphor of the Charioteer, from Plato's famous book *Phaedrus*. Hereunder is the adaptation of this concept. The original version is described in Section 3 of this book, under "Plato".

**The Essence of Self-Leadership** is to harness the power of your mind (and body), like a charioteer harnesses horses.

Imagine then a **charioteer** (*Ethos*), in charge of navigating us to a specific compelling end, outcome or destination. The charioteer may have to take turns, go through many intermediate destinations, but his end goal is always to reach the state of **Eudaimonia**, a state where we are at our happiest, most fulfilled and most productive.

He is harnessing two majestic stallions, one black, the other white.

The **horses** represent the 'battle in the human mind'; a battle that revolves around impulse control. A tug-of-war between your emotions, hopes, desires and fears (*Pathos*), and a logical, strategic, moderating counterforce (*Logos*). *Logos* and *Pathos*, need to stay

balanced and ‘in sync’, throughout the journey. They must work together and gallop in stride, led by the charioteer’s firm, confident hand.

Harnessing these opposing forces, and driving them in alignment with your Ethos, is crucial for anyone trying to take charge of their lives, whether it’s a leader, a CEO or anyone else. Being too uninformed, too impulsive, too hesitant, or not true to yourself, can spell trouble at work and in your private life.

### The 3 Principles as embodied in the Charioteer Allegory

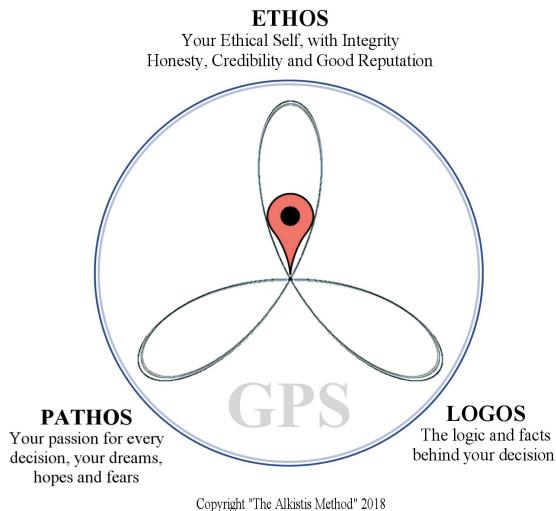
- The **Charioteer represents ‘Ethos’**; our true, authentic self, or as Plato has it, our “Soul”. Ideally, this “True Self” has integrity, honesty and ethos, but most of all, wants what’s best for us, to guide us to the state of Eudaimonia.
- The **Black Horse** is about addressing our ‘**Pathos**’; our emotional state, our motivation, hopes, desires and dreams. Also our deepest fears and weaknesses.
- The **White Horse** is about addressing ‘**Logos**’, or logic; the part that examines and calculates. The ‘reality-check’ part, that makes sure our hopes and fears are based on practical thinking, strategy, numbers and reason.

The above principles or traits provide structure - a way of organizing your internal world so that you have more control over what your brain does. It aims to reprogram your neuropsychology for success on all levels - beyond just positive thinking or affirmations.

*“We cannot choose our external circumstances, but we can always choose how we will respond to them.”*  
- Epictetus

It’s essential that you have more control over how you feel, and what you do, because if you change the way you think, it changes the way you feel, which changes the way you act, giving you better, longer lasting results.

As mentioned above, all our efforts are directed towards reaching the state of *Eudaimonia*, - a Greek word encapsulating the notions of success, happiness and prosperity, (ie “human flourishing”). This is our real ultimate goal. ***In this, Ethos, Pathos and Logos function together like a GPS, an inner compass, to help us navigate our way with confidence and efficiency.***



The path to *Eudaimonia* requires that we face reality, accept the present moment as it presents itself, not allowing ourselves to be controlled by our desire for pleasure or our fear of pain.

We will examine these in more detail, but as an example, let's take a moment to see how I could have applied these concepts to my own situation which I described in the introduction.

First, I would have examined my Ethos:

Did I have the integrity of the Charioteer? Was I being fair and truthful to myself? To my father? To my employers? The answer would have been a resounding “No”. I am, by nature, a “people” person, not a “numbers” person and could never be happy (and therefore successful) in the job that I had. I wasn’t being fair to anyone, most of all myself.

That stark realization would have led me to the conclusion that I *had* to change. That if I did not change, I would never reach eudaimonia.

Next, I would have examined my Pathos.

What did I love most? What did I fear most? What did I really want to do with my life? The answers were there. I wanted to be with people. I loved psychology, philosophy and social interaction.

Then I would have examined my Logos.

What kind of job would suit me? What did I fear? What did I hope for? Were my fears correct, or overblown? Were my hopes based on reality? Could I create a strategy to make a smoother transition into my new career? I could have even steered my job within the bank toward something relevant, such as training or human resources, which would have gained me more experience with what I loved most.

It doesn't mean that I wouldn't have faced problems. Change is always difficult and dangerous and sometimes circumstances may not even allow it. But I would know what I wanted and have a rough plan for achieving it as well as the knowledge that I was doing the right thing. I would have avoided a lot of the stress and anxiety that I had to go through and reached my goals quicker, without all the drama and uncertainty.

## The 3 Golden Principles in More Detail

### ETHOS - The Leader's Edge



Let's face it, in real life, leaders are not always virtuous or ethical. Take Hitler and Stalin, as extreme examples. They had a great number of followers and were very powerful leaders. They were not, however, *good* leaders. They ultimately led their followers to death and destruction because their vision was flawed and their tactics lacked virtue or integrity. This fact becomes very important when it comes to leading *yourself*. You *must* be true and virtuous then, otherwise you'll be leading *yourself* astray; This is self-betrayal. Deep happiness and fulfillment (*Eudaimonia*), according to the Greek philosophers, can never be attained by a malicious character.

In order to become a good and effective leader *of yourself*, and to get the results you want in life, brutally honest self-inquiry and self-regulation are *paramount*. These are essential skills. As Shakespeare wrote in Hamlet: *To thy own self be true*. You must understand yourself, who you are at your core, and figure out what is best for *your wellbeing* and the “inner tribe” you are leading. You must set compelling goals, and create a vision that will inspire *the whole of you*. This, according to the Greek philosophers, is the way

to ‘attract’ your state of *Eudaimonia*. Your promised land. Your ‘*Ithaca*’.

***“Whoever cannot lead themselves, cannot lead others.”***

- Socrates

There are many ego-traps you can fall into when considering this. You may think, for example, that the goal of your life is to earn as much money as possible, and that *virtue* and all those other lofty ideals should be followed by *others*, and not by you - as long as you can get away with it.

Socrates however, would tell you that you are on the wrong path; that **moral virtue (*Areté*) is the greatest good in life**, because it alone is capable of securing one’s authentic happiness and fulfillment. He advises us not to try to deceive others, even if we could get away with it:

***“Be as you wish to seem.” - Socrates***

Ethos, he teaches, is not just something you wear for the outside world. It is something you *practice* and *embody* everyday in your life, because even if no one is watching, you yourself will know.

Now, you may be thinking that this is too idealistic; too naive...

Consider though, that honesty, virtue and morality are more than just religious or philosophical ideals. They are *instincts* deeply embedded in our DNA. They don’t only benefit us as individuals, protecting us from the deceit and abuse of others, they also benefit our societies. We are all the descendants of people who managed to collaborate and live in groups strong enough to persist through invasions and natural disasters. In order to survive, progress and thrive, our forefathers had to be in some way *loyal to each other*, display *empathy, respect, cooperation and ‘obey common laws’* to empower their groups and keep them strong, cohesive and productive. They had to be and do all the things we today *instinctively* consider as “good”.

These codes of behavior have evolved into our values, the values of the Civilized World. Our basic values have held our relationships, families and communities together throughout our history. If we cheat, we undermine them, we sabotage ourselves, our children and civilization itself. Knowing that we have deceived others to achieve outward success, we can never be *truly* happy and fulfilled. You'll just feel emptiness inside, a void, alone.

Think of it this way - we all *want* to live in a better, safer and more civilized society. We therefore *want* and *need* virtue and values to exist.

Also, deep down inside, we all want to be a **valued member** of our community. We seek connections that are sincere, based on trust and appreciation. It's empowering. It benefits us. We don't want to be revealed as a liar or a cheat.

It follows then, that if we want to be happy, **we must behave with Ethos, towards ourself and others, because if we don't, we become the very thing we despise**. Even if no one else knows, *we* know, and we become inwardly un-aligned. An imposter is a person who displays to the world a false image; Although there may be short-term gains, this inner conflict inevitably results in misery and '*dis-ease*'. It's not the path to *Excellence* or *Eudaimonia*.

This means that having **Ethos is not idealistic or naive, but is in fact the most 'selfish' thing we can do, since we are essentially fostering and sustaining our own happiness**, without taking anyone or anything else into account.

Ethos will also benefit you on a purely utilitarian level.

**First** of all, living with Ethos will gain you a good **reputation**. It will make you more **trustworthy**, a priceless commodity in business and personal relations. Ask yourself - who would you rather employ or be employed by? Who would you want as a friend? A partner? When you are trustworthy and have integrity, you are given the keys to the house.

Ethos will create a healthier overall environment wherever it's applied; a beneficial rising tide that sweeps through our society, lifting everyone up.

Ask yourself this - what type of country would you like to live in? More importantly, what type of country would you *invest your money* in? The answer is simple. A country you can *trust*. A country whose state institutions work with transparency, where you can be sure you will be treated with fairness and justice. In short, *a country with Ethos*. This bears out in reality. States with ethos; with justice and fair, independent institutions, have, all things being equal, done much better than countries without them, to the benefit and prosperity of everyone living there.

It's why all leaders, governments and political systems claim (even if falsely) to have it. We know instinctively that it benefits everyone, from our families to our communities, businesses, institutions and governments.

**Second**, Ethos will give you **power** and **purpose**, because it will give you the **freedom to be who you are**. Your thoughts, beliefs and actions will all be *aligned*, giving you courage and confidence because you know you're doing the right thing. It's like a shield you can wear to fend off fear and doubt.

It's why all ideologies and religions in the world embrace and require it. It is the central idea behind their teachings and aimed at your personal well-being as well as that of the society in which you live.

**But what exactly is Ethos?** It's sometimes hard to define. Bias, interests, loyalty, self-preservation, all come into play and sometimes we can't tell if something is ethical or not.

The ancient Greek philosophers had an answer for that and it's **Virtue** (Greek: *Areté*). It's the cornerstone of Ethos. We don't have to think whether some action is ethical or not. We just have to live with Virtue, and Ethics will follow. This is what we call "Virtue Ethics". (We dive deeper into what virtues are and how to apply

them, here below, and in the philosophical section, especially Stoicism.)

Ethos therefore, *is not an abstract term* for philosophy, but a very concrete aspect of our personal *happiness, freedom and fulfillment*. **We should be ethical, not only because it's the ‘right thing’ to do, but for purely selfish reasons.** It benefits *us* and *our* wellbeing.

As Marcus Aurelius, Roman Emperor and devout student of Greek philosophy wrote 2,000 years ago:

*“No matter what anyone says or does, my task is to be good. Like gold or emerald or purple repeating to itself, ‘No matter what anyone says or does, my task is to be emerald, my color undiminished.’”*

**Ethos, therefore, should be the first filter any decision we make needs to pass through.** It's our character - our only true possession.

We don't have to be perfect. No one is. Life is complicated and difficult. But we must strive to be as *excellent* as possible.

Let us start by asking ourselves the fundamental questions that will help us clarify the values that we choose to live by. Questions that any self-respecting person and professional needs to address to command respect and influence others:

- What are the core values I wish to live by?
- What matters most to me?
- What is my Life Purpose ?
- What legacy do I want to leave behind?

The ALKISTIS Method® recommends adopting *the four cardinal virtues* in defining our Ethos because practicing these will inevitably lead to your fulfillment and Eudaimonia.

## The Four Cardinal Virtues:

**Wisdom** (Greek *phronêsis*), **Justice** (Greek *dikaiosunê*), **Courage** (Greek *andreia*), **Temperance** (Greek *sôphrosunê*).

Historians can't agree on where this classification originated. It appears to go back as far as Plato or Socrates, although some argue that they can be traced back to about the 12th-8th centuries B.C., to Homer's epic poems, *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*.

### **Wisdom** (*phronêsis*)

This is the common sense ability to know good from bad. We apply wisdom to judge what is to be done and what is not to be done and to know what is under our control and what is not. Includes understanding, good calculation, quick-wittedness, cunning, discretion, and resourcefulness.

### **Justice** (*dikaiosunê*)

To be fair and just in our *treatment of others*. To be moral, honest, and conduct ourselves with the dignity, equity, and fairness, we demand of others.

### **Courage** (*andreia*)

To resist fear; to be courageous without being reckless. To have confidence and self-restraint about what is truly fearful and terrible; to be bold wisely; intrepid in the face of hardship and death. Includes discipline, confidence, and self-control.

### **Temperance** (*sôphrosunê*)

Moderation concerning desires and pleasures; harmony and good discipline. It has to do with personal independence, and self-discipline; rational acceptance of what is admirable and contemptible. Includes endurance, modesty, high-mindedness, cheerfulness, and industriousness.

These virtues derive initially from Plato's Republic Book IV, 426–435. The Roman Emperor Marcus Aurelius discusses them in

Book V:12 of *Meditations* and views them as the "goods" that a person should identify in one's own mind, as opposed to "wealth or things which attract luxury or prestige." These cardinal virtues are listed in the Bible, as they were adopted by early Christians, who added on the three theological virtues of faith, hope and charity.

The four cardinal virtues are considered the 'antidote' to the capital vices of *pride, greed, lust, envy, gluttony, wrath and sloth*. If you build your life and ambitions around these vices, you will probably be disappointed, because the pleasure they offer is *ephemeral*. It doesn't mean that we don't seek and enjoy pleasurable things like acclaim and monetary success. It means that we don't "require" them to be happy and fulfilled; to flourish in a state of *Eudaimonia*.

To clarify your personal Ethos, Stephen Covey, author of "*The 7 Habits of Highly Successful People*", recommends writing a 'Personal Mission Statement':

*"Writing or reviewing a mission statement changes you because it forces you to think through your priorities deeply, carefully, and to align your behaviour with your beliefs".*

We'll apply all this in Section 2, The Askesis (exercises), because most professionals are very familiar with their company's mission statement, but few have clearly formulated one *for themselves*.

## Pathos & Logos - Your Two Powerful Stallions



Pathos and Logos should be considered together. Ultimately, they serve the same purpose - to pull the chariot that the Charioteer (Ethos) commands, towards *Eudaimonia* (happiness, success and fulfillment). They can be described in the following way:

### **PATHOS- Your Black Stallion**

Pathos is your *passion*; your ability to harness and channel your emotional states to influence and appeal to the emotions of your team or ‘audience’. Aristotle addressed Pathos as a vital part of the art of persuasion i.e. awakening emotion in the audience so as to influence them to reach the desired conclusions and actions.

In The ALKISTIS Method®, the ‘audience’ is *yourself*. Your Pathos is directed towards *you*. You must search within yourself to find what motivates and inspires you and channel your emotions appropriately. It is how you fan your ambition, become inspired, activate your courage and resilience to carry you forward and overcome your fears, anxieties and doubts.

Examining your emotions will furnish you with vital information about who you are and what you really want i.e. your deep desires. It will clarify your goals and reveal subconscious fears and hopes that may be very important to consider. The ability to align yourself

correctly with what you feel most strongly about makes everything else easier and more naturally flowing.

Emotions however are a tricky thing and sometimes it's difficult to examine them without being swayed by bias, preconception, loyalties, jealousy, love, hate and a whole range of factors that come into play every time we form an opinion about something.

The Alkistis Method© includes a very useful tool for helping you with this examination. It is described fully in Askesis I, "The Socratic Test", in "The Askesis" chapter.

You will be looking at that exercise in detail, however, *in a nutshell*, what it says is that you should always examine your emotions by asking 3 basic questions:

1. Is it **True**? - Or are you jumping to conclusions?
2. Is it **Kind**? - Towards yourself and others?
3. Is it **Useful**? - Does it help you in any way?

These three questions will allow you to "interrogate" your thoughts and emotions and check if they are to your benefit or not.

Understanding your own Pathos will also help you understand, harmonize and harness the power of *other* people's hopes and emotions. This is a very powerful ability that will greatly increase your chances of achieving your goals by persuading others to see your point of view and join your vision. Feeling the passion within yourself is a direct path to reaching other people's hearts.

## **LOGOS- Your White Stallion**

Logos is your ability to apply logical, objective, realistic and strategic thinking for influencing yourself and others. It's the *proof* behind your theories; the evidence you need to supply your audience with, to convince them that you're not just a daydreamer or a wishful thinker, but that your proposals are rational and feasible. To do this, you need to understand the subject well, thoroughly

processing it through your Logos. Only then will you be able to successfully communicate it to others.

The Alkistis Method© suggests you should do this methodically, by taking the following simple steps:

1. **Understand** the subject. Research all aspects making sure you have the correct information and understand **why** things are the way they are and what makes them work that way.
2. **Accept** reality and that which you can not change, since it is useless to rail against the inevitable, while also ascertaining that which you **can** and should change.
3. **Adjust** accordingly by taking the action that best benefits you given the circumstances.

Examining your logic is even more important when *you are leading yourself*. You want the best for you. Be vigilant. Review your first impressions. Test your conclusions. How true are the ‘facts’ behind them?

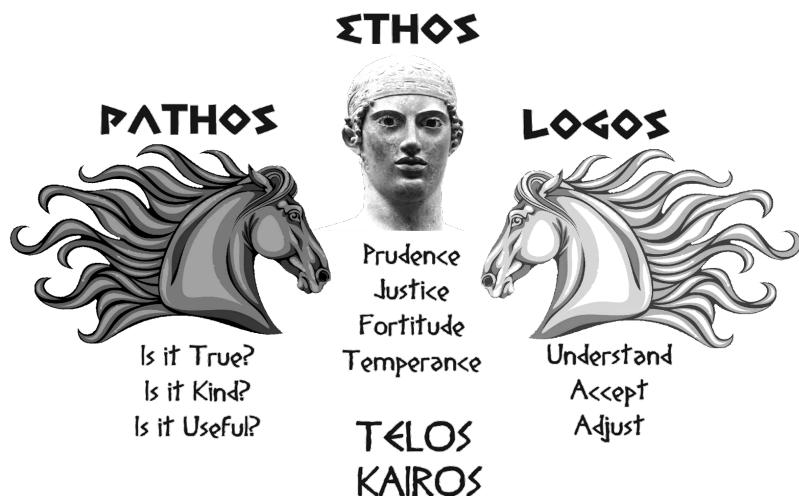
There are **two additional traits** that Aristotle spoke about, which we will include here, together with Logos, because they belong under the umbrella of ‘logical-strategic’ considerations. They are:

**Telos** : (means “The End-Outcome”) - This prompts you to examine your **final goal or destination**, i.e. why are you doing what you are doing. What do you want to achieve? This will help you clarify the intent, importance and exact nature of your actions.

**Kairos** : (means “Timing”) - This questions your timing. Is this the **right time to act**? How urgent is it? Should you choose your time more wisely?

These are important because they force you to take a step back and consider your logic from a more “holistic” point of view, not strictly tied to the facts and numbers.

## Bringing all together



To guide himself correctly therefore and reach our desired goal of *Eudaimonia*, our Charioteer should embrace the Virtues of Prudence, Justice, Fortitude and Temperance, and he should make sure his two stallions are given the care they need.

He should cater to his Pathos by examining his emotions and making sure they are True, Kind and Useful and his Logos by Understanding, Accepting and Adjusting accordingly. Also, as part of his Logos examination he should also make sure to consider the end Goal and Timing of his actions.

**Applying Logos and Pathos**, in alignment with our Ethos, is what The Alkistis Method® is about. For a more detailed look at how this can be achieved, refer to Section 2, The Askesis (exercises)

*Interestingly, neuroscience has found that there is a division of some of our mind's functionality, reminiscent of Logos and Pathos, between the right and left hemispheres of our brains. Even modern psychology speaks of "IQ" (Intelligence quotient) and "E.Q."*

(*Emotional Quotient*), concepts similar to those deduced by Aristotle over two millennia ago.

## Using Ethos, Pathos, Logos to understand others

Lastly, these three traits Aristotle identified, can also help you better understand *other* people. It is difficult sometimes to gauge the intentions and substance of someone you just met, and examining each of these traits separately can give you better insight. Ask yourself: What is their *Ethos*? Their history, their reputation? Do they have integrity? What is their *Pathos*? Their motivation, their hopes and fears. What is their *Logos*? Are their facts correct? Are they reasonable? It is certainly not a full proof method, but it will offer you a well-founded first impression.

## The Desire of Knowledge

In an anecdotal story from ancient Greece, Socrates, widely accepted as the wisest person of his time, was walking down a sandy shore with Plato, his pupil, a young man from a prominent family. The subject they were discussing was Plato's passionate desire to learn from the master.

At one point, Socrates said to Plato, "*Walk with me into the sea.*"

As they ventured in and the water started to slowly rise above their ankles, then their knees, Plato wondered, "*What is the lesson my master is trying to teach me?*" When the water reached shoulder height, Socrates abruptly grabbed Plato's head and pushed him down under the water. Plato didn't react in the beginning, thinking it was an exercise of some sort, but soon, as he started running out of oxygen, he began to struggle and fight back. Socrates however, a builder by trade and strong despite his age, held him down until Plato could take no more and had to seriously fight for his life to free himself from his mentor's relentless grasp.

When he regained his breath, he angrily accused Socrates of trying to drown him.

Socrates replied calmly: “*That was not my intention of course. What I showed you is what it takes to gain true knowledge and wisdom. When you desire it like you desired that breath of air; then you shall have it.*”

Similarly, you must ask yourself, *how badly do you want the inner freedom and other benefits of Self Leadership?* Are you willing to follow through with the rigorous training - the *Askesis*? Are you ready to leave your comfort zone?

You must want the benefits of proper Self Leadership as much as ‘a drowning person wants oxygen’, to reap its full benefits.

As an inspiration, it may help you to gaze into the eyes of one of the most beautiful and famous statues of the ancient world, *The Charioteer of Delphi*.



Image: Photo taken at National Archeological Museum of Delphi

The Charioteer is not portraying the struggle *during* the race, but an enchanted state, right after he has won the race, as he takes the victory-lap around the stadium to the sound of a cheering crowd.

His mesmerizing gemstone eyes evoke what the Greeks of the Classical period referred to as *Areté* (virtue, moral excellence, true nobility).

Despite his great victory, there are no shouts or wild celebration, only contentment and calm inner strength. The face and body do not convey arrogance, only the sense of deep, serene self confidence and satisfaction. He did not succeed through luck or divine providence. He succeeded through clarity of purpose, hard work, and virtue. He deserves his place at the podium.

*Suggested: Before going on to the next section, ponder on the above, while listening to the inspirational, epic musical piece **Chariots of Fire**. (Composed by contemporary Greek composer Vangelis.) Then, write down your thoughts in a journal.*

## SECTION 2

### The Askesis

Exercises for Self-leadership



[WWW.ALKISTIS.NET](http://WWW.ALKISTIS.NET)

## Exercises for Self-leadership

Over the past twenty years, as an executive consultant and coach for dozens of the world's largest and most progressive companies, I've experienced my clients spending millions with top consulting firms to implement change management or leadership development initiatives. Many months later, these consulting firms invariably delivered comprehensive and detailed 'Lean and Six Sigma' roadmaps to a future that *looked great in their reports*. That was the *easy* part. The hard part, which was not always successful, was inspiring individuals on each functional team to *willingly* take action.

