

γνῶθι σεαυτόν

Know Thyself

Athena Business School  
Online Lecture to MBA Class

03 February 2021

# IN • PURSUIT • OF • A LIFE • WORTH • LIVING

---

**Marcelo Garcia**

Founder of WisdomAccelerator.org  
and Explorers.org Member





# DISCLAIMER OF LIABILITY

---

**Several experiences shared during this online lecture are potentially threatening to life and limb and should NOT be attempted without professional supervision or by acquiring equivalent levels of training.**

**Always consult with a medical doctor before significantly changing your own eating habits, we all have different metabolisms with unique characteristics and what's healthy for some could be lethal to others depending on underlying physiological conditions not always apparent.**

**If you harm yourself doing something beyond your levels of competence within risky scenarios both of us would be very unhappy, so please don't.**



**εὐδαιμονία**

---

**THREE (OLD) GREEK WORDS**

**φρόνησις**

**ἀταραξία**



**Eudaimonia** (Greek: *εὐδαιμονία* [*eudaimonía*]; sometimes anglicized as *eudaemonia* or *eudemonia*, /*juːdɪˈmouniə*/) is a Greek word commonly translated as 'happiness' or 'welfare'; however, more accurate translations have been proposed to be 'human flourishing, 'prosperity' and 'blessedness'.

# EUDAIMONIA

The “Good Spirits” of Ancient Greece leading to a flourishing life

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eudaimonia>



**Phronesis** (Ancient Greek: φρόνησις, romanized: *phrónēsis*) is an ancient Greek word for a type of wisdom or intelligence relevant to practical action, implying both good judgement and excellence of character and habits. Sometimes referred to as "practical virtue", phronesis was a common topic of discussion in ancient Greek philosophy.

# PHRONESIS

---

The secular sibling of Spiritual Wisdom, also known as *Sophia*

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Phronesis>



**Ataraxia** (ἀταραξία, *alpha privative* and *tarachē* "disturbance, trouble"; hence, "unperturbedness", generally translated as "imperturbability", "equanimity", or "tranquility") is a Greek term first used in Ancient Greek philosophy by Pyrrho and subsequently Epicurus and the Stoics for a lucid state of robust equanimity characterized by ongoing freedom from distress and worry. In non-philosophical usage, the term was used to describe the ideal mental state for soldiers entering battle.

# ATARAXIA

---

Freedom from worry when facing the battles of life

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ataraxia>



# THINKING TIME

---

Reflect on situations when you faced a significant challenge in life: either of your own choosing or outside your control

- Did it make you more resilient and confident in your own capabilities? (*Eudaimonia*)
- Have you learned practical skills which would make similar situations easier to handle in the future? (*Phronesis*)
- Have you faced it without suffering from major anxiety or panic? (*Ataraxia*)

Please share in the session chat any relevant life lessons you had which you believe other participants could benefit from



# THE LATEST EXPERIMENTS...

---

Part of my own learning path... towards Ataraxia, Phronesis and Eudaimonia

## 100 Days Zero Calories Fast

- Started as a reaction to lack of control due to environmental stress (too much travelling)
- Slow progress first to grasp how fasting works
- The big picture only became clear halfway through the whole experiment (Entropy curve)
- Pushing the boundaries hard, but with strict medical supervision and quantification devices
- Keeping heart muscle fit with 10k daily steps
- Listening to your own body, combined with deep research to understand what's going on to always stay well within safe boundaries
- Lateral learnings: empathy, will power, etc.

## Climbing Mont Blanc Solo

- Started a decade before when attempting a marathon with almost no training and finishing
- “Why not mentality” and audacious goals are a powerful combination, check the SEAL 40% rule
- Learn to rest when you're tired instead of giving up - you're capable of remarkable deeds
- Benefited from almost a decade of rock climbing skills to feel comfortable going alone
- This all led now into a ludicrous stretch goal of becoming “the oldest person ever to do XYZ”
- Have nothing to lose if it doesn't happen as I'm only competing with myself... my game, my rules



# ...LEVERAGING PAST ADVENTURES

---

It's not the destination, it's the journey that counts... variety is the spice of life