That's where **The ALKISTIS Method®** offers help, to make change happen in practice. Its success lies in its application - not its reports.

## Applying The ALKISTIS Method®

As you have already realized by now, the concepts of The ALKISTIS Method® *can only be assimilated and understood through experience* and practice, which is *not* the same thing as knowing them *intellectually*. (Imagine the difference between swimming in the sea, and thinking about swimming in the sea.)

Daily practice requires personal 'Work' on observing the flow of your thoughts, honest self-reflection, and a flexible mindset capable of making leaps, but also exercising temperance.

***"Don't explain your philosophy. Embody it."*** - Epictetus

American philosopher Henry David Thoreau conveyed the problem of modern western philosophy in his book *Walden, Life in the Woods*.

*"There are nowadays professors of philosophy, but not philosophers. To be a philosopher is not merely to have subtle thoughts, [...] but to so love wisdom as to live according to its dictates, a life of simplicity, independence,*

*magnanimity, and trust. It is to solve some of the problems of life, not only theoretically, but practically.”*



In other words, modern philosophy has become *a discourse about philosophy*.

Philosophy is a practice not a theory. Unlike modern academia, philosophy was, first and foremost, about learning **how to live well** - not only thinking about it.

A philosophy school in the Golden Age of Greece was meant to *transform the lives of its students*; To break their chains and realize their potential. (See Plato's Allegory of The Cave later on.) The same applies to Self Leadership. It's all about applying oneself on all levels. The insights philosophy gives are viewed as a way of life and become our daily *practice towards personal awakening and excellence*.

In the Greek language, the practice and application of what one ‘knows’ is called ‘*Askesis*’, and it is the key to personal awakening. *Askesis* (pronounced ask-ee-sis) means: rigorous ‘training’, ‘practicing’ and ‘self-discipline’ from Greek *askein* ‘to exercise’. Hence an ‘ascetic’ is someone who ‘practices’, a practitioner towards improving and mastering one’s physical, emotional and mental abilities.

The *Askesis* here are based on a neuro-coaching approach which is scientifically tested and highly effective. In combination with concepts from Greek philosophy, they represent an integration of applied neuroscience, performance psychology and neurolinguistics.

In these *Askesis*, the *emphasis* is on neurology and engaging *the whole nervous system*, all three of our ‘brains’, the spinal cord and peripheral nerves for high performance and wellbeing. This differs from other forms of coaching and training methods because we are retaining *the central importance* of using neurological or ‘embodied thinking’ processes, rather than relying on advice-style models of

coaching. The benefits and potential of neurocoaching cannot be overstated.

It has been scientifically proven that when we read something or hear it, we retain only 10-20% of the knowledge, whereas, when we participate with our whole nervous system in various exercises, we retain up to 100 %, even after several years have passed.

The idea that the way we think can *physically alter our brain* at the neural-level and reverse previous learning, impairment or damage, is central to neuro-coaching. *Scientific studies in psycho-cybernetics have shown that it takes as little as sixty-six days to take on a new habit.*

Many Askesis are based on the most recent research we have on the human brain and how it affects our physical, emotional and mental states. That's why they are often accompanied by music, visual-arts and specific physical movements in the seminars and workshops.

The Askesis cultivate ***Prosochē*** (attention, focus).

*When you relax your attention for a while, do not fancy you will recover it whenever you please, but remember this, that because of your fault today your affairs must necessarily be in a worse condition in future occasions.*

-Epictetus (*Discourses 4.12.1*)

In time, as you develop and deepen the attitude and practice of *prosochē*, you will become a *prokoptōn* (one who is making progress). The practice of self-observation does not demand perfection. It demands that one does it. Prosoche requires attention and focus. The goal of the *prokoptōn* is continual progress - “Ever to excel” (Greek: “Αἰέν απιστεύειν”).

For the Greeks, there’s nothing more important than overcoming *Akrasia*, (“incontinence”; literally: “lack of mastery”).

The result ? ***Enkratia*** Self Leadership, Self-Mastery.

The upcoming Askesis of The ALKISTIS Method® not only develop your *prosoche* and *enkratia*, but also give you a very good

basis from which to filter your experience and observations on the path to *Eudaimonia*.

### **The 6 major Askesis of The ALKISTIS Method®**

- I. THE SOCRATIC TEST  
Master Your Thoughts & Emotions
- II. THE CHARIOTEER'S CHOICE  
Make Well, Thought-Out , Balanced Decisions
- III. DEFINE YOUR ITHACA  
Formulate Your Personal Mission Statement
- IV. MOPHEAS MIND MECHANIC  
Program Your Subconscious For Success (mp3)
- V. THE MAP OF ULYSSES  
Create a Future Vision of your Life
- VI. MASTER OF RHETORIC  
Influence Others With Ease

A full explanation of these Askesis with video-tutorials is available through The ALKISTIS Method® E-Learning Program:  
[www.alkistis.net/e\\_learning.html](http://www.alkistis.net/e_learning.html)



## Askesis I - THE SOCRATIC TEST

Master Your Thoughts & Emotions

**Background:** Managing your emotions (*your psycho-physiological state*) is no easy task, especially when there are deep seated fears and insecurities that flare up when triggered by some external event. The application of a ‘filtering system’ for dealing with unwanted, disturbing thoughts that will only ruin your mood, dampen your enthusiasm and drain your energy, is a very useful tool for keeping your mind healthy and functioning at its best.

This is what is called the Socratic ‘Elenchus’ (Ancient Greek: ἐλέγχος, Romanized: ‘elenkhos’, means audit, cross-examination, scrutiny) We find this in Plato’s early dialogues. The **elenchus** is the technique Socrates used to investigate our inner narratives which may not always be true or justified.

In this easy to understand, anecdotal story with Socrates, we will see a demonstration of the way Socrates may have applied it.



It was a warm summer’s evening in ancient Athens. The smell of jasmine was in the air...

Socrates was taking a stroll by the shimmering sea near Athens, when an acquaintance ran up to him excitedly and said, ‘Socrates, do you know what I just heard about one of your students?’

‘Wait a moment,’ Socrates replied. ‘Before you tell me, I’d like you to pass a little test. It’s called the Test of Three.’

‘Test of Three?’

‘Yes,’ Socrates continued. ‘Before you tell me about my student, let’s take a moment to test what you’re going to say. The first test is **Truth**. Have you made absolutely sure that what you are about to tell me is true?’

‘No.’ the man replied. ‘Actually I just heard about it.’

‘All right,’ says Socrates. ‘So you don’t really know if it’s true. Now let’s try the second test, the test of **Kindness**. Is what you are about to tell me about my student something good?’

‘No, on the contrary...’ said the man, a little embarrassed.

Socrates continued, ‘You may still pass though because there is a third test—the test of **Usefulness**. Is what you want to tell me about my student going to be useful to me?’

‘No, not really...’

‘Well then,’ concluded Socrates, ‘if what you want to tell me is neither true nor kind nor even useful, then why tell it to me at all?’

As the story reveals, there are three filters we can apply to process our thoughts and beliefs before allowing them to dwell in our minds and drain our energy and mood:

1. **Is it True?**

Is it the truth, the full truth and nothing but the truth?

2. **Is it Kind?**

Is it kind to yourself and others given that we are all people and never perfect?

3. **Is it Useful?**

Is there a reason it should occupy space in your mind?

Now try it for yourself:

**Name:** “THE SOCRATIC TEST”

**Purpose:** Using three ‘filters’ to overcome distressing, frustrating, angering, fear-filled thoughts and beliefs you may presently hold, and keep your mind lean and efficient.

**Instructions:** Bring to mind a particular thought or belief that worries, distresses or angers you, regarding your personal or professional life. It can be a large or small thing.

If the frustrating, angering or frightening event is something you are envisioning in the future, visit and experience that ‘bad’ event. If it happened in the past, revisit and relive the scene to review it and connect with your fear. For example:

The year is 1989. I’m in the living room of my parents’ home. I’m having (the usual) argument with my father about me wanting to leave my job at the bank. The belief that worries, stresses and frustrates me down deep inside is:

*“If I leave my job, he’ll be so disappointed in me. I’ll lose his love and admiration. He won’t forgive me.”*

What is the deep-mistaken-limiting-belief that lies at the heart of that inner narrative? - *‘I’m not worthy.’*

**So back to you now:** In one or two sentences, write down the most frustrating, angering or frightening inner narrative that comes to your mind. It will likely be a belief you presently hold about yourself, another person or a situation. It may help to think about your biggest complaint in life.

Try not to analyze it. State it simply. Start your sentence like this:

 ***‘Deep down inside, I’m afraid that.....’***  
(Fill in the blank.)

And what does that imply about you? (Your deeply misguided, limiting belief.)

 ***On a deeper level, it implies that:***

Now let's process this phrase that you just wrote :

### **1. Is it 100% true?**

'Interrogate' the belief:

- Am I perhaps *dramatizing* the situation and overblowing its importance?
- Am I perhaps *generalizing* and assuming things that are not 100% true?
- Am I perhaps *over-personalizing*, taking offense too easily or even blaming myself for matters that are not related to me?

Now ask yourself again, is my thought or belief 100% true?

NO      YES

Making a general statement that something is true, can be misleading, especially if it is only true some of the time. We often give perceived truths a greater 'power' than they are due. Sometimes, all it takes is a small amount of doubt in the belief to completely discredit and deconstruct it. So, if your answer is 'Yes' (and don't worry if it is), try to work out to what degree this belief is true. You may discover it is a lot less 'true' than you thought.

 **How true do you think your statement is (give a percentage, like 10% or 50%) :** .....

## 2. Is it kind?

Is that narrative kind towards *you*? Are you putting yourself down, being too critical? Self-reflection is good, but very often we judge ourselves too harshly. We're all human and we all make mistakes; the point is to learn from them, not to let them drain our energy and confidence. (You may find that you can trace back this harsh criticism to the way you were disciplined when you were a child).

Also, is it kind towards the *other* people involved? How does the situation look from their perspective? Nobody's perfect. Have you judged them correctly? Remember that the goal of doing this transformation is to protect *your happiness*. The kindness serves *you*, by ridding *you* of poisonous, toxic thoughts. The opportunity to forgive someone serves *you* most of all.



*Write your thoughts down.*

*This diagram may assist you in this process by showing how perspective affects our view of truth: What do you see here, an old lady (looking forwards), or a young lady (looking backwards)? (Image W.E.Hill 1915)*



## 3. Is it useful?

Although fear can sometimes be beneficial, alerting you to real dangers, too much fear and pessimism can poison your mind with self-defeating doubt and paralyze you with indecision. It may also be concealing your deeper desire or an opportunity. You must therefore become a 'witness' to your thought-streams and encourage

yourself to think thoughts which are *useful*, in order to keep your mind healthy and productive.

Consider your victim-story narrative or that deep-limiting-belief. What is the benefit of allowing it to run around in your mind? Does it help you in any way? Of course not! It just perpetuates the situation.

Imagine for a moment: Who could you be if you didn't have that thought? What sort of thoughts would you have instead? What would your life look like if the thought did not exist?

This is what Plato advises us:

‘Whenever you want to talk about people, it’s best to take a bird’s eye-view and see everything all at once.’

From this elevated perspective, imagine who you could be without your victim-story or limiting belief. Imagine yourself looking down on the situation...

In this state of higher awareness, could you now *imagine* letting go of your old narrative and the emotion/vibration of fear that comes with it?

- Yes I can imagine letting go
- No I can’t imagine letting go

Let’s get more specific: *By when* are you *interested* in experiencing this freedom?

- A week from now
- A month from now?
- Tomorrow?
- What about right now?

How can you *rephrase, change or modify* the narrative or belief, so that it’s more *truthful, kind and useful* ?



Write down this new, re-phrased statement, in positive terms.

Read it out loud, putting your heart into it, until it sounds and feels just right i.e. you will feel a flowing, uplifting vibration, you will feel energized as you say it. (If you like, say it with your hand on your heart.)

**CONGRATULATIONS! You did it !**



## Askesis II - THE CHARIOTEER'S CHOICE

Make Well Thought-Out, Balanced Decisions

### Background:

Making decisions can be hard because there are many factors and risks involved. The most important thing though, is that you *make them*. Neuroscience tells us that *reaching decisions reduces your worry and anxiety and helps you solve problems, even if the decision you reach is only “good enough”*.

You can not foretell the future so you can never have *all* the information, meaning that you can never reach the perfect decision. It will always have a degree of uncertainty. You can however, reduce that uncertainty by using Ethos, Pathos and Logos to provide you with a structure that will make sure you have examined sufficiently all aspects of your decision making process.

The more you exercise it, the less the uncertainty you will face and the happier you will feel about your decision. So much time and energy is lost, when we are unclear, undecided or we procrastinate.

*“While we wait for life, life passes”* - Seneca

As mentioned already, in his presentation of the concepts of **Ethos**, **Pathos** and **Logos**, Aristotle was referring to the traits an orator must have in order to influence and persuade his audience. We also mentioned in the Logos chapter that there were two more, lesser known principles that Aristotle identified, that of

- **Telos** (end, goal, completion) and
- **Kairos** (timing, context).

For simplicity, we normally consider these to be included in the **Logos** trait, since they address logical, strategic matters, but it's helpful to examine them individually when taking decisions.

These traits represent *the most basic questions* we can ask regarding *any* situation or problem we are faced with i.e. *Who, Why, What, Where* and *When*:

- **Ethos** addresses **Who** you are.
- **Pathos** addresses **Why** you want what you want.
- **Logos** addresses **What** and **How**; your actual strategy and the realities you are facing.
- **Telos** addresses **Where** you want to go - the actual outcome you seek to achieve.
- **Kairos** addresses **When**; the best time to act/ your timing.

*Together, these force you to examine the full spectrum of considerations which you must address in order to reach a balanced decision for yourself - or to persuade others that your decision is valid.*

It's like calibrating the G.P.S. of your mind with a clear address, allowing you to achieve your goals in the most ideal way. A process of checks and balances and working to gain the knowledge, courage and confidence needed to set correct goals and take the most beneficial, balanced and informed decisions possible.

NOTE: This Askesis is best done after you have completed the Askesis **DEFINE YOUR ITHACA®** and **THE MAP OF ULYSSES®**

### **Name: THE CHARIOTEER'S CHOICE**

**Purpose:** To help you to think more clearly and arrive at the best decision possible.

#### **Instructions:**

- 
- Briefly describe the dilemma or issue that you are facing and which requires a decision to be made.

- 
- What are the 2-3 possible solutions/options/paths according to your understanding of the situation?

You will then proceed to pass through the first filters of Ethos, Pathos, Logos.

### “The Three Filters”

1. **Ethos Filter** - Be honest and truthful with yourself. Is the path or solution that you are thinking about, aligned with who you are? Is it aligned with your integrity, your character, your core values and your best interests? Does it reflect who you aspire to be; your authentic, virtuous “Best Self”? Is it aligned with your purpose in life, and the future vision you have for yourself? (See later on the askesis on creating your Personal Mission Statement)



*Write down your thoughts...*

2. **Pathos Filter** - Consider Pathos - your emotions, hopes, desires and dreams as well as fears. How do you *feel* about it? What does your gut say? What emotions does it evoke in you? Emotions express your subconscious thinking and will usually reveal actual problems or opportunities. Pathos will compel you on the one hand, raising your hopes that your dreams can be

achieved, but on the other hand, it may paralyze you with fear and self-doubt, making you waver with indecision.

Run the thoughts affecting your emotions through the 3 filters we mentioned in Askesis I

- Are they based on True facts?
- Are they Kind?
- Are they Useful?

Answer these questions:



- *What is your BIG WHY (your deeply emotional reason for doing this) ?*
- *What is holding you back?*
- *Write about your 3 Fears/Main Concerns.*

3. **Logos Filter** - Logos is your reality-check. Consider the hopes and fears you listed above in view of the actual realities you are facing. Looking at the facts, are your fears overblown or are your hopes too naive and optimistic?

The only way to know is *to work the numbers and list the facts*. What do they say? What does ‘common sense’ say? What are the logical, rational steps and strategies that must be followed? What proofs, evidence, examples or case-studies do you have? What is the ‘usefulness’ of this path you are choosing? Does it serve the general plan of your life?

Make sure you **Understand** the situation and facts correctly, so you can more readily **Accept** the reality of the situation and **Adjust** in the way most beneficial to you.

Also examine the 2 additional traits:

**Telos:** What is your exact **goal** and is it beneficial to you in the short term as well as in the long term?

**Kairos:** Is this the right **time**?

*Note: It is always a good idea to discuss your thoughts with a **mentor**, coach, supervisor or consultant, to get someone else's point of view. Explaining your thought process to someone else, getting their feedback and answering their questions will open your eyes to matters you may not have considered.*



**Finally, take a decision and write it down.**



## **Askesis III - DEFINE YOUR ITHACA**

### Formulate Your Personal Mission Statement

**Background:** We face tough decisions everyday. As a parent, spouse, business professional, you encounter several circumstances each day which test your patience, your character and your peace of mind.

A Personal Mission Statement is a *tool that can guide you and help shape your decisions, priorities and reactions, based on your values and the vision you have for your life.* It is a condensed, focused representation of your Ethos. *A helpful reminder from the person you want to be.*

***"Give me a place to stand, and I shall move the world"***  
- Archimedes

Clarifying your life purpose makes it easier to navigate through life, when you have a sense of where you want to go. Your psychological well being is empowered, when your actions and words are aligned with your core values. Life is generally good and you feel more content, confident and satisfied. When your behavior doesn't match your values, you develop a sense of uneasiness that swells inside of you preventing you from reaching your state of eudaimonia.

Externally, leaders are aligned and connected to the mission values and goals of their organization. But internally, leaders must be aligned with a set of personal values and character traits that drive their ultimate success..

In this Askesis you can formulate your Personal Mission Statement, based on your values.

## Name: DEFINE YOUR ITHACA

**Purpose:** To clarify our core values and what this translates into as a personal mission statement, which can guide us through difficulties as an inner compass or GPS.

### Instructions: Stage 1. Clarify your Ethos

**Answer these 10 questions below to determine your Ethos:**

1. Look around your personal and professional spaces. Make a list of 3-5 things that are dear and important to you. Next to each item, write which of the values (from the list below) these things represent. For example: Your University Degree & Certificates of Attendance to Seminars represents ‘life-long learning’ or ‘achievement’. Your Montblanc pen represents ‘effectiveness’ at getting big contracts or ‘elegance’.
2. How do you spend most of your time? Make a list of 3-5 things and next to each item, write which value (from the list below) each thing represents. For example: Working long hours on your computer may represent ‘wealth creation’. Going to the gym represents health, wellness. Travel may mean adventure for you.
3. What activities energize you? You do these 3-5 activities and you feel *great* afterwards? For example: Jumping on a trampoline represents joy, euphoria. Speaking in front of an audience may represent success or strength. Spending regular time with friends could mean loyalty.
4. Where are you spending or investing most of your money?
5. In which area of your life are you most organized, professional, competent, focused and reliable?
6. What are you most obsessed about?
7. What sorts of goals do you set and are then able to realize (or notice significant progress over time)?
8. What topics of conversation do you bring up often, or have you taught on. What kind of topics ‘energize’ you?

9. Who are the celebrities, politicians or people in your life who inspire you?
10. What do you like to learn, listen, study or read about?



Next to each of the 10 above questions, take note of which of the six core human values these things/activities represent.

### ***The 6 Core Human Values (CHV)***

1. **Certainty:** Assurance you can avoid pain and gain pleasure, safety, security.
2. **Uncertainty/Variety:** The need for unknown, change, new stimuli, adventure
3. **Significance:** Feeling unique, of value, important, special or needed, independence.
4. **Connection/Love:** A strong feeling of closeness or union with someone or something.
5. **Growth:** An expansion of capacity, capability or understanding.
6. **Contribution:** A sense of service and focus on helping, giving and supporting others.

Now **arrange these Core Human Values** in *order of importance* to you, from most important (#1) to least important (#6)

**For example**, your final list should look something like this:

1. “I love improving lives of others” >> CHV: Contribution
2. “I love traveling.” >> CHV: Variety/Uncertainty
3. “I love working in a team.” >> CHV: Connection/Love
4. “I love being the boss.” >> CHV: Significance
5. “I love to save my money.” >> CHV: Certainty
6. “I love taking online courses.” >> CHV: Growth

The above are a ‘distillation’ of your most important values. It reveals to you what experiences really drive and inspire you, ‘underneath it all’.

Now, with the above set of your deepest values, you have a clearer picture of “Who you really are....” (Ethos). In order to find fulfillment and to thrive i.e. eudaimonia, you need to live according to these, in that order of priority. This means to live with **integrity**.

Once you have done the above inner work, only then are you ready to become clear on your personal mission, i.e. what you are here to do, what has meaning and for whom. Contributing and serving society, your family, your team, your clients, your company, is something that will provide you with a sense of purpose, self respect and self worth. The stuff of which self-leadership will be the natural result, not something you have to strive for.

In his book *“The Leader Who Had No Title”* top management guru, Robin Sharma demonstrates how *we can all work with and influence people like a superstar, regardless of our position. You don't need to be a CEO or a world leader to be a leader from within; You just need to figure out what it is you are skilled at and love to do, and where you can make a difference!*

### **Instructions: Stage 2 Finding your Mission Statement**

Before we proceed to writing your personal Mission Statement, it's useful to gain some clarity on your life's professional mission and purpose by answering these questions:

1. What do I (love to) do? What are my skills and talents? If you could teach someone something, what would that be? (See Stage One above).
2. Who do I do it *for*?
3. What do those people or causes actually *want and need that I can provide*? (What is the **deficiency** or **lack** that you are trying to fulfill? How will it change or transform as a result?)

Some guidelines for the formulation of your statement:

- It should be short, preferably contained in one sentence, so that it can be focused, concise and easy to follow.

- It should not be a general, vague or predictable statement. Try to be as *specific* as possible.
- It should be in the present or present-continuous tense. (As if it has already happened.)
- If you are a religious/spiritual person, you may include your faith within it, if that's what inspires you.

Here are some examples of mission statements adopted by very successful CEOs.

- “*To serve as a leader, live a balanced life, and apply ethical principles to make a significant difference.*” - *Denise Morrison, CEO, Campbell Soup Co.*
- “*To have fun in my journey through life and learn from my mistakes.*” - *Sir Richard Branson, Founder, Virgin Group*
- “*To be a teacher. And to be known for inspiring my students to be more than they thought they could be.*” - *Oprah Winfrey, OWN*



***Write your own Personal Mission Statement..***

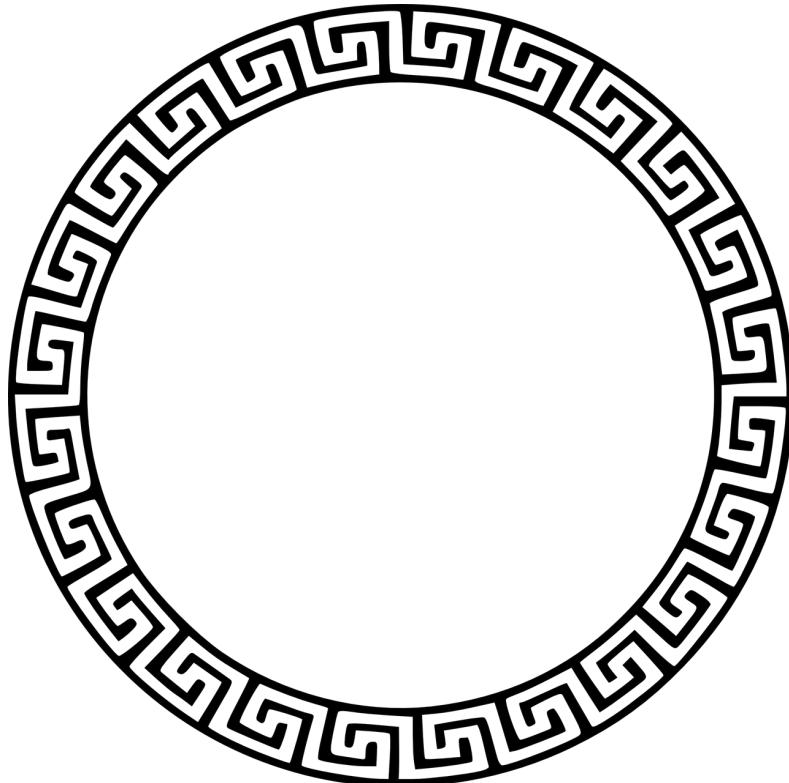
When you repeat your Personal Mission Statement, you should, ideally, feel confident about it. It's your personal ‘credo’, ‘motto’ or ‘maxim’.

Remember that this is a concise distillation of what it takes to make you happy, to allow you to reach your state of Eudaimonia.

You should undertake to repeat your mission statement to keep it current and relevant in your mind. A great way to do that is through guided meditation as explained in the next Askesis “*Morpheas Mind Mechanics*”. You should also re-formulate it at regular intervals

throughout your life, to update it and adjust for changing circumstances, realities and priorities.

Once you are done, write it on your ‘Shield’ (below), which you can also ‘decorate’ with other symbols such as a lion, a sun, a laurel, a crown, anything that will inspire you.



#### **Suggested to also think about:**

What will your obituary in the newspaper look like?

Take a moment to write your obituary or *epitaph*; what you would want written about you when you have passed away many, many years from now. Use words, phrases and sentences. Don’t over-think this exercise. Do not edit, censor, analyze or critique your thoughts. Take 10-15 minutes to complete it. You can revisit it again in the

future, so do not try to perfect your answer now. Questions you should ask yourself as you do this exercise are:

- What and/or who did you impact or change? Why?
- What character traits and values did you consistently demonstrate over your life? At your core, who were you?
- Who did you care for? How did you impact or change this person/these people?
- What were major accomplishments in your life? At the ages of 40, 50, 60, 70?
- What did you show interest in? What were you passionate or enthusiastic about?
- What was your legacy?

Think BIG. Imagine possibilities. Ask yourself: *Why not?*



## Askesis IV - MORPHEAS MIND MECHANICS

### Program Your Subconscious For Success (audio-mp3)

This basic Askesis, taught within The ALKISTIS Method®, is for inducing a calm, relaxed and harmonious state of body, mind and spirit. It is also conducive to ‘programming’ the subconscious in realizing a specific “instruction” or “mission”, for example a Personal Mission Statement (as discussed in the previous askesis: “*Define Your Ithaca*”)

**Background:** The practice of consciously recognizing and controlling our imagination or dreams, has been around for centuries, since ancient Greek times, when "*Morpheus*" the ancient Greek God of Dreams was venerated.

Many temples (Epidaurus, Delphi, Ephesus, and others) contained a special area for ‘dream incubation’ where pilgrims were induced into a sort of *sleep-trance* for dreaming, with the intention of meeting a particular divinity for the purpose of healing or receiving a message/ insight. (*Hypno-agogia*: Greek for ‘Sleep - Channelling’)



Image (CC) 2.0: Ancient bronze sculpture of ‘*Morpheus*’, **Greek God of Dreams**. the one with the amazing ability of appearing in dreams of mortals in any form. As his name implies, the Greek word “morphe” means “form” (*meta-morphosis*)

Today, modern doctors recommend the daily practice of a deeply relaxing inner state of body and mind, of at least twenty minutes, to help us manage stress and anxiety in a natural, non-chemical way.

Furthermore, scientific studies have proven that in a relaxed state, the mind is more than two hundred (200x!) times more receptive to suggestions, than in its ordinary, conscious state, allowing new thoughts to slip through the defenses of the 'older guard' of thoughts and habits. In addition, when we introduce a 'Personal Mission Statement' (or positive affirmations) during this practice, it can bring on positive, powerful changes in our life. If you are a practicing Christian, Muslim, Buddhist, Hindu, Jew or any other religion, *the Deep Relaxation can also enhance your spiritual experience and euphoria.*

Here are the **benefits** of this Deep Relaxation through Guided Meditation:

- Calms your nerves. Helps you handle stress better in general.
- Cultivates the process of self-induced deep relaxation, so that you can 'relax yourself' at will.
- Increases your mindfulness, allowing you to become more intuitive.
- Offers space to insert a deeply empowering **mission statement** for personal transformation, during the practice..
- Relieves some psychosomatic stress related symptoms.

It's no wonder many professional athletes and top entrepreneurs use these techniques to get outstanding results. (See more in Section 3, Scientific Foundations, Hypno-learning).

When asked about hypnotherapy in an article of the *Harvard Medical School Journal* (Sept. 2015) Dr. Max Shapiro, psychologist, answered that:

*"It is now known that the brain has greater ability to influence the body than previously acknowledged... A hypnotic trance empowers people to activate neural circuits that are otherwise hidden... This circuitry can activate greater comfort for pain relief, greater mental focus for certain activities, and greater self-esteem."*

### Name: MORPHEAS MIND MECHANICS

**Purpose:** To get you into a relaxed state, open to suggestion and reprogramming of your subconscious to more positive beliefs and habits.

**Instructions:** To perform this Askesis you will need to listen to a Guided Meditation (also called Deep Relaxation). There are many on the internet. To start you off you can **download your FREE Deep Relaxation MP3 from the link below:**

[http://www.alkistis.net/free\\_mp3.html](http://www.alkistis.net/free_mp3.html)

The music on the mp3 has been inspired by original Ancient Greek music. by composer B. Blazoudakis, of The Megaron National Athens Concert Hall, exclusively for The ALKISTIS Method®.

This Askesis can be done on a daily or weekly basis.

Find a place where you will not be disturbed for 20 minutes. Switch off your mobile devices and close the door, making it clear that you should not be disturbed during the practice.

Lay on a bed, a yoga mat, a carpet or a reclining chair. Cover yourself with a light blanket or throw a jacket over the top part of your body if you are at the office. (This is because it will make you feel more protected, as your temperature drops slightly, during relaxation.)

Lay back, with your legs slightly apart and your arms rested at the sides, preferably with the palms facing upwards.

Play the MP3 audio and simply listen to the soothing voice that will guide you along a beautiful and relaxing inner ‘landscape’ (for example, a walk along the beach.)

Note: Somewhere around the middle of the mp3, there is a special section where you will be prompted by your “inner Guardian” to repeat (mentally) *a suggestive statement*. This is any kind of pre-chosen positive affirmation or mission statement of a result that is compelling for you - for example, your **Personal Mission Statement or ideal state of being**.

Doing the Deep Relaxation every day is like watering a ‘seed’ which will grow and flourish. It will begin to transform your life in a positive way and rewire your brain for success.



*"Zeus has assigned to each person a daimon as guardian and committed his safekeeping to this trustee, who does not sleep and cannot be misled. To what better and more careful guardian could he have committed to us? So when you have shut your doors, and darkened your room, remember never to say that you are alone, for you are not alone; but God is within, and your daimon is within, and what need have they of light to see what you are doing?"*

Epictetus discourses 1.14.11-14



## Askesis V - THE MAP OF ULYSSES

### Create Your Future Vision

**Background:** This Askesis will help you get a clearer idea of the ideal version of your future. It defines your “*Ithaca*”, the end experience that you want to achieve. This exercise will help you in three ways:

- First, to define this future vision with more precision, so as to help you make a decision. Decision means precision. Precision focuses our energy.
- Second, to choose the best path which suits your life’s reality.
- Third, the clearer you are, the easier it will be to recognise the “*Telos*” (your desired result) when you see it.

This Askesis is not meant to bind you to a certain result, but to help you become more specific. No one can know what the future holds, and of course you can alter or tweak your vision along the way. So go ahead and don’t be afraid to declare what you want- your Ithaca.

The process to create a clear future vision requires three activities:

1. Brainstorming to come up with 2- 3 possible **scenarios, related to the vision that you want**. For each version of these possible scenarios, explore their possible outcomes. For example, you may wish to achieve health, happiness and increased income doing the thing you love most, professionally. But not all scenarios would suit your reality. You will need to find the best fit. In naming the various versions of your mission, you create a map, which will help you find the most ideal route.
2. Deciding which of the 2-3 scenarios is most ideal, by using the decision-making filters of Ethos, Pathos, Logos. View these

scenarios as ‘suitors’ which may all look good but only one is really the best match for you. Creating a visual representation (Vision Board, Slide-show or a Motivational Mind-Movie video) to view regularly, so as to connect with this vision on a deeper level.

3. Charting achievable goals within a flow-chart, and working from the end goal, the Telos, **backwards** to make it happen.

This way, we allow the Telos (our vision) to guide us.

**Name:** THE MAP OF ULYSSES®

**Purpose:** Setting a clear destination (*Telos*).

**Instructions:** First, explore 2-3 possible scenarios that will enable you to achieve your vision for your future. Be as specific as possible. Describe everything in vivid detail:

*Where do you want to be living? What will your occupation be? What are your family requirements? What will you see, taste, smell, feel once you have arrived? By when can it realistically be fulfilled? 1 year, 2 years, 3 years, 5 years ahead?*

Give each scenario a **title**, so they become more distinguishable in your mind.

You don’t have to write full sentences, just **jot down the main points** of your 2-3 scenarios on a separate sheet of paper or a computer screen.

Example: *It is January 2025, and I am living and working in Paris, France. The kids are going to the International School. Me and (spouse or partner’s name) are really well and in harmony together. My company is making X turnover and it has been awarded X prize.... My health is great, as I go jogging every day and play volleyball once a week with the team. etc... We also go skiing in the alps once a year. My actions are really making a positive difference to .... and so on...*

Then use the The Alkistis Method® to filter out the most ideal scenario:

## ETHOS

1. Does it reflect my character, my **core values** and the **Personal Mission Statement** I created and am committed to?
2. If not, where exactly does it deviate, and what effect will that deviation have on my integrity, prospects, and overall life experience?
3. Does my choice have integrity? Be positive here, but also realistic. Remember, “*To thine own self be true.*”
4. Am I ready to change my life, if that’s what it takes to achieve this scenario, and will I be happy if I do?

Now the last question - Who will your vision make you become? What does the vision of Ithaca do to you, the Hero?

Carl Jung said that “*The goal is important only as an idea; the essential thing is the opus which leads to the goal: that is the goal of a lifetime.*”

## PATHOS

1. What **undesired changes** must I make that go against my grain, desired lifestyle or way of doing things? Does it take me out of my comfort zone?
2. What is my greatest **fear, concern**, discomfort or uneasiness about this scenario?
3. What other **emotions** does it inspire in me?
4. What do I really **love** about this particular scenario?
5. Will this scenario really bring more **meaning** to my life?
6. On a scale of 1-10, how **excited** or **moved** am I about this scenario? It should ideally be something like “**HELL YEAH!!!**”

## LOGOS

1. Does this scenario actually raise my quality of life? And if so, how?
2. What does this scenario mean for me ***financially***? Do I have a clear understanding of the consequences or do I need more research?
3. What things, situations, ***lifestyle habits*** will I need to change? (Make a list )
4. ***Who will these changes affect*** except me? (i.e. family members, friends, main stakeholders)
5. Whose ***approval*** or consent do I need to proceed and will this be easy to get?
6. How large of a ***disruption*** will this scenario cause in my present life?
7. Do I have a clear plan or ***strategy***? What are my milestones? (Make a general ‘flow-chart’ showing major milestones.)
8. Does it depend on external circumstances or do I have a reasonable ***‘control’*** over the process? How do I minimize risk?
9. What are the greatest ***obstacles*** for manifesting this scenario?

Also address the other two axis of the Logos trait, namely ***Kairos*** (timeliness) and ***Telos*** (end goal)

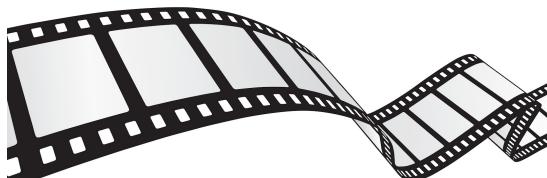
After this filtering process is complete, it will be easier to **select ONE** of these scenarios, as being the most ideal and compelling one.



**Write down** the title of your scenario as if it was a *movie*.

In order to also engage **the right side of your brain in manifesting this scenario** it's recommended to make a visual representation called a “Vision Board”. You can do this by using photographs and sticking them onto a collage, or making a ‘slideshow’ on your computer. Even better is to use audio-visual software to create a

‘Motivational Mind-Movie’ video, complete with inspiring, upbeat, empowering music and titles.



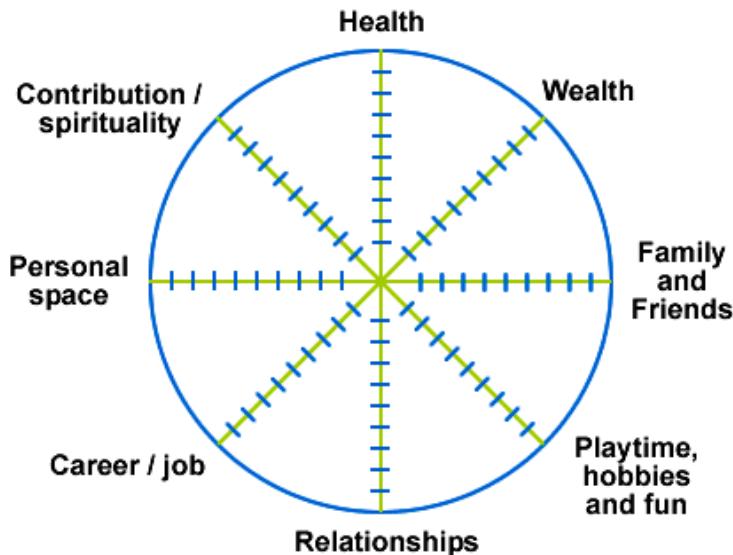
Apply your imagination with ‘role-play’. For example: Some of my clients have even created a ‘mock’ interview of their future-self by a “reporter from CNN” who asks them about their life and accomplishments, as if it has *already occurred* (in the future year 20XX).

There is no perfect way to do this - have *fun* with it. The point is that, this process will empower you, as well as allow you to address details and consequences, that you may have missed.

When completed, it’s recommended you watch it once a week. While watching the vision board, slideshow or motivational mind-movie, try to really imagine that you are in the scene, by engaging all your senses.

Allow yourself to fantasize! The more vividly you can fantasize the better because it will transform the way you see yourself today. You won’t feel as stuck when things get tough, because you have already “been to the mountaintop” through your motivational mind-movie.

The best way to predict your future is to create it. Make sure to include all areas of your life. Here is an example:



### **Plotting Your Path To Realize Your Vision On a Flow-Chart.**

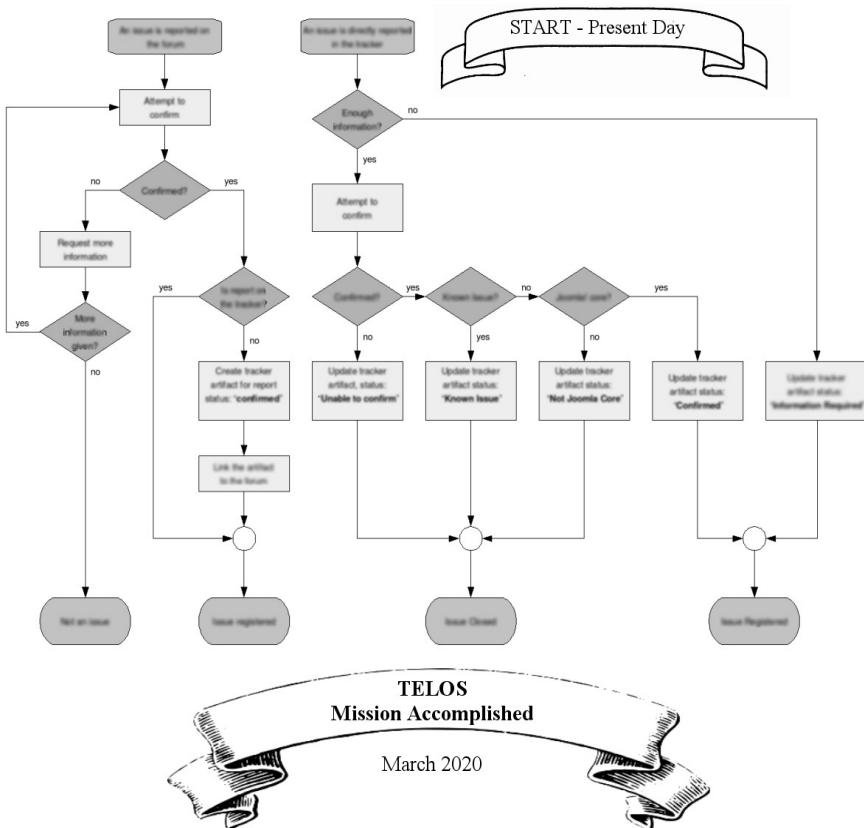
Another recommended graphical representation to engage the right side of your brain, is plotting out your path towards your vision by creating a big flowchart on a whiteboard or on Excel, or through flow-chart software, or however you want to do it.

Start by defining, on the one end, your present situation, and on the other, the top 5-6 aspects or cornerstones of your end-vision.

The purpose of the flowchart is to help you lay out a road map to get from one place to the other by setting milestones along the way, with specific dates they have to be accomplished by synchronizing the flow and dividing the process into smaller, achievable tasks that will eventually lead to your end vision.

Here is a general idea of what your flow-chart may look like:

## From Fear to Freedom





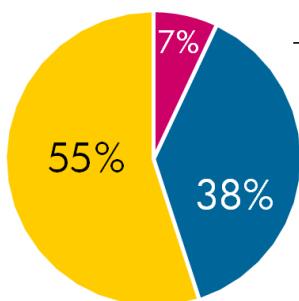
## Askesis VI - MASTER OF RHETORIC

### Influence Others With Ease

**Background:** Persuading others is a very important ability in anything you want to do and can play a great role in achieving your goals and dreams. It is one of the most popular seminars which I am asked to teach, to my corporate clients, because it gives their personnel confidence, effectiveness and facilitates communication and the spread of ideas within the company itself.

The method is the same as we have followed up to now and is explained in Section 1 of this book, Core Concepts, where you read about Aristotle's masterpiece, *The Rhetoric*, where he presents the concepts of Ethos (credibility), Pathos (emotion, imagination) and Logos (logic, reason), as the three traits an orator must have, in order to engage, influence and persuade his audience.

Scientific experiments, including the one conducted by Dr. Albert Mehrabian, Professor Emeritus of Psychology, UCLA, show that Pathos is much more important, when one is trying to influence and persuade others. As can be seen from the chart below, nonverbal communication (body language, eye contact, tone of voice etc) accounts for 93% in importance.



Dr. Albert Mehrabian's 7-38-55% Rule

### Elements of Personal Communication

- 7% spoken words
- 38% voice, tone
- 55% body language

The teaching of presentation skills usually requires a coach and a group setting, so that it can be done in a ‘real’ environment, but you can also explore this yourself, preferably with at least one other person watching you.

In this Askesis you will be standing in front of **a video camera** (and a small group if you are with others) so that you can have a more realistic view of your delivery and impact.

### Name: MASTER OF RHETORIC

**Purpose:** To train and improve our skill of influencing and persuading others.

**Instructions:** Think about a presentation you want to make in front of a group of people or to someone in particular (your boss, investor, client etc). Think about what you want to persuade or influence them about. What actions do you want them to take?

An example, for addressing a group: *Imagine that shortly, you are going to present yourself to the entrance committee of a very ancient and prestigious school of Self-Leadership. They will be comparing your presentation to hundreds of other applicants. Prepare a presentation, applying Ethos, Pathos, Logos of Aristotle's "Rhetorical Triangle" to convince them to let you join their institution.*

Write down your points to prepare under each principle point:

**ETHOS:** What is your personal history and integrity in relation to the subject matter? What impressions, qualities or values do you want to leave behind?

 *Write down your introduction which should include a greeting, the subject you want to talk about as well as your full name, occupation and relationship to this subject.*

*Write down the values and impressions you seek to stress.*

## PATHOS:



*Write down your **Emotional arguments**:*

*“I am really passionate about.....” or “I know that you are passionate about...(dreams)....” or “I know that you are concerned about.... (fear)...” Explain your ‘Why’ in simple words.*

## LOGOS:



*Write down your **Logical Arguments**:*

*(Show a real life example if possible.)*

Conclusion:



**Write down the Summary or Conclusion of your arguments, as a ”Call to Action”:**

Example: *And that’s why .....(call to action)....”*

When you have your presentation ready, deliver it to your audience (or to yourself if you can’t get anyone) and **film yourself doing it**.

Reviewing the video will tell you a great deal. Focus especially on your body language and other non-verbal communication such as eye-contact, breathing, posture, etc.

- How do you see yourself?
- Do you come across as having the Ethos, Pathos and Logos required to persuade your audience?
- What do the others think?

Repeating this process until you can accept *yourself* as a capable and effective speaker, will greatly improve your chances of *others* seeing you in a similar manner.

## Now, About Your Comfort Zone...

Formulating your Ideal, Compelling Future Vision is great, but how is it supposed to happen if we just meditate on it? The answer is - it won't. Realizing your 'Ideal, Compelling Future' needs you to take MASSIVE ACTION... Here is a true story that can inspire you.



In ancient Greece, a young man by the name of Demosthenes, dreamed of becoming a great speaker, but whenever he opened his mouth he was nervous, awkward, and troubled by both a speech impediment and a stutter. According to Plutarch his speech suffered from "*a perplexed and indistinct utterance and a shortness of breath, which, by breaking and disjointing his sentences, obscured the sense and meaning of what he spoke.*"

Demosthenes however was *determined* to be a great speaker, so to overcome his difficulties, he put pebbles in his mouth, to slow himself down, and spoke loudly towards the sea for several hours every day. In time, he eliminated his stutter and overcame his speech impediment. His voice grew louder, stronger, and more confident.

Demosthenes went on to become one of the *greatest and most famous orators in history*. According to one account, when asked to name the three most important elements in oratory, he replied "*Delivery, delivery and delivery!*"



# SECTION 3

## Philosophical Foundations



## Philosophical Foundations



Image (CC) 2.0 : Raphael's 'School of Athens', in The Vatican, Italy

The Alkistis Method® was inspired by all schools of Greek philosophy, the totality of which would take several thousands of books to fill. What follows is a very short summary of the teachings of Socrates, Plato and Aristotle, the three great classical philosophers known as the 'Classic Trio', as well as a short summary of Stoicism.

Over two millennia have passed since the so-called 'Golden Age' of Greece, (480-320 BCE), yet the legacy of the Greek philosophers still motivates us to strive for *eudaimonia*. This wonderful Greek word literally means 'to be filled with positive spirits' and integrates success, happiness and prosperity, a sort of human flourishing.

At the beginning of the sixth century BCE, people's general belief was that happiness was something to be experienced *after death*. The world was full of mysticism and supernatural forces and our

fate and happiness was largely controlled by the whims of the Gods, who required rituals and sacrifices to grant us their favor.

The Greek philosophers thought differently. They taught that *we can, and have every right to find happiness in this world*, while we are alive, and it doesn't depend on the gods, but on ourselves.

**'Happiness depends on ourselves.'** - Aristotle

This was a *radical paradigm shift* at the time, although to us, today, it may seem obvious. In the **Declaration of Independence of the United States**, for example, Thomas Jefferson writes:

**"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness."**



The Declaration of Independence, National Archives, Washington D.C.

The US founding fathers stated in the Federalist Papers that:

**"A good government implies two things: first, fidelity to the object of government, which is the happiness of the people; secondly, knowledge of the means by which that object can be best attained."**

For the Classical Greek philosophers like Socrates, Plato and Aristotle, *happiness is the final end or goal* that encompasses the

totality of one's life. It is not something that can be gained or lost in a few hours. It's about playing with a long term strategy.

As Aristotle noted, it is easy enough to see that we desire money, pleasure, and honor *only because we believe that these goods will make us happy*. It seems that all other goods are a means towards obtaining happiness, while **happiness is always an end in itself**.



Image (CC) 2.0 : The Supreme Court building on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C., an example of Greek Revival Architecture, completed in 1935. It was designed by Cass Gilbert and built of white marble, exactly like the Parthenon.

During this ‘Golden Era’, the Greeks produced some of their highest achievements in the arts, philosophy and science. It led to the invention and development of democracy, public education, freedom of religion, trial by jury, (and women’s rights, in Sparta), as well as recognisably ‘Greek’ institutions like the Olympic Games and tragic and comic theater. In such a free, civil society each person could live safely and pursue their version of happiness.

There are several concepts that are basic to Greek philosophy:

### **The Golden Mean: ‘Nothing In Excess’**

This is the idea that the virtuous path is usually the middle path between two extremes. It’s an idea found throughout Greek philosophy, literature, myths and plays.

One of the earliest and most famous representations of this idea is the tale of Daedalus and Icarus. As the tale goes, Daedalus, a famous artist of his time, built wings out of wax, for himself and his son, so that they might escape the clutches of King Minos. Daedalus warns his son that in order to be safe, he should "*fly the middle course*" between the sea and the sun. Icarus however, taken by the beauty of flying, did not listen and flew too high. The sun's heat melted his wings and he plummeted to his death.

Another mention can be found carved in Doric on the front of the temple at Delphi, cautioning "Μηδὲν ἄγαν" ("Nothing in excess").

### Areté: The Path of Excellence In Body, Mind & Spirit

In their search for the truth and the ideal way of living, the classical Greek philosophers held in the highest esteem a quality they called "**Areté**". (Gr. *ἀρετή*)

No English word or phrase adequately captures the exact meaning of Areté. The nearest equivalents are '**Excellence**' and '**Virtue**'.

This is what the Greeks believed they should strive for in all their endeavors. *Areté was the pinnacle of their value-system. Especially excellence of character.*

For **Plato**, *Areté* is mainly associated with moral excellence. It involves four specific moral virtues - Prudence, Courage, Temperance and Justice. It's something they all share, a special, *unnamed quality* - their essence. It is clearly related to Goodness, but it's not the same thing.

For **Aristotle**, something is excellent when it *manifests its unique purpose* (Greek: *Telos*). The unique, defining quality of human beings, for Aristotle, what makes them distinct from other animals, is the capacity for rational thought. Human excellence therefore, involves the correct use of reason and logic, principally in connection with a moral choice. The Golden Mean (mentioned above) is closely associated with this.

## Virtue Ethics: For Flourishing and Living Harmoniously.

As mentioned previously, “Virtue Ethics” is the idea that we don’t have to decide every time what is ethical and what is not. All we have to do is live with Virtue.

It’s difficult sometimes to ascertain what is “ethical” since many factors come into play, such as our special needs and circumstances, our loyalties, biases, preconceptions and so on. Virtue ethics tells us we don’t have to. We just have to be a good person (virtuous) and things will sort themselves out.

This is why, according to the Greek philosophers, it’s so important to live with *Areté* (virtue). We must make it a part of our lives, strive for it every day because as Aristotle says,

*“We are what we repeatedly do ...  
Excellence is therefore a habit.”*

As always, it is important to remember that these ideas are there for our own benefit, because they are the only way to reach *Eudaimonia*.



**Take a moment** to self-reflect on your thoughts about the path to *Eudaimonia* through *Areté*.

## Ever To Excel: “AIEN APIΣΤΕΥΕΙΝ”

This motto is derived from the sixth book of Homer's *Iliad*, (Iliad 6. 208), going back over ten thousand years, in a speech Glaucus delivers to Diomedes. During a battle between the Greeks and Trojans, Diomedes is impressed by the bravery of a mysterious young man and demands to know his identity.

Glaucus replies: "*Hippolocus begat me. I claim to be his son, and he sent me to Troy with strict instructions: Ever to excel, to do better than others, and to bring glory to your forebears, who indeed were very great ... This is my ancestry; this is the blood I am proud to inherit.*"

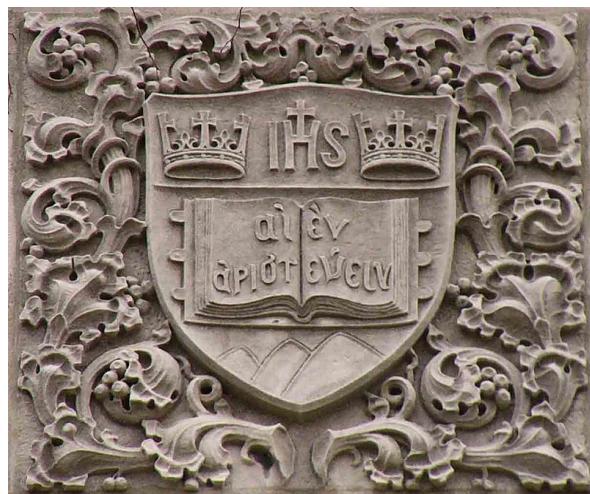


Image (CC) 2.0: Boston College Library has the motto: “AIEN APISTEYEIN”

It is in a human being's striving to excel, that the nobility of one's soul can be appreciated. This doesn't have to be 'striving' based on anxiety or fear. It can be a glorious, heroic striving, full of wonder and curiosity...

This concept is best expressed in this poem by the Greek - Alexandrian poet, C.P. Cavafis. (Translated by Edmund Keeley / Phillip Sherrard from [www.cavafy.com](http://www.cavafy.com))

As you set out for Ithaka  
hope the voyage is a long one,  
full of adventure, full of discovery.  
  
Laistrygonians and Cyclops,  
angry Poseidon- don't be afraid of them:  
you'll never find things like that on your way  
as long as you keep your thoughts raised high,  
as long as a rare excitement  
stirs your spirit and your body.  
  
Laistrygonians and Cyclops,  
wild Poseidon- you won't encounter them  
unless you bring them along inside your soul,  
unless your soul sets them up in front of you.  
May there be many a summer morning when,

with what pleasure, what joy,  
you come into harbors seen for the first time;  
may you stop at Phoenician trading stations  
    to buy fine things,  
mother of pearl and coral, amber and ebony,  
    the sensual perfume of every kind-  
        as many sensual perfumes as you can;  
        and may you visit many Egyptian cities  
to gather stores of knowledge from their scholars.

Keep Ithaka always in your mind.  
Arriving there is what you are destined for.

But do not hurry the journey at all.

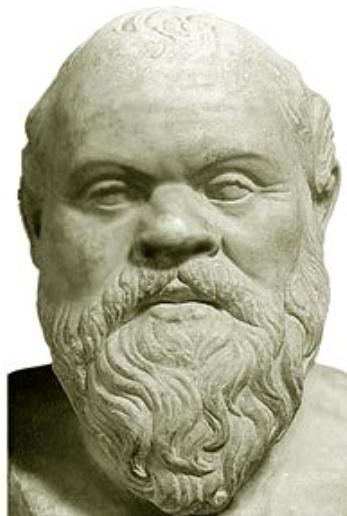
Better if it lasts for years,  
so you are old by the time you reach the island,  
wealthy with all you have gained on the way,  
    not expecting Ithaka to make you rich.

Ithaka gave you the marvelous journey.  
Without her, you would not have set out.

She has nothing left to give you now.

And if you find her poor,  
Ithaka won't have fooled you.  
Wise as you will have become,  
    so full of experience,  
you will have understood by then  
    what these Ithakas mean.

## Socrates



***“Know thyself.”***

*(Ancient inscription at the temple of Apollo in Delphi,  
Greece adopted by Socrates as his motto.)*

Socrates was born in Athens, Greece in 460 BCE. The Roman Stoic philosopher Cicero once said that Socrates ‘*Wrestled philosophy from the heavens and brought it down to Earth.*’ One could say he was a sort of Prometheus—taking fire from the gods and giving it to humans, thus giving them the tools to determine their own destiny. Prior to Socrates, Greek philosophy consisted primarily of metaphysical or scientific questions, such as: How did the universe come into being? What is the nature of matter?

According to Socrates, examining oneself, our motives and actions, is the most important task one can undertake. Self-observation alone will give us the knowledge necessary to answer questions like: *How should I live my life? Who am I? What do I want?*

According to Socrates, if you devote yourself to mindfulness (*prosoche*) and sincere inquiry, you will soon come into contact with your inner voice, your True Self, your *daimonion* (Greek for ‘an inspiring spirit’).

When we turn our gaze inwards and focus on self-knowledge, Socrates proposed, we will soon discover our true nature and potential. And contrary to the opinion of the masses, one’s True Self according to Socrates is not to be identified with what we own, with our social status, professional achievements or even with one’s own body. Socrates believed that philosophy had a very important role to play in the lives of individuals on a very fundamental level:

*“For you see what our discussions are all about and is there anything about which a man of even small intelligence would be more serious about than this:  
What is the way we ought to live? - Socrates*

### The Pursuit of Happiness According to Socrates

*“Most excellent men, are you not ashamed to care for the acquisition of wealth and for reputation and honor, when you neither care nor take thought for wisdom and truth in the perfection of your soul... ”  
- Socrates (The Apology, Plato 399 BC)*

All human beings naturally strive after happiness, thought Socrates, for the pursuit of happiness (*Eudaimonia*) is the greatest goal in our life. And everything we do, we do because we think it will make us happy. We therefore *label* what we think will bring us happiness as ‘good’. And those things we think will bring us suffering and pain we label as ‘bad’.

So it follows that if we have a mistaken conception of what is good, then we will spend our lives frantically chasing after things that will not bring us happiness, *even if we attain them*. Socrates has been proven right after all, by modern science: *Scientific surveys in many countries over decades proved that most blue-collar working people are just as happy as rich people, and teenagers from working class*

*families describe themselves as happier than teenagers from affluent families.*

The point here is that obtaining wealth and power are fine but are not an end in themselves. We must also satisfy our soul, which seeks love, connection, contribution, harmony in order to be truly fulfilled. That may seem obvious, but how many of us have lost track of what is really valuable and good for us in our pursuit for the stars? And on the same note, concerning the quality of life our achievements offer us, how many of us have the time or peace to actually enjoy it?

According to Socrates, if one devoted themselves to mindfulness (in Greek = *prosoche*) and sincere inquiry, they will soon be led to a more appropriate view of what is Good and how to attain happiness and success.

There is one Supreme Good, he claimed, and possession of this alone will secure our happiness. This Supreme Good is obtained through *Moral Excellence, Virtue, Honor, “Areté”*.



### ***Areté: The path to Eudaimonia***

If one is pursuing well-rounded happiness, one cannot avoid *Areté*. It is the ‘fast-track’ to fulfillment and personal success.

An individual is considered virtuous, if their character is made up of the moral qualities that are accepted as the highest human qualities. They are the Four Cardinal Virtues: *courage, temperance, prudence, and justice*. They were living values, taught in schools and in the Olympic Games of Ancient Greece.

This concept can be summarized as follows:

**Areté** (Moral Excellence + Virtue + Honor)

=>> **Eudaimonia** (Happiness + Success)

But if all individuals naturally desire happiness, and if it is only by becoming virtuous that one can attain happiness, then a simple question arises - *Why do so many people fail to become virtuous and instead choose to commit 'bad' acts?*

Socrates maintained that the answer to this question is *that these people are ignorant*. If they truly knew that what they are doing was 'evil' and the repercussions it has on their happiness, they would refrain from such actions. It would actually be in their self interest to do so, because they would understand that only if they were virtuous could they be truly happy.

Socrates held that all evil acts are committed in ignorance... About 500 years later, Jesus Christ was to say "*Forgive them Father, for they know not what they have done.*"

Of course, that does not mean we will not fight to avoid or stop people from harming us, but at least we do not have to respond in the same way. We must do what is in *our* benefit, retain our virtue and composure and not let toxic people drain our energy from us.

### **The Originator of Authentic, Servant Leadership**

Socrates can be acknowledged as the originator of "Authentic, Servant Leadership" which is a tendency more and more nowadays in enterprises and organizations since the 60's. This is an approach to leadership that emphasizes building the leader's legitimacy through honest relationships, built on an ethical foundation, with followers whose input is valued.

*"The way to gain a good reputation is to endeavor to be what you desire to appear." - Socrates*

The person you want to be true to is *yourself*, not what others want of you, or the false image you have had to adopt to please or intimidate others. As Shakespeare wrote in Hamlet, "*To thine own*

*self be true.*" You must strive to present this true image to the world. This is what 'Ethos' dictates and this is what is also best for *you*.

A lot of unhappiness and stress is caused by pretending you are someone that you are not. Socrates warns against that. Although you may have to do this on occasion to advance your interests, you must try to avoid falsehood as much as possible, because it can have dire consequences; not only for others or for the society that you and your loved ones live in, but for you, personally, and your well-being.

No one can dispute that our professions may give us our daily subsistence, but we need to strike a balance between our personal 'standards' and what is required for results. Authenticity is an art and a goal well worth pursuing.

Achieving this authenticity is an ongoing process that involves mindfulness (*prosoche*) and the exercising of vigilant questioning of the world and our beliefs, to test if they hold true. By applying this simple but radical approach to understanding, Socrates turned the history of human thought on its head. His approach was what we now famously call *The Socratic Approach*.

### **The Socratic Approach: The Truth Shall Set You Free**

*"Socrates... was one of the greatest philosophers the world has ever known. He did something that only a handful of people in all history have been able to do; he sharply changed the whole course of human thought; and now twenty-four centuries after his death, he is honored as one of the wisest persuaders who ever influenced this wrangling world..."*

**- Dale Carnegie**, Pioneer in modern leadership training

Socrates created *the first recorded rational approach to personal development* at a time when mysticism and dogma were the standard. He believed that we can only arrive at the truth by questioning our own assumptions, on a regular basis.

***“I cannot teach anyone anything,  
I can only teach them to think.” - Socrates***

According to Socrates, what often causes suffering is our own misguided and *irrational* beliefs. We are our own prisoners, our own torturers, we cling to our toxic, self-sabotaging beliefs, even when they hurt us. The consequences of an unexamined life are tremendous.

***“An unexamined life is not worth living.” - Socrates***

So how do we free ourselves from the self-made prisons we've constructed in our minds?

Socrates taught that what we need to do is *learn how to ask ourselves critical questions*; not just assume that our ‘mind chatter’, the generalizations and preconceptions we hold, are always true. Socrates taught that we shouldn’t believe everything we think. On the contrary, he taught that it’s often self-deception in the form of a ‘lie’ or a ‘distortion of the truth’. We need to constantly question and test our thinking, to arrive at the truth or the solution.

Harvard professor of ‘Emotional Intelligence’ Daniel Goleman, analyses this phenomenon in his book ‘*Vital Lies, Simple Truths - The Psychology of Self - Deception*’. The art is in maintaining our objectivity; being able to observe our own self in order to become aware of how our attitude, intention and behaviour participate in the formation of the problems we are actually trying to solve.

So what exactly was Socrates’ approach? Did he tell people they were wrong? Of course not, that’s for amateurs. He was a master. His whole technique consisted of a series of questions. Also known as ‘The Socratic Method’, it was based upon setting up a debate or dialogue for getting to the *objective truth*.

He strategically asked questions to which his ‘opponent-doubter’ would have to agree. As he kept on winning one admission after another, he put the person in a ‘positively-inclined’ state ie open to accepting the objective truth. He kept on asking questions until finally, almost without realizing it, his ‘opponent-doubters’ found

themselves embracing a conclusion they would have bitterly denied just a few minutes earlier.

## **Non-Violent Communication**

The Socratic Method can also be seen as the foundations of non-violent communication, through ten general rules of engagement that reflect his teachings:

1. Carte blanche: everything is open to questioning, no subject is taboo.
2. The purpose of questioning is to get to the truth, through elenchos, i.e. elenctic reasoning. Truth is rarely black or white. There are two sides to every penny.
3. The act of refuting one's presuppositions with serious arguments is seen as something to be expected, welcomed and cherished. We are grateful that someone challenges us, so that we may learn and expand our vision and experience.
4. Respect and acknowledge each refutation, by honoring it with a serious answer or counter-point. Don't ignore or dismiss it.
5. The validity of the points have priority over the position of authority or perceived 'holiness' of the speaker.
6. Find common ground wherever possible.
7. Being mindful of your own ego weaknesses, partisanship, cognitive biases, helps you not to be reactive. Practise ataraxia (equanimity) as much as possible.
8. Manners. No name-calling, labeling, humiliation, or sarcasm towards the other party.
9. Be authentic and speak from the heart. State how you are truly feeling without blaming the other. Honestly state what you value. Offer possible solutions.

10. Be empathic. Listen with your mind, and your heart. Your body language should reflect this: in other words, maintain eye contact, keep an open position and leave ample space for the other to express their views, encouraging them with statements like, ‘That’s interesting, tell me more...’ Summarize their position before you move on to express your view.

***‘I disapprove of what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it.’ - Voltaire***

### **Wisdom from Within**

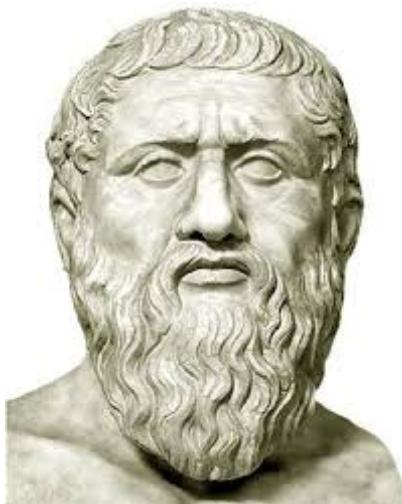
In Plato's books *Apology 31c* and *Republic 496* and without giving a full explanation, Socrates refers to an ‘inner voice’ called ‘Daimonion’ (δαίμον - literally translates into ‘an inspiring spirit’) which warned him of dangers but never told him what to do:

*I have a divine sign [daimonion] from the god which began when I was a child. It is a voice, and whenever it speaks it turns me away from something I am about to do, but it never turns me towards anything. This is what has prevented me from taking part in public affairs, and I think it was quite right to prevent me. Be sure, gentlemen of the jury, I should have died long ago otherwise.*

What he seems to mean by this is that, apart from relying on analytical reasoning to lead your life, you should also listen to your inner voice, your *intuition*, when it warns you of dangers you can’t see. This is intricately linked to what Aristotle referred to as *Pathos*.

It’s good advice. Intuition is an *instinct* developed through countless generations of humans that survived through trouble and hardship, and should always be taken into account when reaching a decision, after, of course, being analyzed as to whether it’s true (*Logos*).

## Plato



*“For a person to conquer themselves is the first and noblest of all victories.” - Plato*

Born in 428 BC, into a prominent and wealthy family in the city state of Athens, Plato was an aristocratic man with superb athletic physique. His real name is thought to have been Aristocles; Plato may have been a nickname, either given to him by his wrestling coach in reference to his broad shoulders (in Greek 'Platon' means *broad*), or because of his broad intellect or forehead.

He studied under Socrates and then devoted his life to one goal; helping people reach a state of what he termed '*eudaimonia*' meaning success, happiness and fulfillment.

Like his teacher Socrates, Plato thought that the truth could not be reduced to simple formulas, and then just “applied”, whenever it’s convenient. Rather, it had to be discovered by each person for themselves; but not in isolation. Partners and dialogue are indispensable. It requires a process. It’s why all his writings are in the form of dialogues (Greek; *dia* through and *logues* words, logic) -

imaginary discussions, in which Socrates, his mentor, is always given a starring role in conversing and debating issues.

For Plato, however, true insights come from a timeless sphere of eternal truths; the world of Ideas; a higher world, of which this material world that we perceive is just a *shadow*. In order to find happiness, Plato maintained, we need to have the Guiding Light of the Idea - of True, Eternal Love and Goodness.

*“Be kind, for everyone you meet  
is fighting a hard battle.” - Plato*

Among his over thirty-six works are *The Republic*, *The Symposium*, *The Laws*, *The Meno*, and *The Apology*. Most of them have the purpose of showing how these high ideals and ethics can be applied to our private life and politics, for a just and civilized society. For example in *The Republic*, Plato was the first person in history to contend that people had a right to free education by the State, that women too should be educated, and that women would make just as good rulers as men. These were revolutionary proposals at the time and in many places of the world, they still are.

Plato contributed several very powerful insights for making life more fulfilling, which concern us.

### **The Theory of Forms (Ideas)**

The theory of Forms (or theory of Ideas) states that the physical world is not as real or true as timeless, absolute, unchangeable ideas. According to this theory, “Ideas” or "Forms" are the non-physical essences of all things, of which objects and matter in the physical world are merely imitations.

Plato speaks of these entities only through the characters (primarily Socrates) of his dialogues who sometimes suggest that these Forms are the only objects of study that can provide knowledge.

The basic idea is as follows:

Forms (or Ideas) are the essences of various objects. They are the *qualities* that an object must have to be considered that type of object.

For example, if I were to draw a circle and you draw another one, our circles would be slightly different (mine may be a little oval, etc), but both of them can be considered circles because they have the “Form” or “Idea” of a pure, perfect “circle”.

Plato believed that true knowledge or intelligence is the ability to grasp the “realm of Ideas or Forms” with one's mind.

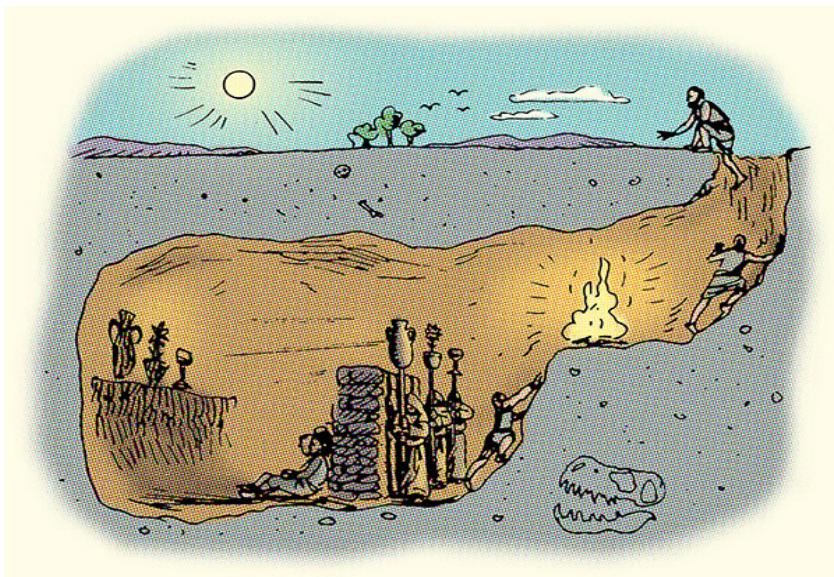
These ideas are also expressed through the “Cave Allegory” below.

### **The Cave Allegory**

We rarely give ourselves time to think carefully and logically about our lives and how to live them. Apart from our own inner ‘beliefs’ which we hold true, we often just go along with popular opinions, like ‘Fame is great’, ‘Money is Power’ etc. In the 36 books he wrote, Plato showed this common sense to be filled with errors, prejudice and superstition. Plato’s answer, like his teacher Socrates, is to “*Know Thyself*” - or at least try. To do so means the beginning of self inquiry.

Expressing his more metaphysical nature, Plato maintained that our body is nothing more than a vehicle for the soul, a sort of *biological virtual reality suit*. Through philosophy, we could expand our mind and come to the realization that what we perceive as reality is only a shadow of a greater reality (see Theory of Forms, above)

He explained this concept in his work, *The Republic*, using a simple allegory; the Allegory of the Cave. *It illustrates the need for more self-reflection and self-knowledge and the consequences of not doing so.*



Description of the Cave Allegory: *In a fictional dialogue between Socrates (Plato's teacher) and Glaucon (Plato's brother), Socrates describes a scenery deep in a cave where a group of people have lived since infancy. These people have always been chained in such a way that they cannot move their heads in any other direction, than to a blank wall in front of them. Behind them there is a fire and between the fire and them, there is a path on which other people pass, holding up various objects. The shadows of these objects, project on the wall, but not the shadows of the people carrying them. The chained people see the moving objects and begin to ascribe forms and meaning to them.*

*When one of them is freed and shown the reality outside the cave, he comes to understand that the shadows on the wall do not reflect reality at all. From this point on, he can perceive the true form of reality (e.g. the true objects) rather than the mere shadows seen by the prisoners.*

According to Plato, every prisoner that was freed also had the obligation to return to the cave and help free the other prisoners, although he may be mocked by them and even have to face hostility.

This stresses the social responsibility aspect of Self-inquiry and Self-reflection.

Subjecting our view of reality to examination, rather than accepting it at face value, as we do for so many things, along with the rest of the ‘cave dwellers’, is the path of the wiser leader (the philosopher - king).

The more you understand the true reality of the world around you and inside you, the less the decisions you make will be affected by your biases, preconceptions, superstitions and emotions, something Plato compares to being *dragged around by wild horses*.

We often do *at least one of three things* with incoming sensory information; delete, distort, or generalize. Often we do varying combinations of all three. Here is a guideline on the three mental chains we often foster, that create a lack of perspective:

**Deletion** – Omitting certain aspects of our experience by selectively paying attention, focusing on specific parts, and deleting the rest from our conscious awareness.

**Distortion** – Distorting our experience, leading to being frightened of a harmless situation, or being intimidated by certain people, and misinterpreting what is being said.

**Generalization** – Drawing conclusions about ourselves, others or situations in general, based on a particular personal experience, hearsay, or other trends of thought.

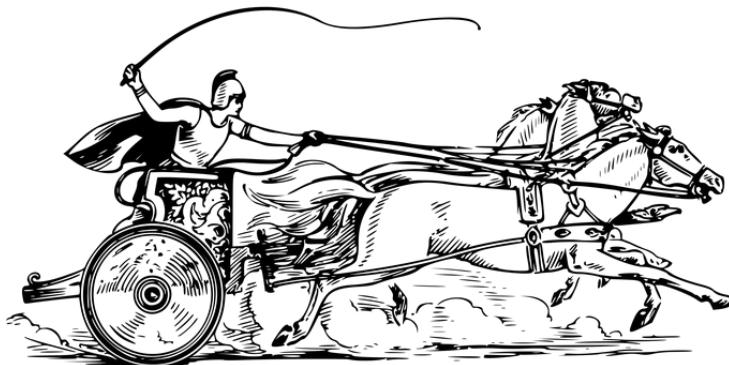
## **The Charioteer Allegory: Self Leadership**

From Plato also comes the vision of the three-part nature of the soul, or psyche, as explained through the *allegory of the charioteer*. A concept with great depth, it furnishes an unmatched visualization of what a human is, and why he does what he does.

The Charioteer represents reason, the part of the soul that must guide itself to truth and happiness (Eudaimonia). One horse represents rational or moral impulse, the positive part of passionate

nature (e.g. *honor*, *righteous indignation*), while the other represents the soul's irrational passions, appetites, and lustful nature.

Without expanding into Plato's metaphysical descriptions, the purpose of the Charioteer is to direct the entire chariot, ie the soul, towards *enlightenment*, while keeping the horses aligned and in balance - a difficult task, given that one wants to rise to the heavens, and the other to return to earth.

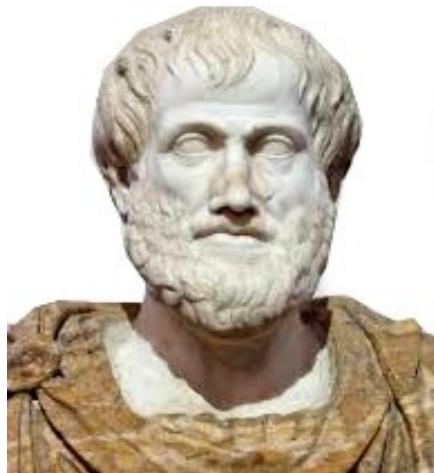


The Greeks saw these elements of the soul as real forces, like electricity that could move a man to act and think in certain ways. Each element has its own motivation and desires: Reason seeks truth and knowledge. Passion seeks food, drink, sex and material wealth. Honor seeks glory and recognition with humility and temperance.

Plato believed Reason to be the highest aim, but each force, if properly harnessed and employed, becomes part of our self-mastery and can contribute to a person's *Eudaimonia*. Achieving this harmony of soul and self-alignment, Plato argues, is a precursor to tackling any other endeavors in life, like leading others.

This powerful concept of the Charioteer is borrowed by The ALKISTIS Method® to help visualize the relationship between *Ethos*, *Pathos* and *Logos*, since they represent a similar dynamic.

## Aristotle



*"Educating the mind without educating the heart,  
is no education at all."*  
– Aristotle, 'Rhetoric' 4th century BC

Aristotle is one of the greatest thinkers in the history of western science and philosophy, making contributions to logic, metaphysics, mathematics, physics, biology, botany, ethics, politics, agriculture, medicine, dance and theater. He was a student of Plato, who in turn studied under Socrates.

Aristotle was born around 384 B.C. in the ancient Greek Kingdom of Macedonia, where his father was the royal doctor. He grew up to be arguably the most influential philosopher who ever lived, with many nicknames like '*The Master*', or simply '*The Philosopher*'.

His first big teaching commission was tutoring Alexander The Great, to whom he taught his leadership skills. When Alexander the Great went out to conquer the whole of the known world, Aristotle headed off to Athens, to study under Plato for a while, until eventually branching out on his own.

In 335 BC, he founded the *Lyceum*, the first scientific institute, based in Athens, Greece. He was one of the strongest advocates of a liberal arts education, which stresses the education of the whole person, including one's moral character, rather than merely learning a set of skills. According to Aristotle, this view of education is necessary if we are to produce a society of happy, as well as productive individuals. For Aristotle, philosophy was about practical wisdom being of service to society.

## What Makes People Happy ?

*"All people seek one goal; Eudaimonia (Success and Fulfillment)... The only way to achieve true success is to express yourself completely in service to society... First, have a definite, clear, practical ideal - a goal, an objective. Second, mobilize the necessary resources to achieve your ends; wisdom, money, materials, and methods. Third, adjust all your means to that end..."* -

**Aristotle**

More than anybody, Aristotle enshrines happiness as the central purpose of human life and a goal in itself. As a result he devotes more space to the topic of happiness than any thinker prior to the modern era. He too, like Socrates and Plato before him, concluded that happiness depends on the cultivation of virtue (*Areté*). Aristotle was convinced that a genuinely happy life required the fulfillment of a broad range of conditions, including physical as well as mental well being. In this way, and being of a practical nature, he introduced the idea of a *science of happiness*, in the classical sense, as a new field of knowledge.

Essentially, Aristotle argues that virtue is achieved by maintaining the 'Golden Mean', which signifies moderation; the *balance between two excesses*. Aristotle's doctrine of the Mean is reminiscent of the teachings of many religions, such as Buddha's Middle Path. It was a widely accepted idea. As inscribed on the

temple of Apollo at Delphi, “*μηδεν αγαν*”; "nothing in excess" (meaning self-mastery, not mediocrity).

One of Aristotle's most influential works is the *Nicomachean Ethics*, where he presents a theory of happiness that is still relevant today, over 2,300 years later. The key question Aristotle seeks to answer in these lectures is "*What is the ultimate purpose of human existence?*" In other words, what is that end or goal toward which we should direct all of our activities?

Everywhere we see people seeking pleasure, wealth, fame and honor. But while each of these has some value, none of them can take the place of the ultimate good, that which humanity should aim for. Towards that ultimate end, an act must be self-sufficient and final, to be "*that which is always desirable in itself and never for the sake of something else*" (*Nicomachean Ethics*, 1097a30-34), and it must also be attainable by man.

Aristotle claims that nearly everyone would agree that happiness is the end which meets all these requirements. It is easy enough to see that we desire money, pleasure, fame and honor only because we believe that these goods will make us happy. It seems that all other goods are a *means towards obtaining happiness, while happiness is always an end in itself*.

In the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle suggested that good and truly successful people all possessed distinct virtues. He proposes that we should become better at identifying what these are, so that we can nurture them in ourselves and honor them in others.

He zeroed in on eleven basic virtues as a guideline over 2000 years ago: *courage, temperance, liberality, magnificence, magnanimity, pride, patience, truthfulness, wittiness, friendliness and modesty*. Indeed, not a bad mix of attributes to possess as a leader, whether one is a CEO, a politician, or a parent in today's world.

### **Balance in Character and The Middle Path**

Expanding on the idea of balance, Aristotle also observed that every virtue seems to be smack in the middle of two vices. It occupies

what he termed - the ‘Golden Mean’ between two extremes of character. In book four of his ethics under the charming title of, ‘*Conversational Virtues, Wit, Buffoonery, Boorishness*’ Aristotle looks at ways people are better or worse at conversation. Knowing how to have a good conversation is one of the key ingredients of the good life, Aristotle recognized. Who can argue with that?

Some people go wrong because they lack a subtle sense of humor and that’s ‘*the boor*’; someone useless for any kind of social intercourse because he contributes nothing and takes offense at everything. But others carry humor to excess; ‘*the buffoon*’ cannot resist the joke, sparing neither himself nor anybody else. This character will try to provoke laughter saying things that a man of taste would never dream of saying...

So the virtuous person is in the ‘golden mean’ in this area; witty but tactful. Definitely an art to be shared, Aristotle even drew up a table of too little, too much and just right around a whole host of virtues. He wrote,

*“Anybody can become angry - that is easy, but to be angry with the right person and to the right degree and at the right time and for the right purpose, and in the right way - that is not within everybody's power and is not easy.”*

Moral goodness, and happiness, says Aristotle, is a *result of habit*. It takes time, practice, and encouragement, so Aristotle thinks people who lack virtue should be understood as being unfortunate rather than being wicked. (As if they have a ‘disability’.)

What they need isn’t scolding or being thrown into prison but better teachers and more guidance. We need to protect ourselves from ‘mentally-emotionally ‘disabled’ people, but not attack them, and we need to expand our understanding of others. Self-leadership is an art which includes the understanding of oneself and others. (See chart on next page.)

We can't change our behavior in any of these areas at the drop of a hat, but change is possible eventually, especially if we have a deep desire to improve ourselves.

*"We are what we repeatedly do.  
Excellence is therefore a habit."* - Aristotle

The table in the next diagram depicts the path of virtue, Aristotle's *Golden Mean* expressing the balance between deficiency and excess.

DEFICIENCY of VIRTUE (vice)	VIRTUE	EXCESS of VIRTUE (vice)
Cowardice	Courage	Rash
Insensible	Temperance	Dissipation
Stinginess	Generosity	Wastefulness
Chintzy	Magnificence	Vulgar
Aspersion	Magnanimity	Vainglory
Indolence	Industrious	Overambitious
Indifference	Caring	Controlling
Self-deprecation	Honest	Boastfulness
Boorishness	Charming	Buffoonery
Quarrelsome	Friendliness	Obsequious
Lying	Truthful	Tactless
Impatient	Tolerant	Doormat
Timid	Confident	Domineering
Fickle	Loyal	Gullible
Unsure	Vigilant	Impetuous
Cowardice	Protective	Bully
Fearful	Patient	Impulsive
Rudderless	Flexible	Rigid
Naïve	Practical	Cynical
Wimpy	Assertive	Arrogant
Selfish	Nurturing	Martyr
Paranoid	Confident	Arrogant
Pushover	Careful	Stubborn

## The Art of Persuasion for Leaders

Like many people, Aristotle was struck by the fact that the best argument doesn't always win a debate. He wanted to know - why does this happen and what can we do about it? He had lots of opportunities for observation.

In Ancient Athens, many decisions were made in public meetings often in the Agora (the open marketplace) of the town square. Orators would vie with one another to sway popular opinion. Aristotle observed the ways audiences and individuals are influenced by many factors that don't strictly engage with logic or the facts of the case. It's irritating, and the reason many serious people tended to avoid the marketplace and populous debate.

So, Aristotle wrote the *first ever manual on the art of persuasion*. He called it '*The Rhetoric*'. We already discussed it in the introduction. In it he presents the concepts of *Ethos*, *Pathos*, and *Logos*, as the traits an orator must have in order to influence and persuade his audience.

He also referenced two more, lesser known traits, that of *Telos* (ending), meaning the purpose or attitude of a speech, and *Kairos* (time, weather), meaning the particular setting, context, atmosphere, time, and place that a speech occurs.

It is these concepts and their extended application to ourselves that form the backbone of The ALKISTIS Method®.



## Stoicism

*“Just keep in mind — the more we value things outside our control, the less control we have” - Epictetus*

On a warm afternoon, around 300 BC, a haggard, long faced man paced the streets of ancient Athens. He had never been a joyful figure, but he was especially sullen today as he had suffered a great loss. His name was Zeno and he had been a wealthy merchant until recently. Then on a voyage from Phoenicia to Piraeus (the port of Athens) his ship sank in the rough, stormy waters of the Aegean sea. He managed to survive, but lost everything he had.

Stopping by a book-shop, he browsed “Memorabilia”, a scroll by Xenophon, detailing the teachings of the father of Greek philosophy, Socrates. So impressed was he at these insights, he asked the book-seller where men like this might be found.

Just then, Crates of Thebes, the most famous Cynic living at that time in Greece happened to be walking by. The bookseller pointed. “Follow him...” he advised Zeno.

As so Stoicism began - with a businessman and a cynic. They were men hardened by life, searching for truth and wisdom, and **a way to be happy, no matter what difficulties life may throw at them.**

As with all other schools of thought, Stoicism was greatly influenced by the teachings of those before them, like Socrates, Plato, Aristotle and others. Famous philosophers of Stoicism include Zeno of Citium, a former slave, Epictetus, the Roman Emperor Marcus Aurelius, the Roman statesman Seneca The Younger, and the arch-enemy of Julius Caesar, Cato the Younger. The wide variety of these, demonstrates that Stoicism is applicable to all walks of life.

The term "stoic" was taken from the "stoa poikile", meaning "painted colonnade". It was the marketplace ('Agora') where Zeno used to teach, instead of at the more established lyceums and academies. In modern times, we often use the word 'stoic' referring to someone who remains calm under pressure and avoids emotional extremes.

The ancient Stoics prided themselves on being rational, objective thinkers. They believed that humanity's greatest asset is a functional mind and to exercise reason is the most virtuous pursuit. Their "physics", i.e. their view of the world, may have some errors compared to what we know today, but that was only because it was an attempt to rationally explain the world *given the facts they had at the time*, without depending on mysticism. They would be the first to adopt today's scientific insights and adjust their views accordingly because they were what we would call 'mature, grown-ups'. Stoics take full responsibility for their life, and they base their views on science, logic and reason.

You might ask, where does love fit into this equation? Stoics believe that if we all thought more rationally we would all be less egotistical. There would be a lot more love in this world: Love for each other, love for the environment and love for ourselves. Why? Because it makes sense, something the stoics value above all. We all win in a more loving and just society.

The philosophy asserts that only Virtue is capable of bringing true happiness and fulfillment. Virtue (ie ethical and moral well-being), is living in agreement with Nature, and practicing the Four Cardinal Virtues (from Socrates/Plato's teachings):

- **phronêsis** (Practical Wisdom - knowing good from bad)
- **dikaiosunê** (Justice, fairness, and kindness in our relations with others.)
- **andreia** (Wise courage and endurance in response to our pain and anxiety.)
- **sôphrosunê** (Temperance - Wise self-discipline in response to our desires.)

As an ethical doctrine, the goal of Stoicism is freedom from anguish or suffering, through the pursuit of reason and "apatheia" (Greek word meaning dispassionate, objective, unemotional reaction, and clear judgment). It teaches indifference and a "passive" reaction to external events on the grounds that nothing external can be good or evil, because it depends on how we view things .

Stoicism therefore gives us back the power, offering equanimity in the face of life's highs and lows.

Socrates was their hero and 'role-model'. He was put on trial, accused of corrupting the youth of Athens. After being found guilty of this charge, he was sentenced to death. While in prison, his old friend Crito comes to see him and provides Socrates with an opportunity to escape. Socrates refuses to escape and accepts his impending death, making a choice in keeping with his values and character.

## The Three Disciplines

There are *three* areas of application of Stoic philosophy:

**The Discipline of Assent/Consent.** (Greek: *Sunkatathesis*) This has to do with how we allow ourselves to perceive the world around us. When we control our perceptions, we get mental clarity; the ability

to assent to true impressions, dissent from false ones, and suspend our judgment toward uncertain ones (*epoché* in Greek). It concerns how we should judge our impressions so as not to be carried away by them into anxiety or disturbing emotions. (See *Askesis I and II*)

**The Discipline of Desire/Appetite** (Greek: *Orexis*) Teaches us about what is best to want or avoid. What should our goals be? Where do we channel our energy, time and resources. This has to do with how we align and apply our desire with the course of Nature. A wise person would seek to harmonize his inner *Logos*, with the greater cosmic *Logos*, just like a musician attunes his/her instrument to the symphony orchestra. When we do this, we can deal with anything the world puts before us.

**The Discipline of Action/Urges.** (Greek: *Hormē*) This has to do with the actions we take or do not take towards a desired outcome. When we direct our actions properly and justly, we are effective and get results. The discipline has to do with the development of the skill to take the right action (*Kathikon*), at the right time (*Kairós*), for the right reason (*Orthos logos*).

*Vincit qui se vincit.*

(*Stoic motto, Latin: He conquers, who conquers himself*)

Let's look at how these three main disciplines would look in practice:

### **The Discipline of Assent**

#### **1. Immediately recognize what is in or out of your control.**

A stoic realizes that only his/her thoughts and intentions are truly within their sphere of control; everything else is ultimately uncontrollable.

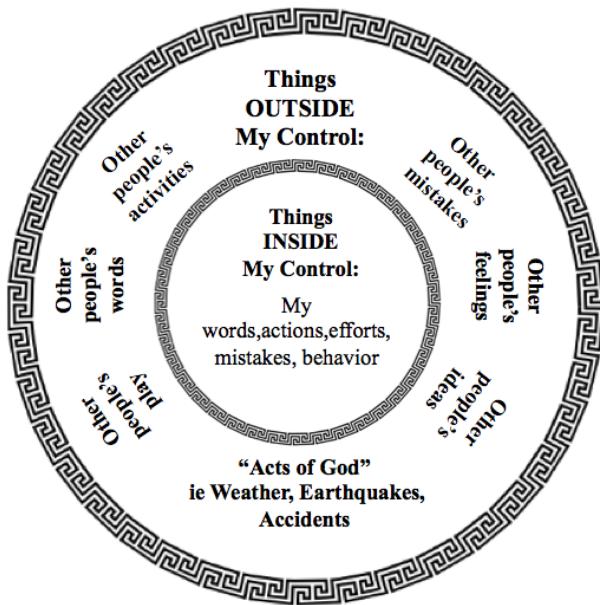
*"The chief task in life is simply this: to identify and separate matters so that I can say clearly to myself which are externals and not under my control, and which have to do with the choices I actually control. Where then do I look for good and evil? Not to uncontrollable externals,*

*but within myself to the choices that are my own.”*

- Epictetus, Discourses, 2.5, 4-5

The ‘Dichotomy of Control’, is a central idea that the Stoics held and practiced. It is also the original concept behind the Christian Serenity Prayer,

*“God, grant me the serenity to accept the things that I can not change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference”.*



Here is how Epictetus puts it in his Enchiridion (a sort of Stoic manual):

*“Some things are within our power, while others are not. Within our power are opinion, motivation, desire, aversion and, in a word, whatever is of our own doing. Not within our power are our body, our property, reputation, office, and, in a word, whatever is not of our own doing.”*

## 2. Passions and emotions such as fear, lust, anger, envy, resentment etc are personal choices, regardless of outer circumstances.

This is based on Epictetus' teachings that there can be no such thing as being the 'victim' of another, you can only be a victim of your own thoughts. It's all about self-discipline.

*"Keep this thought handy, when you feel a fit of rage coming on, it isn't manly to be enraged. Rather, gentleness and civility are more human, and therefore manlier. A real man doesn't give way to anger and discontent, and such a person has strength, courage and endurance unlike the angry and complaining. The nearer a man comes to a calm mind, the closer he is to strength."*

- Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations*, 11.1.5b

In other words, anger is weakness of will. Are you going to be a puppet of your anger or appetite? Just because someone calls you a name, does that mean you have to jump? Just because your anger says 'jump', do you have to jump? Not if you are the master of your destiny.

*"Frame your thoughts like this - you are a mature person, you won't let yourself be enslaved by this any longer, no longer pulled like a puppet by every impulse, and you'll stop complaining about your present fortune or dreading the future."*

- Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations*, 2.2

## 3. Awareness/Assessment of Self and of Circumstances

*"Above all, it is necessary for a person to have a true self-estimate for we commonly think that we can do more than we really can."*

- Seneca, *On Tranquility of the Mind*, 5.2

How can you really be considered self-aware if you refuse to consider your weaknesses, patterns and instincts? Are you ready to have that "hard-talk" with yourself? Be careful of dangerous overestimation of yourself or of situations. Understand that awareness is freedom.

*“The person is free who lives as they wish, neither compelled, nor hindered, nor limited - whose choices aren’t hampered, whose desires succeed, and who doesn’t fall into what repels them. Who wishes to live in deception, tripped up, mistaken, undisciplined, complaining, in a rut? No one. These are base people who don’t live as they wish; and so, no base person is free.”* - Epictetus, Discourses, 4.1.1-3a

In Greek, the word, ‘*Oiesis*’, self-deception and ‘*Hybris*’, hubris, are seen as dangerous traps that we set for ourselves. We must exercise self-awareness at all times, otherwise, we may have a tragic end, like the hero *Oedipus*.

*“Zeno would say that nothing is more hostile to a firm grasp on knowledge than self-deception.”* - Diogenes Laertius, Lives of the Eminent Philosophers, 7.23

#### 4. Objective, Free Thinking

Don’t get caught up in all the drama and other illusions of the ego. Be careful not to allow toxic thoughts to slip in, by being constantly vigilant.

*“Your mind will take the shape of what you frequently hold in thought, for the human spirit is colored by such impressions.”* - Marcus Aurelius, Meditations 5.16

*“Drama, combat, terror, numbness, and subservience, every day these things wipe out your sacred principles, whenever your mind entertains them uncritically, or lets them slip in.”*  
- Marcus Aurelius, Meditations, 10.9

*“Hold sacred your capacity for understanding. For in it is our ruling principle that won’t allow anything to enter that is neither inconsistent with nature nor with the constitution of a logical creature. It’s what demands due diligence, care for others, and obedience to God.”*

- Marcus Aurelius, Meditations, 3.9

## The Discipline of Desire

1. **Cultivate** Fortitude and Resilience through **positive habits**, because “*We are what we repeatedly do*”, as Aristotle taught.

Stoics believed that it is great to be inspired, from time to time, but real transformation happens in small, consistent steps that work, such as waking up early in the morning, making our bed each day, meditating, journaling, fasting regularly etc. Because a strong soul is better than good luck.

“*We must undergo a hard winter training and not rush into things for which we haven't prepared.*”

-Epictetus, Discourses, 1.2.32

“*The rational soul is stronger than any kind of fortune - from its own share, it guides its affairs here or there, and is itself the cause of a happy or miserable life.*”

-Seneca, Moral Letters, 98.2b

2. **Live with Kindness and Virtue;** it will make you invincible.

“*Kindness is invincible, but only when it's sincere, with no hypocrisy or faking.*”

-Marcus Aurelius, Meditations, 11.18.5.9a

The Stoics studied Plato and Socrates who taught that the real secret to philosophy is learning to love.

“*Dig deep within yourself, for there is a fountain of goodness ever ready to flow if you will keep digging.*”

-Marcus Aurelius, Meditations, 7.59

“*The wise person can lose nothing. Such a person has everything stored up for themselves, leaving nothing to Fortune, their own goods are held firm, bound in virtue, which requires nothing from chance, and therefore can't be either increased or diminished.*”

-Seneca, On the Firmness of the Wise, 5.4

### 3. ‘Amor Fati’ is about accepting your fate.

When something happens that we dreaded would happen, what is more intelligent to dwell on: Wishing that it hadn’t happened or figuring out what to do about it and possibly even benefitting from it?

This premise, that we don't control what happens to us but we *do* control how we respond to it, is expressed in this quote from Marcus Aurelius:

*“The impediment to action advances action,  
what stands in the way becomes the way.”*

In this way, there is no such thing as a setback or a problem or an obstacle. There's simply an opportunity to try a different strategy. It may not be what we wished for or were expecting, but it's what we got and we need to deal with it. It's not what we would have preferred, but it's what we have to work with. After all, what else can we do?

Obstacles ‘galvanize’ our determination to succeed, like gasoline feeds fire. This is what the Stoics call, “*Amor Fati*” - the love of one’s fate. Difficulties can bring out the best in us when we embrace them with this radical attitude.



**“ΕΝ ΙΥΠΙ  
ΠΡΟΚΟΠΤΕ”**  
*‘In fire advance’*

Image: This Greek motto for soldiers has been found on many ancient military seal rings, as in this photo from a private collection.

Throughout history great men and women have responded to problems, obstacles and adversity in a similar way :

*“Don’t seek for everything to happen as you wish it would, but rather wish that everything happens as it actually will - then your life will flow well.”* -Epictetus, Enchiridion, 8

Some people mistake Amor Fati for being fatalistic, leading to non-action. On the contrary, it's about accepting what has happened and using the time to re-group resources, in order to proceed to the next steps. It is, in fact, the only useful and practical thing you can do. Everything else is a waste of time and energy.

#### 4. Meditation on Mortality ‘**Memento Mori**’

The literal translation of this is ‘Remembering you will die.’ Stoics meditate daily on their mortality to revive their commitment to a principle centered life, to be more grateful and free from being anxious.

Imagine a soldier who is leaving for duty tomorrow, not knowing whether they'll return or not. How would they behave and see things? Firstly, they'll get their affairs in order. They will handle their business. They will tell their family and children how much they love them. They wouldn't have time for quarreling or petty matters. In the morning they are prepared to go, hoping for the best, but knowing that they might not come back.

*“Let us prepare our minds as if we’d come to the very end of life. Let us postpone nothing. Let us balance life’s books each day... The one who puts the finishing touches on their life each day is never short of time.”*

-Seneca, Moral Letters, 102.7b-8a

### **The Discipline of Action**

1. Stoics live according to the **cardinal values** that lead to Virtue and Eudaimonia; Experience has proven that when wealth and power are targeted for their own sake, it leads to a feeling of emptiness.

*“How much better it is to be known for doing well by many than for living extravagantly? How much more worthy than spending on sticks and stones is it to spend on people?”*

*-Musonius Rufus, Lectures, 19.91.26-28*

Stoics believe that their virtue and honor are the greatest treasure and they would not ‘sell out’ at least not as readily as people with low moral standards. This moral backbone makes them unshakable in the most challenging circumstances.

## 2. Solving Problems through a **View From Above**

When we see the bigger picture, we can more easily find solutions and things begin to ‘click’. A great idea can come from this raised perspective.

*“How beautifully Plato put it. Whenever you want to talk about people, it’s best to take a bird’s eye-view and see everything all at once - of gatherings, armies, farms, weddings and divorces, births and deaths, noisy courtrooms or silent spaces, every foreign people, holidays, memorials, markets - all blended together and arranged in a pairing of opposites.”*

*-Marcus Aurelius, Meditations, 7.48*

Marcus Aurelius told himself: “*Many of the anxieties that harass you are superfluous... Expand into an ampler region, letting your thoughts sweep over the entire universe.*”

## 3. Do your duty.

*“Never shirk the proper dispatch of your duty, no matter if you are freezing or hot, groggy or well, rested, vilified or praised, not even if dying or pressured by other demands. Even dying is one of the important assignments of life and, in this as in all else, make the most of your resources to do well in the duty at hand.”*

*-Marcus Aurelius, Meditations, 6.2*

The Stoics believed that every person, animal and thing has a purpose or a place in nature. Think of a symphony orchestra. Each musician has their role to play in the Grand Plan of Nature.

*"On those mornings when you struggle with getting up, keep this thought in mind - I am awakening to the work of a human being. Why then am I annoyed that I am going to do what I am made for, the very things for which I was put into this world? Or was I made for this, to snuggle under the covers and keep warm? It's so pleasurable. Were you then made for pleasure? In short, to be coddled, or to exert yourself?"*

-Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations*, 5.1

#### 4. Be Pragmatic.

*"That cucumber is bitter, so toss it out! There are thorns on the path, then keep away! Enough said. Why ponder the existence of nuisance? Such thinking would make you a laughing-stock to the true student of Nature, just as a carpenter or cobbler would laugh if you pointed out the sawdust and chips on the floors of their shops. Yet while those shopkeepers have dustbins for disposal, Nature has no need of them..."*

-Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations*, 8.50

So in other words, don't wait for perfection or utopia, be pragmatic and make the best of it. There's always more room to maneuver and negotiate than you think. As Seneca wrote,

*"Apply yourself to thinking through difficulties - hard times can be softened, tight squeezes widened, and heavy loads made lighter for those who can apply the right pressure."*  
*(On Tranquility of Mind, 10.4b)*

Stoicism is a clear path for entrepreneurship, for personal happiness, for navigating a world that is inherently unpredictable. It's a philosophy for self-made individuals, for resilient and robust individuals, for resourceful people who understand that they don't control outside forces, but they can control their internal ones.

Inspired by Socrates, who lived and died by his values, the Stoics are not prepared to ‘sell-out’ what they value most; *Tranquility, fearlessness and freedom*. As Epictetus explains, so simply.

*“What is the fruit of these teachings? Only the most beautiful and proper harvest of the truly educated - tranquility, fearlessness and freedom. We should not trust the masses who say only the free can be educated, but rather the lovers of wisdom who say that only the educated are free.”*

### **The correct approach of practicing Stoicism**

Although Stoicism provides an excellent philosophy for navigating through life, it should not be confused with self-repression or denial and should not be the only method employed when the problems are overwhelming or arising out of physical conditions.

A Stoic should seek the support and advice of family, friends and professionals if the situation requires it. Seeking help isn't a sign of weakness. It's a display of wisdom.

*“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?” - Marcus Aurelius*



## Concluding with ‘Agape’.

Agape (Ancient Greek ἀγάπη, agapē) a word that goes as far back as Homer, refers to unconditional love, the highest form. It combines charity and the love of God/Nature for humans, and of humans for God/Nature. The word is not to be confused with the other forms of love: philia, (friendship love), philautia (love of self), storge (protective love) and eros (erotic love) as it embraces a universal, unconditional love that transcends and persists regardless of circumstance. It goes beyond plain emotion to the extent of seeking what is best for others and having the intelligence to understand that our fate is inextricably tied to one another and the environment.

As explained in the earlier introduction to ‘Virtue Ethics’, what distinguishes the human species from any other species on Earth is the unique combination of being social and being capable of reason. We are naturally, instinctively pro-social, pro-sustainability, and since we are capable of thinking generally and abstractly we realize that we are all connected, with our family, friends, humanity, the trees, the planet, the Cosmos. Through Oikeiosis we therefore appropriate or adopt the concerns of others and the environment. We are compelled to do so through Agape.

The ancient Greek philosophers were some of the first “Spiritual” scientifically inclined people. Many others followed, like Albert Einstein, who wrote:

*“A human being is part of the whole, that which we call the universe, a part limited in time and space. We experience ourselves, our thoughts and feelings as something separate from the rest. A kind of optical delusion of consciousness. This delusion is a kind of prison for us, restricting us to our personal desires and to affection for a few persons nearest to us. Our task must be to free ourselves from the prison by widening our circle of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature in its beauty. The true value of a human being is determined by the measure and the sense*

*in which they have obtained liberation from the self. We shall require a substantially new manner of thinking if humanity is to survive.”*

*“The most beautiful and profound experience is the sensation of the mystical. It is the sower of all true science. He to whom this emotion is a stranger, who can no longer wonder and stand rapt in awe, is as good as dead. To know that what is impenetrable to us really exists, manifesting itself as the highest wisdom and the most radiant beauty which our dull faculties can comprehend only in their primitive forms - this knowledge, this feeling is at the center of true religiousness.”*

*“There are only two ways to live your life. One is as though nothing is a miracle. The other is as though everything is a miracle.”*

- **Albert Einstein** - (The Merging of Spirit and Science)

**“Wisdom begins with Wonder”**  
- **Socrates**



## SECTION 4

# Scientific Foundations



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## The Scientific Foundations

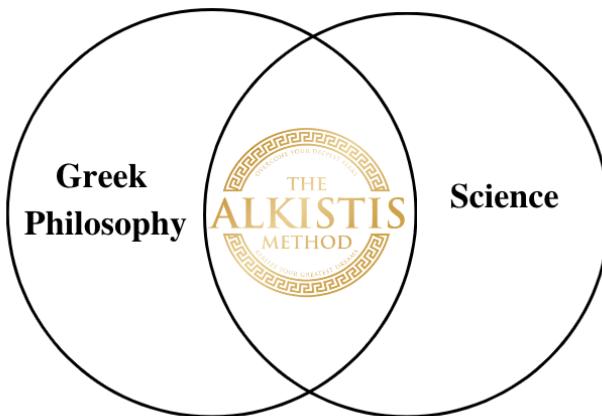


The Milesian School is an early Pre-Socratic school of philosophy founded in the 6th Century B.C. in the Ionian town of Miletus. They are sometimes described as ‘Philosophers of Nature’ as they presented a view of nature in terms of methodologically observable phenomena and therefore represented one of the first attempts to make philosophy truly scientific.

This was a radical shift from the prevailing views of the time, which held that natural phenomena were explained solely by the will of gods with human characteristics.

Science has advanced a lot since the time of the ancient philosophers and has added a great deal of knowledge to the matters they explored. The amazing thing though, is that the basic approaches of objectively observing, and proving theories with reason and logic, that they developed back then, are still valid, relevant and widely applied today. Why? Because in order to fly a rocket into space, or make mobile phones work, you can't depend on wishful or supernatural thinking. You need science.

The uniqueness of The ALKISTIS Method® for personal and professional development is that it effectively integrates modern scientific discoveries, with the ageless wisdom of ancient Greek philosophy for achieving optimum results.



## Scientific & Evidence Based Techniques

Scientific research by leading institutions like Harvard and M.I.T., have made startling discoveries about the human brain, especially in recent decades. Some of these insights can help leaders and ordinary people dramatically improve employee morale, productivity, and retention. An important result of this research was the development of *neurocoaching*, a fusion of applied neuroscience, performance psychology and neurolinguistics. It gives emphasis to neurology and **engaging the whole nervous system** to get the desired results, by using neurological or ‘embodied thinking’ processes, rather than the advice style model.

The benefits and potential of neurocoaching cannot be overstated. If self-leadership and eudaimonia is our goal, this approach can offer us our basic techniques for successfully reaching it.

**In this section** we will get a brief overview of some of the advances that have brought us to a modern approach for optimizing human performance.

We will also see that *these techniques fall perfectly in line with the insights and teachings of the ancient philosophers*, for the simple reason that in essence, our problems and desires, haven't changed

since back then; we are all still grappling with fear in its many forms: anger, resentment, envy, frustration, anxiety etc.

## Behaviorism and Pavlov's Dogs

Behaviorism is the theory that behavior can be explained in terms of conditioning, without appeal to thoughts or feelings, and that psychological disorders are best treated by altering behavior patterns.

The origins of this theory lie with Ivan Pavlov, the first Russian Nobel laureate, who is best known for his famous 1901 experiment, usually referred to as “Pavlov’s Dogs”, in which he developed the concept of the “Conditioned Reflex”.

The experiment showed that when a buzzer sounded simultaneously as food was presented to a dog, the dog *connects* the sound of the stimulus (buzzer) with the presentation of the food, and began to salivate even if the food was not present.

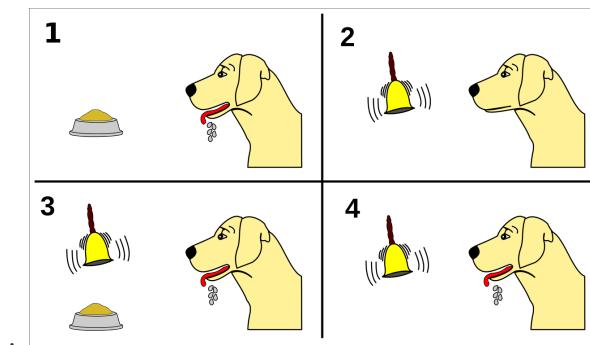


Image (CC) 2.0: The famous experiment of Nobel Prize Winner, Dr.Ivan Pavlov

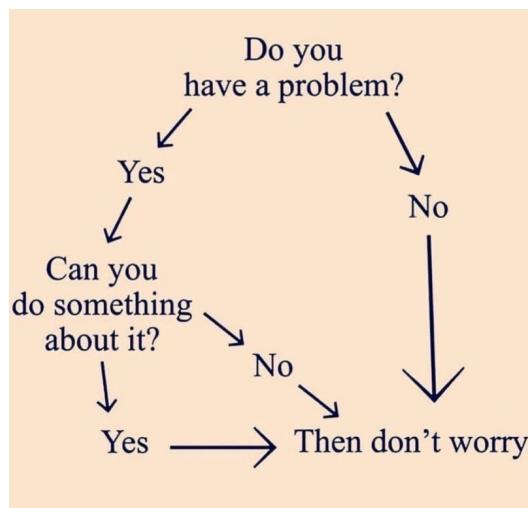
His research caused a revolution in training, learning and therapy approaches. The idea of ‘conditioning’ as a form of (automatic) learning and training for humans, became the basis of what we know as modern *Behaviorism*, a new psychology based on training new, positive, desired behaviors, sometimes in a matter of minutes rather than through many years of psychoanalysis.

The truth is that **all of us have been trained in certain ways**, with limiting beliefs and patterns of behaviour, a bit like circus animals.

In the circus, for example, a trainer will tie a young elephant's foot to a post, with a cord and each time the little elephant tries to walk away, it gets painful cuts by the chord. Over time, it develops the deep belief that it should not, and cannot break free and it gives up. Thereafter, *even when the cord is removed, the elephant continues acting as if it still existed.*

Much in a similar way, as little kids, growing up, our family and the specific culture that we were surrounded by gave us clear signals and punished us when we did something they did not agree with. Slowly, we became 'programmed' unconsciously to act like them and talk like them, and think like them.

So, now as conscious adults who want to take charge of our life, we must become mindful and selective. We need to ask ourselves *which of those beliefs that we learned earlier on in our life or our career, are no longer useful.* The "A-Ha!" realization is that "YES", we can be re-trained in new behaviors *regardless of our age.* It does not, and *need not require years and years of therapy* to change our limiting thoughts and behaviours in order to take control of our lives. The brain is simple to reprogram *when there is the will to do so.*



**Just because something is simple and straightforward though, it does not make it less powerful or effective.** This evidence-based knowledge is being applied in all sorts of fields where a new stimulus will cause a whole new, improved response in people: It's like we can *just flip a switch (on-off) in our mind*, for new, excellent, extraordinary results.

This natural healing system that each one of us is born with, which allows our brains to overcome our phobias and traumas by '*flipping a switch*' to a new thought/stimulus, is a very important tool in taking charge of ourselves.

It allows us to reprogram our minds and through **continuous application**, change the way our mind works and the way it perceives ourself and the world.

This is something the ancient philosophers knew very well, and applied in practice. As Aristotle famously said:

***"We are what we repeatedly do ...  
Excellence is therefore a habit."***



Note: If you are interested in a medallion for experimenting with “pressing a button” to alter your state, please follow this link:

[www.alkistis.net/medallion.html](http://www.alkistis.net/medallion.html)

## Cognitive Behavioral Therapy

Albert Ellis was an American psychologist who in 1955 set forth the first cognitive-behavioral therapy, the ‘Rational Emotive Behavioral Therapy’ (REBT), in which he proposed that emotional and behavioral problems could be relieved through a process of cognitive restructuring or, put more simply, *the changing of faulty thoughts and beliefs through examination and understanding*. This treatment model represented a major shift from the dominant treatment model of the day, Freudian psychoanalysis, which

emphasized the bringing forward of subconscious thoughts as a way of changing behavior.

Ellis got his ideas from an old and trusted source - the ancient Greek philosophers, and more specifically from Socrates' Maieutic method of inquiry (which we discuss in the chapter on Socrates, in Section 3) and Aristotle's notion of *Prohairesis*.

**Prohairesis** (Greek: προαίρεσις; variously translated as "choice", "intention", or "option") represents the choice involved in giving or withholding assent to impressions, in other words, the choice we have on how we interpret things. The use of this Greek word was first introduced into philosophy by Aristotle in the Nicomachean Ethics. It is what distinguishes human beings from all other creatures.

According to Aristotle (and later Epictetus), nothing can be considered either good, or bad, aside from those things that are within our own power to control. And the only thing fully in our power to control is our own view of the situation (prohairesis). By exerting their prohairesis (options) people can choose their impression of an event rationally and decide how to deal with it.

*"Between stimulus and response there is a space. In that space is our power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and our freedom."* - Dr. Viktor Frankl

In the 1960s, another psychologist, Aaron Beck, identified fifteen specific ways in which our beliefs can drift away from reality and cause depression, anxiety, and other difficulties. He called these cognitive distortions, and he, too, believed that re-aligning one's cognition with reality would reduce suffering. His work was similarly built on the framework of the Greek philosophers.

Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) is a psychosocial intervention that is the most widely used evidence-based practice for improving mental health. Guided by empirical research, CBT focuses on the development of personal coping strategies that aim at solving current problems and changing unhelpful patterns in cognitions (e.g. thoughts, attitudes or beliefs), behaviors, and regulating emotions.

Though it was originally designed to treat depression, it is now being successfully used for many mental health conditions, but also for leadership training.

The CBT model is based on a combination of the basic principles from behavioral and cognitive psychology. It differs from historical approaches to psychotherapy, such as psychoanalysis, where the therapist formulates a diagnosis based on looking for the unconscious meaning behind behaviors. Cognitive Behavioral therapy focuses on the *actual behavior* or problem caused by a diagnosed mental disorder, not the disorder itself. The role of the therapist is to support the client in finding and practising effective strategies to decrease the *symptoms* of the disorder.

Primary characteristics which distinguish CBT from other forms of therapy can be summed up with the following points:

- The focus is on the current problem instead of its historical influences.
- Emphasis is on using evident behaviour changes, to determine progress.
- Treatment is clearly specific.

## **Stress & Coping Research**

There's a large body of research on mechanisms of psychological stress and coping strategies known as the "stress and coping" literature. Richard Lazarus' seminal cognitive appraisal model of stress and coping provided the basis for the cognitive model of emotions employed in most CBT. This theory states that the amount of stress experienced is proportionate to the extent by which the perceived demands (or level of threat) in a situation outweighs your perceived ability to cope with it (or control the outcome).

This leads to the "goodness of fit hypothesis" (GOFH), proposed by Lazarus and Folkman (1984), which states that healthy coping consists of matching our coping style to the level of control we have over problems in daily life. In other words, the hypothesis says that people will suffer less stress if, on the one hand, they accept events appraised as *beyond* their control, employing "emotion-focused"

coping to reduce distress, and on the other hand they actively problem-solve events perceived as *under* their control.

This hypothesis is similar to the Stoic principle of Dichotomy of Control. In general, modern research on the “goodness of fit” hypothesis and other aspects of stress and coping is perfectly aligned with the insights of Stoicism and Greek Philosophy.

CBT is a form of psychotherapy where a person learns to change their perceptions, and how they see things in their life. This can have a positive effect on behavior and mood.

CBT is evidence-based. This means it's been clinically proven to work. It is the most researched form of psychotherapy. No other form of psychotherapy has been shown to be systematically superior to CBT; if there are systematic differences between psychotherapies, they typically favor CBT. Moreover, the CBT theoretical models/mechanisms of change have been the most researched and are in line with the current mainstream paradigms of human mind and behavior (e.g., information processing).

CBT can help people with many problems, ranging from depression to chronic pain.

In the next section we will explore the function of the brain from a scientific perspective.

## **Brain User’s Manual**

Probably the best known model for understanding the structure of the brain, in relation to its evolutionary history is the famous *triune brain theory*, which was developed by Paul MacLean in the 1960s, which defines three levels of brain activity: The Reptilian, The Mammalian and The Neocortex.

Although this model is currently seen as an oversimplified organizing theme by some in the field of comparative neuroscience, it continues to hold public interest because of its simplicity. While technically inaccurate in some respects, it remains one of very few

approximations of the truth we have to work with and is quite sufficient for our purposes.

More specifically, the three levels of brain activity, are:

The ***Reptilian*** Brain, the oldest of the three, which appeared over 500 million years ago in fish, and controls the body's vital functions such as heart rate, breathing, body temperature and balance. The reptilian brain is reliable but tends to be somewhat rigid, compulsive and re-active.

The ***Mammalian*** (or limbic) Brain, which appeared over 150 million years ago and can record memories of behaviours that produced agreeable and disagreeable experiences, so it is responsible for what are called emotions in human beings. The main structures of the limbic brain are the hippocampus, the amygdala, and the hypothalamus. The mammalian brain is the seat of the value judgments that we make, often unconsciously, that exert such a strong influence on our behaviour.

The ***Neocortex*** first assumed importance in primates only 2-3 million years ago, and with its two large cerebral hemispheres has culminated into what we have come to recognize as the human brain. These two hemispheres have been responsible for the development of human language, abstract thought, imagination, and conscious, strategic thinking.

These three parts of the brain do not operate independently of one another. They have established neural pathways of interconnections through which they influence one another.

One of the problems we have as humans, is that most people allow their *reptilian or mammalian brain to make decisions for them*, especially when we feel threatened, instead of applying the neocortex, the most recently evolved section of the brain.

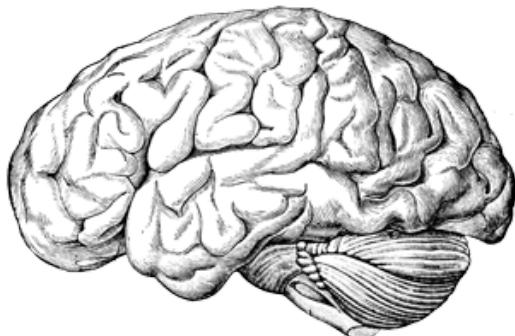


Image (CC) 2.0: A drawing of the human brain.

The reptilian brain functions based on “fight-or-flight” reactions. Just imagine how a reptile, such as a lizard reacts when it is feeling threatened. It will either ‘fight’ which means it will attack, or it will take ‘flight’, which means that it will “run off” from the scene, as fast as it can. Both of these activities need ample injections of adrenaline.

People who have anger management problems, who often ‘attack’ others either physically or verbally have allowed their reptilian brain to ‘hijack’ their thinking; The adrenaline injections, ‘block’ the functions of the ‘neocortex’, reducing their capacity for rational thought.

People who allow their mammalian brain to do their thinking for them will always be at a loss, if they do not step-back and question their beliefs before getting caught up in a self-created ‘melodrama’, and creating arguments based on false beliefs and distortions that are not true or valid.

Let us take a moment of self-reflection: When was the last time your reptilian brain ‘hijacked’ your mind and you lost your temper? Notice the results when you allow that to happen? What sort of person do you become? Who would you be without that anger/frustration/ego? Who *could* you be, if you allowed your mind to work at full capacity, as Aristotle would say, with *Areté*?

Neuroscience tells us that the brain can constantly learn, our whole life long, and that we can acquire new, more useful beliefs that will

get us to where we want to go from now on. Here is where the neocortex of our brain comes in.

The neocortex is the part of our brain, capable of conscious self-reflection, imagination and metacognition (thinking about our thinking processes). Metacognition is also a very important part of *Prosoche* i.e. observing, *organizing and managing your thoughts and energy*.

It is the most evolved and most recent ‘updated software’ of our brain. It is also the seat of Ethos, and ‘higher-level’ thinking, such as visualization and strategizing. It is solutions-oriented and not fear-based like the reptilian brain. The neocortex offers a new inner freedom to those who use it.

## Rewiring your Brain

### **From Fear, Frustration and Anxiety to Calm, Confidence and Self-leadership.**

People spend the majority of their life living under stress. Stress is when your body's knocked out of ‘order’ (*homeostasis*); the stress response is what your body innately does to return itself back to ‘order’. That's the first definition of *resilience* .

There are three types of stress. *Physical stress* is from an injury, an accidental fall or trauma, *Chemical stress* from viruses, bacteria, blood sugar levels, heavy metals, hormones, foods and hangovers, and *emotional stress* like traffic jams, internet disconnections, second mortgages, single parenting and your doing your taxes.

Each one of those things knocks your brain and body out of balance, so all organisms in nature have evolved to tolerate short-term stress. For example, if a deer is chased by a pack of wolves and escapes, fifteen minutes later it goes back to grazing, and its stress is over.

Human beings are different though, in that *we can turn on the stress response just by thought* alone. You can begin to think about some future worst-case scenario and because the privilege of human beings is that *we can make thought more real than anything else*, we

can focus on that fear-thought *to the exclusion of everything else*, and we can knock our body out of physiological balance (*homeostasis*) just by thought alone.

Our unconscious mind *believes it is actually in* that experience in the present moment. Or on other occasions we focus on past bitter memories that are ‘written’ in the recesses of our brain and like magic, we bring them to life through dwelling on those old traumas, and *in that moment it is real*. The hormones of stress push the genetic buttons that create disease. No organism can tolerate living in emergency mode for extended periods of time without it eventually becoming sickness. So if you can *turn on* the stress response just by thought alone, and we know that the hormones of stress regulate genes that *create* disease, it’s easy to conclude that your thoughts can make you well too.

The hormones of stress give the body and brain a rush of energy (mainly adrenaline) and it’s *like a narcotic*. It becomes a drug and people become very addicted to the adrenaline and other stress hormones. They use the problems and conditions in their life to *reaffirm* their emotional addiction so they can reaffirm who they think they are; ie the bad relationship, the bad job, the terrible circumstances, all of that is in place because the person needs to reaffirm their emotional addiction. So then if you become addicted to your own chemicals through (illusory) thoughts, when it comes time to change them, *just like an addict*, you will try to *stop* the new, positive thoughts from coming into your mind.

Let us say, you have been having insecure thoughts for the past twenty or thirty years. It is going to feel very *familiar*, even comfortable. “I am insecure” will be a ‘normal’ thought for you. Whenever you say “I AM.... (anything)” what you are saying is that you are commanding your mind and body towards a certain result / *Telos/ destiny / outcome*.

The moment you decide you are no longer going to think insecure thoughts, your body is going to look back up at your brain and say “*Hey! I modified my receptor sites for you so many years ago, we've been doing this for twenty years... I'm counting on those chemicals*

*coming... and now you're telling me that we are just going to stop this 'routine'?"* It will start sending signals back to the brain to make the same choice as you have been making for so long! If you keep that period going on for weeks or months it's called a temperament or a personality trait: He has a bad temper, she gets hysterical, he throws tantrums easily, she has anger management issues, etc...

So your twenty years of hatred, bitterness, anger or your fifteen years of fear and insecurity is the very reason that you get sick, or feel exhausted, or you've lost your enthusiasm for life. "Why are you so angry?" people ask. "Well this experience happened to me nine years ago..." An article in Scientific American recently claimed that *scientists have found that 50% of what you say about your past is not true.* We make up stuff in our head, looking to reaffirm that we are "right". Remember Plato's Cave Allegory? It is amazing how much people distort things in their mind.



Living by those same familiar emotions means that nothing new is happening in our life, so we feel safe, because we are at least *alive* ie. we have survived another day on Earth. The body literally is *living in the past* and we can not create a new future holding on to the emotions of the past. We are basically trying to predict the future from the past. That's called *anxiety, neurosis and insomnia*. We're missing out on the possibility to be grateful, the possibility to be in wonder, to feel really alive, the possibility to feel at peace and fulfilled.

Most people have to hit a point of crisis where they finally start taking their attention off their outer world and start to ask themselves some bigger (self-reflective, philosophical) questions: *Who am I ? What is a greater expression of myself? What would I*

*have to change to be happy? What do I really want after all? Who in history do I admire that I want to be like?* They begin to contemplate and speculate and rehearse *who they could become*. Actually, the mere process of thinking about who we can become, begins to change our brain. (See also image below on neurogenesis.)

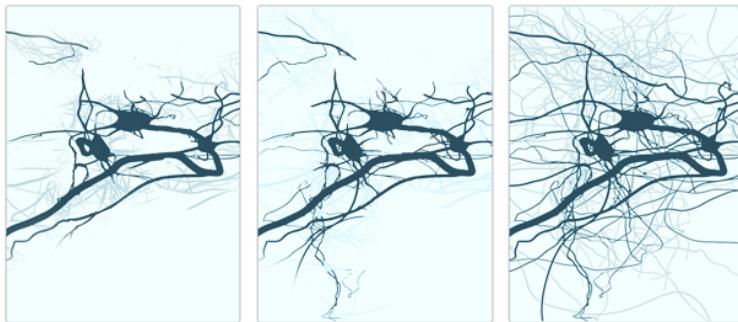


Image (CC) 2.0:I Neurogenesis - growth of new neural connections.

*When you combine a clear intention with an elevated emotion that's heartfelt, you move into a new state of being.* You can begin to remind yourself every single day of who you want to be. Through regular practices, like meditation, you begin to *cause your brain to fire in new sequences and new patterns* and new combinations and you make your brain work differently. According to neuroscience your brain begins to fire and create new circuits. You are essentially rewiring your brain.

*“We become what we repeatedly do.”* - Aristotle

When you are asking open-ended questions, the frontal brain lobe, *like a great symphony leader*, looks out of the landscape of the entire brain and begins to select different networks of neurons and seamlessly pieces them together to create a new mind. The moment the brain begins to fire in tandem, the frontal lobe creates a picture. That picture is called *an intention* and *when you can make that picture more real than anything else and you begin to feel inspired by it*, and your body's *no longer living in the past*, you begin a new state of being, with new values and actions. This creates a new reality.

The more we practice a new state, the more it becomes the default setting. *Scientific studies have shown* that it takes *as little as sixty-six days* to take on a new habit. Many *Askesis* in The ALKISTIS Method® aim to create new habits and new default settings, for new outcomes.

### Try “Prohairesis” (Exercising your Options):

The next time you have an urge to get angry, to grab a cigarette, to gobble a cupcake, to waste your precious working time on social media, (or any other negative habit), wait about ten minutes or count backwards from a hundred to zero before you do it; Say to yourself in a loving way (never with meanness), “*I'll allow you to get angry, I'll allow you to smoke, I will allow you to grab that cupcake, I'll allow you to interrupt your work on this important project to scan Facebook, but in ten minutes from now. If you still have that urge to do so, I will allow it.*”

Some theories say to count backwards from fifty to override the left brain hemisphere (emotions) by engaging the right hemisphere (numbers) for this ‘wave of desire’ to pass.

Neuroscientists have confirmed that emotional responses last for only sixty to ninety seconds. So a mood technically is anything you choose to feel after those ninety seconds.

Once triggered the chemicals released by your brain surges through your body and you have a physiological experience within ninety seconds from the initial trigger. The chemical component of your anger has completely dissipated from your blood and your automatic response is over. If however, you remain angry or needy after those ninety seconds have passed, then, it is because you have chosen to let that circuit continue to run. (No one ever dies from a snakebite, it's the poison that circulates in the bloodstream that kills.)

An emotion that lasts longer than a minute and a half is no longer an automatic response, but a decision to keep igniting that thought that emotion over and over again.

(For more on this, a good book is, Indistractable: How to Control Your Attention and Choose Your Life, by Nir Eyal.)

## Hypno-Learning and Meditation in Alpha State

The use of hypnosis and meditation has been scientifically proven to be an effective tool to increase memory, mindfulness and to reprogram our brain for new habits.

*“People don’t know that a third of their life is a third where they could change or structure or better themselves,”* writes Adam Horowitz, PhD at MIT

This was well known to the ancient philosophers like Plato and Aristotle, who gave a great deal of attention to the relationship between the soul and the body. The schools that they founded incorporated vigorous physical and musical training.

Deep relaxation practices of consciously recognizing and controlling our thoughts and dreams, has been around for centuries. Since ancient Greek times, "Morpheus" the Greek god of Dreams was venerated. Aristotle, the Greek philosopher and scientist, (384-322 BC) who wrote about this practice in his works, ('On Dreaming' and 'On Sleep and Waking') was the first to note that the images and symbols we see in dream and myth speak directly to our subconscious. Hippocrates, (460-377BC) the Father of modern Medicine, praised induced dreaming & hypnosis for its benefits.

Now, thousands of years later, clinical tests are proving how much our physical state affects our mental and emotional state, and how we can ‘manipulate’ our physiology to develop our full potential.

Doctors recommend daily practice of a deeply relaxing inner state, to help us manage stress and anxiety. Scientific Studies have proven that in a relaxed state, the mind is more than 200% more receptive to suggestions, than in an ordinary, conscious state. In addition, when we introduce a 'positive mission statement' during this practice, it can bring on positive powerful changes in our life.

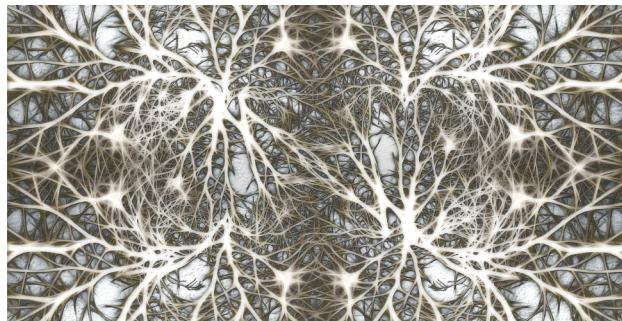


Image (CC) 2.0 : Neural networks, ‘firing’ electrical pulses to each other.

At the root of all our thoughts, emotions and behaviours is the communication between neurons within our brains. Brainwaves are produced by synchronised electrical pulses from masses of neurons communicating with each other.

Our brainwaves change according to what we’re doing and feeling. The higher frequencies are dominant when we feel hyper-alert. When slower brain waves are dominant, as in hypnosis, we can feel relaxed, slow, dreamy and open to suggestions or instructions. In Meditative (*Alpha*) and Deeply Relaxed (*Theta*) states, the mind becomes a receiver, much like a radio or television, tuning into a specific ‘Learning Channel’. (Greek Hypnagogia, Hypnos = sleep Agogia = learning).

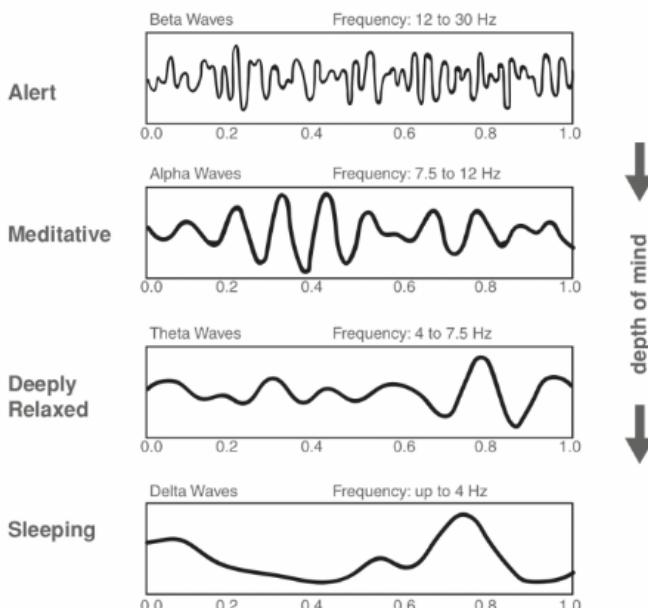
The benefits of hypnosis, hypno-learning, meditation and hypnotherapy for learning new, constructive thinking habits and overcoming negative habits are discussed in the Askesis “Morpheas Mind Mechanics”, in Section 2, with the use of a “Deep Relaxation through Guided Visualization” audio mp3.

Researchers have long known that sleeping plays an important role in the learning process. While we are in a deeply relaxed state (*Alpha*, *Theta*), our brains are busy organizing and consolidating the information and events we encountered that day. Important things get filed away, while the rest gets deleted to make room for new learning. A new study from the Decoding Sleep Interfaculty

Research Cooperation at the University of Bern, Switzerland, has shown that the brain's channels for learning are open during sleep.

*"What we found in our study is that the sleeping brain can actually encode new information and store it for long term. Even more, the sleeping brain is able to make new associations,"* said Marc Züst, co-author of the study.

## Brain Waves Chart



The hypnagogic state:

- Calms your nerves and helps you handle stress better in general.
- Cultivates the process of self-induced deep relaxation, so that you can 'relax yourself *at will*'.
- Increases your mindfulness, allowing you to become more intuitive.
- Offers space to insert deeply empowering *positive affirmations* for personal transformation.

- Relieves migraines and other psychosomatic stress related symptoms.
- Connects you to higher level of insight and powers ie the World of Ideas. (See Plato section on 4th Dimension)

The ALKISTIS Method® practitioners apply hypno-learning and meditation techniques for overcoming limiting habits and reprogramming our brain for outstanding performance. In order to take charge of our life, we should start by taking charge of the ‘automatic’ programs running in ‘robot-mode’ since we were young.

You can download the free guided meditation (mp3 format) from:  
[www.alkistis.net/free\\_mp3.html](http://www.alkistis.net/free_mp3.html)

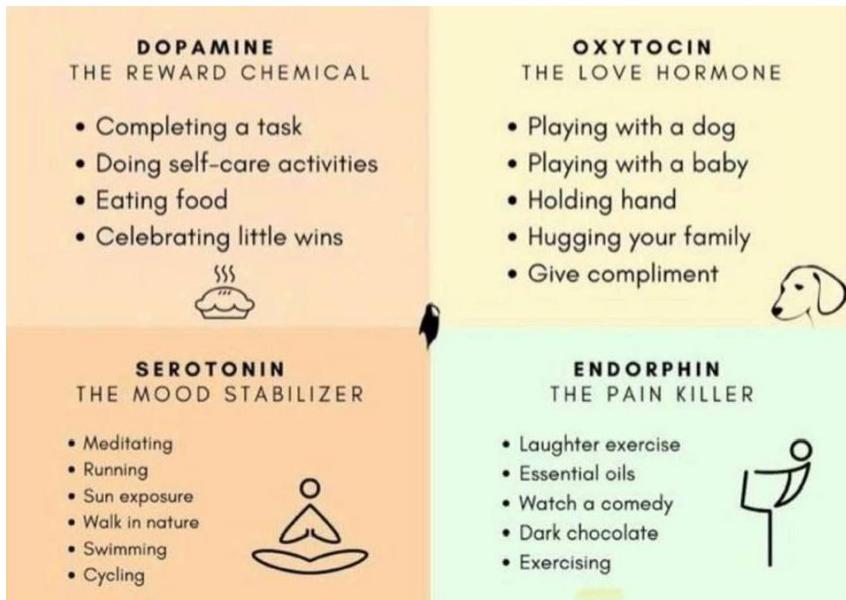
### **The Chemicals of Happiness & Ways to Hack Them**

When we ask ourselves what makes us happy, we often think of the circumstances, possessions, or people in our lives. In reality, happiness is largely a chemical experience. Four main neurochemicals, hormones, and neurotransmitters generated in the brain are fundamentally responsible for creating the sensations and emotions we've come to associate with happiness.

Hormones are chemicals produced by different glands across your body. They travel through the bloodstream, acting as messengers and playing a part in many bodily processes.

One of these important functions? Helping regulate your mood.

Here's a brief summary of the four 'Happiness Chemicals'.



## Dopamine, The Reward Chemical

Dopamine is known as the feel-good neurotransmitter—a chemical that transmits information between neurons. The brain releases it when we’re eating food that we crave, completing a task, celebrating little wins or doing a self-care ritual, contributing to feelings of pleasure and satisfaction as part of our reward system. This important neurochemical boosts mood, motivation, and attention, and helps regulate movement, learning, and emotional responses.

## Oxytocin, The Love Hormone

Oxytocin is a hormone that acts as a neurotransmitter. It plays an important role in reproduction. In females, the hormone triggers labor and the release of breastmilk. In males, oxytocin helps move sperm. Oxytocin is a naturally occurring hormone. It’s produced by the hypothalamus — a small region at the base of your brain — and secreted by the nearby pituitary gland. It’s known as the love hormone, as it’s released in activities like, petting your dog, or hugging your loved ones. Even giving a compliment can release this wonderful feeling.

## Serotonin, The Mood Stabilizer

Serotonin acts as a neurotransmitter, a type of chemical that helps relay signals from one area of the brain to another. Although serotonin is manufactured in the brain, where it performs its primary functions, some 90% of our serotonin supply is found in the digestive tract and in blood platelets.

As a neurotransmitter, serotonin helps to relay messages from one area of the brain to another. Because of the widespread distribution of its cells, it is believed to influence a variety of psychological and other body functions. We can trigger this chemical by meditating, suntanning, walking and cycling in nature.

## Endorphin, The Pain Killer

Endorphins are chemicals the body releases when it is under stress or in pain. Endorphins can help relieve pain, reduce emotional stress, and offer a sense of well-being. Endorphins are primarily created in the hypothalamus and pituitary gland. They act as neurotransmitters—chemicals that help to carry signals across a nerve synapse. They are also considered hormones since they can carry messages throughout the nervous system, not just the brain.

To trigger endorphins, you may want to try laughing ‘on purpose’, or watching comedies. They’re also triggered by dark chocolate or even essential oils, like lavender and geranium.

Happiness is sometimes quite elusive to us, luckily, our brains and bodies are constantly undergoing complex chemical processes that we can affect with our daily thoughts and actions. Once we understand how our feel-good hormones and neurotransmitters work, we may be able to trigger them more easily than we realized.

*“Whether you’re talking about memory augmentation or creativity augmentation or improving mood the next day or improving test performance, there’s all these things you can do at night that are practically important,”* Horowitz added in an interview with OneZero of Medium.com

## Tricks of the Mind

There are several ways we can train our mind so as to influence our reality. Hereunder are a couple that have a wide following:

### Living in the Here and Now

There's probably nothing more important to understand if you want to feel freedom, fun and fulfillment in your life. You need to keep reminding yourself : The past is a memory; it's a thought arising in the present... The future is an illusion; it's just another thought arising in the now.

And yet we spend most of our lives forgetting this truth, repudiating it, fleeing it, overlooking it, and what's shocking is that we succeed; we manage to never really connect with the present moment and appreciate the 'here and now' because we are continually hoping to become happy in the future...

And so happiness never arrives, because we keep pushing it away; it's a moving target. (The reasons for this were explained in the section about the Reptilian and Mammalian brain, and it has to do with survival instincts.)

Repeat this phrase over and over in your mind: '*What I truly have is THE PRESENT. I am free to choose fear or freedom. Here and now, I am free to create and attract anything I want. I choose freedom, and fulfillment over 'drama' every time.*'

Think about it - even when we think we're in the present moment, in very subtle ways always looking forward, anticipating what's coming next. It's a survival instinct, as we are always trying to predict what can go wrong.

We're always solving a problem, or trouble-shooting. And that's OK if you are channeling this problem-solving, trouble-shooting habit for something creative. But instead, we allow this 'worry program' to 'override' all situations. If only for a moment you could stand

back, and appreciate yourself and your life as you would a magnificent, complex work of art, you would feel free.

The emotional-vibrational state we put around the present moment is important and largely determines our experience of it and what we are attracting-manifesting.

It is possible to in fact experience life more nakedly than this. To experience it without an obvious frame or preconception...

If we pay attention to the present moment closely enough, in a way that we're not doing anything to it... We are just present in the now... in a *state of wonder and appreciation*, as Socrates and Buddah taught, we will be amazed! (Even in the middle of an argument with someone, try repeating the phrases: "*That's fascinating!* *That's interesting!* *That makes me curious!*")

One thing is for certain - Meditation and techniques for attraction and manifestation such as **hypno-learning** which we discussed earlier *do increase our chances* for attracting or manifesting our affirmations and goals.

## Synchronicity, The Law of Attraction or RAS?

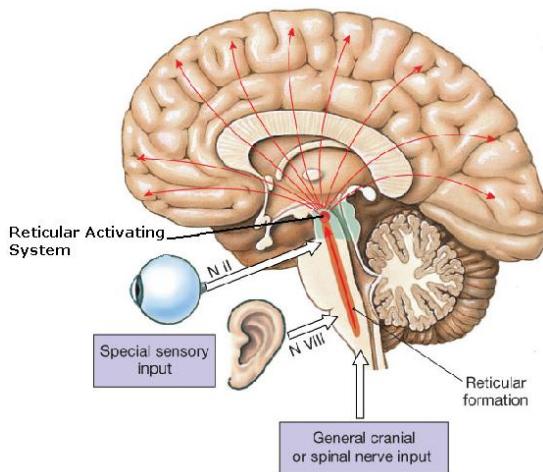
The Greek roots of this word are syn (together) and kronos (time).

'Synchronicity' is a concept developed by psychologist Carl Jung to describe a perceived meaningful coincidence. Jung described synchronicity as an "acausal connecting principle" in which events, both large and small, in the external world might align to the experience of the individual, perhaps mirroring or echoing personal concerns or thoughts. For example, during one of Jung's sessions, while his patient was describing a dream about a scarab, a scarab-like beetle flew into the room.

Most people experience surprising coincidences from time to time. (For example, when I met this woman on the bus in Rome, who was looking for someone to replace her in her job as a trainer). Some call this 'The Law of Attraction', others call it 'Mental Power'. Scientists believe that it's because of the Reticular Activating

System. (RAS). This is a bundle of nerves at our brainstem that filters out unnecessary information so the important stuff gets through. The RAS is the reason you learn a new word and then start hearing it everywhere. It's why you can tune out a crowd full of talking people, yet immediately snap to attention when someone says your name or something that at least sounds like it. Your RAS takes what you focus on and creates a filter for it. It then sifts through the data and presents only the pieces that are important to you. All of this happens without you noticing, of course. The RAS programs itself to work in your favor without you actively doing anything. Pretty awesome, right?

In the same way, the RAS seeks information that validates your beliefs. It filters the world through the parameters you give it, and your beliefs shape those parameters. If you think you are bad at giving speeches, you probably will be. If you believe you work efficiently, you most likely do. The RAS helps you see what you want to see and in doing so, influences your actions.



Some people suggest that you can train your RAS by taking your subconscious thoughts and marrying them to your conscious thoughts. They call it “setting your intent.” This basically means that if you focus hard on your goals, your RAS will reveal the people, information and opportunities that help you achieve them. (See

Askesis “The Map of Ulysses: Create Your Future Vision”. ) If you care about losing weight, for example, you will become more aware of and seek information and people who can help you lose weight... and you end up actually losing weight.

When you look at it this way, The Law of Attraction doesn't seem so mystical. It's not magic, it's your Reticular Activating System influencing the world you see around you.

## The Most Important Thing

The most important thing is to focus on the *feeling, state* or some would even call it '*your vibration*' : How will you be feeling when your desired outcome occurs in reality? Below is a list of *thoughts that you will most likely be thinking* and feeling when your goals will be achieved:

- *Oh my Goodness !*
- *I feel free !*
- *I feel fulfilled!*
- *I feel grateful !*
- *I love my life !*
- *I appreciate everyone and everything in my life right now!*
- *I'm surrounded by friends, family and collaborators who I can share all of this with!*
- *I have radiant health!*
- *I have so much wealth now*
- *I'm rich in so many ways !*
- *I have forgiven everyone !*
- *I appreciate all the ups and downs of my life!*
- *Looking back, I see the important lessons that all those difficulties were on my path for !*
- *I made it !!!*
- *Things turned out even better than I had ever imagined !*
- *Now, I understand that all along, it was about loving and believing in myself !*
- *Now, I understand that all along, it was about caring for and forgiving others !*

Pay attention to the emotions that come up in you as you say these statements out loud. Become aware of how your whole state is transforming.

*This* is the state that you want to remember and recall; you don't have to remember the details of your vision, only 'the vibe', how it makes you feel.

### Try this now

Open your mouth and simply make a sound that expresses that feeling of relief, joy or excitement that you may be feeling...

It may be something like *AHHHH... or.... HOME... or YIPEE... or ... LALALA... or.... YAHOOO.... or WOOHOO.... or AHMEN... or.... HALLELUJAH !* (Note: There's no right or wrong here; as long as leaves you with a positive, uplifting, empowering, pleasing feeling for you. Some people say it's like orgasm. Try it several times until you feel wonderful.)

### Write your empowering vibration/sound/mantra here:

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This vibration/sound/mantra is the key to recalling your most empowered state.

*'The task is not to see what has never been seen before, but to think what has never been thought before about what you see everyday.'*

- Erwin Schrodinger, Physicist



## Epilogue

CONGRATULATIONS you've read through the book so far. I'm sure it's been challenging in some places, but you carried on, and here you are. I wanted to end this book, in the same way that I began it - on a personal note... I would like to share with you the remainder of my story in the hope that it may inspire you to follow your Ethos and attract what you really want in life.

My story picks off where I've been working in Italy, in a job which I really love. One day, I decided to visit my sister in Germany. There, through her social circle, I meet 'Hans', a handsome man who is a few years younger than me. He's a descendant of Prussian aristocracy and heir to a pharmaceutical company. He has a passion for ecology and sustainability. We get along beautifully... 'I can teach you how to ride, my mother collects and trains horses for a hobby.' How could I resist? We enjoy the summer, with classical music, horses and picnics. In the Autumn, we move in together in Berlin.

I find work as a management trainer for a big company called AOL. Hans is finishing his master's thesis in sustainable architecture. Often, he tells me of his vision of designing a sustainable community somewhere sunny, maybe even Greece... He has a desire to create a modern 'utopia'. In response, I remind him that 'utopia' is a Greek word, meaning 'no-place', but I would gladly join this project, as I could lead workshops there.

It seems the timing is perfect, as my sister and her (then) husband, 'Mikael', also expressed the interest in founding a place that's 'off the grid', with the vision of sustainability, mindfulness and voluntary simplicity.. As fate would have it, a friend emails us about an estate for sale on the island of Evia. The place is located on a

fertile plateau, overlooking the Aegean sea. It all looks idyllic to us in the photos.

The estate is a former mulberry and olive plantation with several natural springs. There are also some ruins of an abandoned village that's over two hundred years old. Since the buildings were in ruins, our plan is that we would live in our 'sahara-style' tents, while we worked together to renovate one of the old houses. We decide to put our funds together and purchase the plot, without having visited it. Besides, the area is known for its dolphins - and we all loved dolphins...It all feels right.

In Spring, we arrive by jeep on Evia full of expectation. As we approach the area, we are shocked! The cliff-hanging road leading to this very isolated place is treacherous. The old houses are in a much worse state than we had imagined. The place has giant spiders, scorpions and deadly snakes. Weeds are waist-high, so we can't even see the ground... There's only one spring of water on the whole land which is actually flowing; we have to carry the rest from a neighboring source. It's very windy here, as the property is north-facing. Internet reception is almost non-existent. The beach, although filled with amazing caves and crystal clear water, is not at all easy to access; it's a forty minute hike. We're all disappointed but proceed with our plan; we have to survive here in this wilderness. We pitch our large tents and begin working feverishly to make this place safe and livable.



Life is very challenging for we four founders. Our day starts at 4 am. working through until dusk. A new life begins for me; six month periods of working in nature on this Greek island and six months as a free-lance management trainer in Berlin.

As our settlement slowly develops, with the help of visiting volunteers from around the world, I come to appreciate this off-grid living, to un-plug in nature, to feel the wind, to eat organic food, to swim with dolphins, to drink pure spring water... The view is jaw-dropping every day... The tents are furnished, but it's still not 'glamping'... Everything is done by hand; I'm washing the sheets, I'm carrying water, I'm shoveling, I'm planting, I'm building. I'm chasing snakes off the terraces. I've cut my hair very short so that it's easier to work and so that I don't catch fleas!

Eventually, Hans and I decided to live there all year round to really make our project work. Sometimes I feel like I'm in an episode of the American saga 'Lost', where the survivors of a plane-crash find themselves stranded on a deserted island; I'm starting to get very tired of living in such an isolated place in the wilderness full-time in tents.



Image: Joining hands to harmonize our energy at 'AKADEMIA ELIKON'  
always, before, during and after work.

Even though things are beginning to manifest outwardly, there's a growing uneasiness, now that we have to seek funding for our project; It seems that each of the four founders has a different view of what this settlement should develop into.. We have endless sunset meetings, trying to integrate our conflicting visions, which simply end up in deeper disagreements. We're going around in circles. Hans and I decide we must leave this place, but it's also clear that we have to separate; He wants to go live in Australia, where his brother lives, and I want to stay in Europe. I return to my management training work in Germany; *broke, disillusioned and worst of all - heart-broken.*

During those cold, rainy nights in Germany, as a way of giving myself motivation and encouragement, I begin writing a book called... “You Can Realize Your Dream”... Just for laughs, I send the manuscript to a few publishers... To my surprise, Cosmos, an American publisher from New York loves it and sends me an advance! My books hit the shelves of every major bookstore in the US! It's not a New York Times bestseller, but I'm so happy anyway.

With the publisher's advance, I begin to dream of a brighter future. Every evening before going to sleep, I replay this scenario my mind: *“I'm living next to the sea in Greece, with my soul-mate... We are deeply in love. I'm the host of a TV show about personal development. I've completed a Master's in Psychology and a Phd in Philosophy. People from all over the world send me their life-questions and I'm helping them find solutions...”*

When I turned thirty-five, I take a trip to Greece, and finally make amends with my father; He's so proud of who I've become! While I'm there, I rekindle my relationship with Dimitris, a dear friend of mine I knew since I was 16. We fall in love, move in together, and get married in 2004 with a ‘Big Fat Greek Wedding’!

Since then, we've been living in peace and harmony together in a beautiful place called ‘Rabbit Island’ in Greece. I've been producing episodes for ‘AlkistisTV’ on YouTube and offering online webinars that have brought relief and inspiration to over 1.5 million people so far. The project on Evia continues to attract people from

all over the world each summer. I produced my first short film, “*From Fear To Freedom*” that was aired during the World Wellness Weekend in 2022. It feels so wonderful to be touching so many lives... I can honestly say that I *did* get what I *really* wanted both in my professional and personal life... And, I’m so eager and excited to receive and share *much, much* more!

*Now, you may be wondering, is everything perfect now ?*

Today, I appreciate the ‘small’ things in life like running water, an internet connection and a washing machine for my laundry... I’m still a person who has good days and not-so-good days. The difference now, though, is that I’m no longer controlled by my moods and fears. They don’t shape my life. I trust the journey. I’ve acquired perspective, so I don’t have knee-jerk reactions or take things personally anymore. I’m no longer resentful, blaming others for things not going my way. I know how to transform my circumstances into love, compassion and fuel for my creative energy. I’m able to harness my thoughts and emotions, so they’re working *for* me, not against me. I’m living a life of meaning and purpose. I’m no longer a prisoner of my mind’s limitations. I finally feel fulfilled and free (on most days)...

What we all want, as Aristotle taught, is happiness and fulfillment and along my path I have come to realize that these were always in my hand, and never depended on something outside of me.



Image: My TEDx talk in India.

In this book you have been offered *The Askesis* and a wealth of information inspired by some of the greatest minds in all of history, to make the best of yourself and your life. The Greek philosophers advised that it is wise to meditate each evening on being grateful for our life and awaken every morning planning our day as if it were on, or very near the last day of our life. The reason is that this “view from above”, the greater picture of our life, can liberate us from pettiness and self-created drama. It is a way of focusing on the “here and now” and this is the irony: By contemplating on our own death, we can intensify our appreciation of our life. Hence the motto, “Seize The Day” from (Latin) *Carpe Diem* and (Greek) ἀδραξε την ημέρα.

We spend about half of our time thinking about things other than what's going on around us. But actually, we're happiest when focusing on the here and now, rather than thinking about other topics, places, or times. Mind-wandering often takes the form of thinking about events that happened in the past, may happen in the future, or will never happen at all. And it doesn't make us happy. Rather, people are happiest when their minds are focused on the activity of the moment; The ‘Flow State’ as renowned psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi calls it.

In today's fast paced, greed driven society, where people experience deep levels of anxiety and having ‘lost religion’ to science, there is a real *vacuum* which Greek Philosophy can help fill. It's not by chance that Steve Jobs had once said, “*I would give up all my technology for an afternoon with Socrates.*”

Even though over two and a half thousand years have passed, the way of Greek philosophy remains unchallenged, relevant and universal for all humans. *It is a set of values and practices, which anybody can apply and benefit from, regardless of their faith, to make them inwardly strong and free no matter how challenging a situation may be.*

Each day, a practicing philosopher clears his/her mind through reading or meditating on their values (see askesis on “Personal

Mission Statement”). This daily Askesis rejuvenates and reminds us who we really are and what we are really here for. Every night before sleep, a practitioner goes over their day and identifies mistakes and feels healthy pride in worthy accomplishments. This is reminiscent of the evening self-reflection exercises taught by one of the greatest Greek philosophers, Pythagoras (c. 570 – c. 495 BC), whose “Golden Verses” teach:

*“Do not receive sleep on your tender eyes, before you have thrice gone through each of the day’s deeds: Where have I failed myself? What have I done? What duty have I not fulfilled?”*

And are these not the very same questions that we will all eventually be asking ourselves at a ripe old age, when we will be reflecting back on our life, to determine if it was well-lived? “Memento Mori” every day therefore, just may be the key to freedom and a fulfilling life.

As lovers of wisdom, we can transcend the ‘pettiness’, through daily

- **Appreciation of beauty:** Noticing and valuing beauty, excellence, and skill expressed in nature, performance, various professions, and everyday experience.
- **Spirituality:** Holding beliefs about the meaning of life and its higher purpose. Knowing where you fit within the larger scheme of life, and taking comfort and direction from that knowledge.
- **Gratitude:** Being aware of and thankful for the good things that happen. Taking time to express thanks.
- **Hope:** Believing that the future can be good and working to bring it about. Being optimistic
- **Humor:** Liking to laugh or see the light side of life. Being playful. Bringing smiles to other people.

According to Plato upon death, the philosopher achieves that which they have been striving for their entire life. Because of this, in “The

Phaedo”, Plato has Socrates claim that the practice of philosophy in life is really a dress rehearsal for what comes in death: “*...those who practice philosophy in the right way are in training for dying, and they fear death least of all others.*”

I hope my book will help you find happiness..

Sending you my love from Greece.

Sincerely, Alkistis



## Song of Seikilos

*As long as you live, shine,  
Have no grief at all.  
For your life is short,  
and time will claim its toll.*

The Seikilos epitaph is the oldest surviving complete musical composition, including musical notation, from anywhere in the world. The epitaph has been variously dated, but seems to be either from the 1st or the 2nd century AD.

The musical notation consists of two staves, each with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The first staff contains the lyrics: "Ho - son zes, phai - nou Mē - den ho - lōs—— sy ly - pou——". The second staff contains the lyrics: "Pros o - li - gon e - sti to zēn—— to te - los ho chron - os a - pai - tei——". The music is composed of eighth and sixteenth notes, with several grace notes indicated by small vertical strokes above the main notes. The lyrics are written in a cursive script below the notes, corresponding to the rhythm of the music.

*See Youtube video: Ancient Greece: Song of Seikilos*



### **PS. Let's Stay In Touch**

If you'd like to stay in touch with the good vibrations of *The Alkistis Method*®, you will find details and links to lifelong learning opportunities at the end of this book.

If you feel that you have benefited from reading this book, please send your testimonial for use on my website, [www.alkistis.net/testimonials.html](http://www.alkistis.net/testimonials.html) and also on **AMAZON**, so that it can also inspire many other people also. Here are some examples:

If you would like to see an inspiring film based on my life, go ahead and see this 20 minute video (of the beta version of the film) on [www.patreon.com/alkistis](http://www.patreon.com/alkistis) which I've made, as I'm collecting patrons for it to become a feature film.

## Testimonials

*Alkistis, I recommend your book, especially during our times where people have lost meaning and purpose. Greek philosophy has much to offer to modern people.*

- Dr. Drew, American TV Personality

*Dr. Agio, you're an expert in transforming fear into freedom and that's pretty amazing that you're helping so many people overcome their fears!*

- Priscilla Presley, ex-wife of Elvis Presley, Actress

*Dr. Agio, I want to congratulate you on your amazing book. I hope it will be a great success!*

- Nadia Comaneci, Olympic Gold Medalist, Gymnast

*Dr. Agio, your book will be comforting and helpful to so many people. Congratulations!*

- Bo Derek, Hollywood Star

*A wonderful and important book! Dr. Agio revives the best of the ancient, classical wisdom of Greek Philosophy and shows how and why it is just as practical to help us live well today as it was two millennia ago. This book is a must read for anyone looking for permanence and meaning in a world of transience and superficiality.*

- Alexandra O. Hudson,  
Researcher & Adjunct Professor,  
Indiana University

*Whether you are an athlete, an investor, a writer or an entrepreneur, Greek Philosophy will open the door to a healthier, less anxious and more productive life and career.*

-Arianna Huffington, CEO of THRIVE Global

*The Dr. Agio Method provides both philosophical and practical approach to hone your skills of Self-leadership. This Method offers a full spectrum of view points, from Aristotle and his philosophical teachings in ancient Greece to best techniques in training your brain through NLP.*

Raz Choudhury  
CEO, SAM.AI  
Artificial Intelligence  
New York, USA

*I found The Dr. Agio Method to be informative, inspiring and practical. In a non-stop world, we so often don't create the time to consider why we are doing what we are doing!*

*The Dr. Agio Method calls up the very oldest philosophies to create some perspective, in the information age.  
An extremely worthwhile read.*

Lawrence Bernstein  
Speechwriter to the British Royal Family  
London, England

*I find The Dr. Agio Method to be enlightening and practical. There is a wealth of useful information and exercises that assist one to reflect on simple questions which we usually shy away from, forcing one to face our reality. It gives us the necessary tools to achieve an understanding of oneself and our strengths.*

Katerina Ferentinos,  
Wealth Management, Merrill Lynch, New York, USA

*Alkistis is a very inspiring coach and trainer.*

Paul Efmorfides,  
Founder of COCO-MAT, Greece

*Alkistis has a unique, enlightening perspective.*

His Excellency Abdelhadi Alkhajah,  
Royal Family, United Arab Emirates

*The method of Dr. Alkistis Agio resonates deeply with me... The virtues and character traits such as Honesty, Truthfulness, Integrity, Courage and Industriousness that are enshrined in this method, are all familiar values which the United Nations proudly represents on a global level.*

Maria-Threase Keating, UK Country Director,  
United Nations Development Programme

## About The Author

*'Alkistis you are a hero to me. I hope you see me as a representative of your book. You are a modern Greek oracle.'*

- Steve Wosniak, Co-founder Apple computers.

General : Of Greek origin, she grew up in Montreal and has worked in Italy, France, Germany, Greece, the United States and the United Arab Emirates. She speaks five languages.

Education : Alkistis first studied International Banking at the Chartered Institute of Bankers in London. She worked in corporate finance (Barclays) for a time and later transitioned to her second career, by earning a Master's in Integrative Psychotherapy from Middlesex University and a Doctor of Philosophy (Transpersonal Counseling) from University of Sedona, Arizona. She has also studied neurocoaching with Anthony Robbins.

### Experience :

-Trainer for the Dale Carnegie System for many years. Her clients included some of the largest companies where she trained professionals all over the world. It is through this that she developed her own method, based on Greek Philosophy.

- Speaker on many Corporate and Social events.

-Produced webTV shows, books, seminars and guided meditation films for over 20 years, bringing relief, wellness, empowerment and inspiration to over 1.5 million people all over the world.

-Coached and Trained Clients in person and via online courses, to transition from anxiety and anger to calm, confident self-leadership, embracing the Socratic view that "In order to lead others, we must first lead ourselves".

-Served as Host, Expert and/or Guest in a number of well known Television shows on Greek TV.

-In 2019, she co-hosted a historic event, 'STOICON', the first international conference of Modern Stoics in Athens, Greece.

-Featured as speaker on several networks, such as CBS, The Sunday Times, Washington Post, CNN, FOX, ALJAZEERA, NBC and more.

-Gave TEDx Talk on "Self-Leadership: The 3 Golden Principles of Greek Philosophy."

Co-organizer of STOICON 2019 (International meeting of Stoics in Athens) which led to the creation of "Plato's Academy Center" project, at the original ancient site in Athens.  
[\(https://platosacademy.org\)](https://platosacademy.org)

#### Books:

- Thalassa, The Spirit of The Mediterranean* (Self published)
- You Can Realize Your Dreams* (Cosmos Publishers New York)
- The Answer is Within* (Kedros Publishers)
- Greece's Secret Energy Gates* (Kedros Publishers)
- Happiness Now* (Fereniki Publishers)
- Euphoria* (Amazon)
- From Fear To Freedom* (Amazon)

Film: '*From Fear To Freedom*' (Got a distinction at the Delphic Film Festival in 2022)

## Links to Lifelong Learning

*“Gyrasko diae pola didaskomenos”* (**Greek:** γηράσκω δ' αἰεὶ πολλά διδασκόμενος) — “As I grow older I keep being taught new things” a quote by Solon the famous Athenian lawmaker (whose legal work was the basis for Roman law) showing the philosopher's way of being always inquisitive and open-minded.

### I. The Alkistis Method® E-Learning Course

Your personal odyssey of self-reflection begins with the basic online course led by Dr. Alkists Agio, filled with both written and video-explanations of each *exercise*. On-demand lecture videos, practical exercises, discussion forum, real-world homework assignments and self-reflection practices.

[http://www.alkistis.net/e\\_learning.html](http://www.alkistis.net/e_learning.html)



### II. Exclusive Seminars In Greece with Dr. Alkistis Agio.

If you liked reading this introduction to The Alkistis Method®, but you would like to do the *exercises* in Greece and participate in one of the exclusive quarterly retreats in Greece for up to 12 participants at a time.

[www.alkistis.net/groups-greece.html](http://www.alkistis.net/groups-greece.html)

### III. Ask the Greek Oracle App & Cards®

Think of your most pressing problem. Consult the "Greek Oracle" app or cards. They are filled with strategies and inspirations based on Greek philosophy. For a FREE trial version of the app and access to the cards look here:

[www.alkistis.net/greekoracle.html](http://www.alkistis.net/greekoracle.html)

### IV. Follow Alkistis Agio On Instagram & Facebook.

@alkistisTV

### V. Leadership Trainings For Your Organization.

'The Alkistis Method®' is an eclectic series of seminars that have been created for you to develop competency in effective communication, self-management and human relations skills. It is based on an integration of Neuro-Linguistic Programming, Cognitive-Behavioral Methods, Neuroscience and ancient wisdom, specifically for modern managers.

Series of Eclectic Seminars for Leadership Development that can be tailored to your organization's needs.

<http://www.alkistis.net/leadership-training.html>

### VI. VIP Coaching-Mentorship Programs

**Overcome your greatest fears and weaknesses with the exclusive, private one-to-one sessions with Dr. Alkistis Agio.**

Fill out this application form:

[www.alkistis.net/contact.html](http://www.alkistis.net/contact.html)

### VII. 'Golden Medallion' of the The Alkistis Method®

Since ancient times, jewelry has been used for raising awareness and for *triggering* empowering 'states' of consciousness. The Golden Medallion is based on *Ethos*,

*Pathos, Logos* and can be used as a mechanism or device for 'triggering' your imagination and your capacity to envision your future more clearly...

[www.alkistis.net/medallion.html](http://www.alkistis.net/medallion.html)

### VIII. ‘Fear to Freedom’ the Film

This film offers you a guided journey to the mythical ‘paradise island’ of ‘*Eudaimonia*’, where you will experience relaxation and healing. It will become your escape, your secret hide-away and will offer you the gift of transformation.

<https://www.alkistis.net/freedomfilm.html>

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