## “13 Ways to Almost Die”

- Started “almost dying” already as a toddler, but by now I’m firmly in the “too old to die young” category
- List of past “close shaves” with death include:
  - Splitting a marble table in two parts with my forehead
  - Avoiding getting hit by a car as a kid and later by a train
  - Being close to drowning on three occasions, all unique
  - Swimming alone in the middle of a shark feeding frenzy
  - Nearly choking on smoke while putting out a major fire
  - Almost falling from a steep rockface while solo climbing
  - Swerving in the last second from Snowcat crusher spikes
  - Getting shot at by soldiers near a war zone\*

9

## Give Yourself Stretch Goals

- The early decision to visit all countries in the world helped tremendously... 2/3 already done
- “Let’s visit 7 Asian countries in 7 days” as a dare
- Pick tough peers for your baseline comparison
- Asking “What’s the next crazy challenge I could gift myself?” - can be as simple as spontaneously walking a marathon length during a sunny day...
- ...or as risky as spending holidays crossing the Khyber Pass disguised as a Pashtun tribesman and getting (briefly) detained by secret services both in Pakistan and Afghanistan...
- ...but always know “when to grit and when to quit”

\* [linkedin.com/pulse/etiquette-rules-when-turkish-army-shoots-you-mistake-offers-garcia](https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/etiquette-rules-when-turkish-army-shoots-you-mistake-offers-garcia)



**ορμησις**

**πρόνοια**

---

# THREE (NEW) GREEK WORDS

**ομοιοσταση**



# HORMESIS

The “Good Stress” which in the right amounts increases your resilience

- “What doesn’t kill you makes you stronger” \*
- E.g. prolonged fasting triggers a hormetic physiological response - switching on ketosis, apoptosis and autophagy
- “It’s not the poison, it’s the dose” \*
- With the wrong dose, even water will kill you by drowning
- Focus is on becoming ready for a VUCA world, thriving in Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity and Ambiguity
- Toughen up to cope with unavoidable “unknown unknowns”

**\* This is not always true, for most organisms there are no known healthy doses of lead and many other heavy metals for instance.**

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hormesis>





# PRONOIA

---

“That feeling the Universe is conspiring behind your back to make you successful”

- Neologism for the opposite of paranoia... only half-jokingly
- “If you think you’ll fail or succeed... you’re right either way”
- Redefine “Success” to incorporate “Learned Lessons”, framing experiences is key to the way you integrate them
- Your personality is defined by how you react to what happens to you, regardless of whether positive or negative
- Showing vision and initiative does wonders to attract supporters to help you along the way
- Keep an open mind and nimble feet to nudge your direction according to the specific context

<https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/pronoia>



# HOMEOSTASIS

The perfect balance to survive and thrive within your environment

- Achieving balance in multiple aspects of your life, both psychological and physiological
- The “Golden Mean” approach: a finely tuned and monitored balance between excess and deficiency
- E.g. courage is a virtue, but if taken to one extreme it becomes recklessness and to the other cowardice
- A variable concept: the human body is remarkably adaptive, which is why we can live both in Sahara and in the Arctic – the widest environmental range of all animals

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Homeostasis>





# SHARING TIME

---

Let's now discuss the participant life lessons shared in the session chat

- Share as if you're talking to yourself when you were a teenager – someone you deeply care about and wish to see succeeding
- Please keep your storytelling under 2-3 minutes to have time for group interactions
- Golden Rule: comment about others as you'd like them to comment on you...

**A candle sharing its flame with others still shines just as bright  
...and remember that teaching is one of the best ways to learn.**



# SIX GREEK WORDS RECAP

---

**1**

**EUDAIMONIA**

**2**

**PHRONESIS**

**3**

**ATARAXIA**

**4**

**HORMESIS**

**5**

**PRONOIA**

**6**

**HOMEOSTASIS**



# LEARNING LIST

---

A few suggestions of sources to go deeper into these topics (listed alphabetically)

## Books

- Dave Asprey: “Fast this way”
- Angela Duckworth: “Grit”
- Jason Fung: “The complete guide to fasting”
- Tim Ferriss: “Tool of titans”; “Tribe of mentors”
- Stephen Hall: “Wisdom”
- Scott Galloway: “The algebra of happiness”
- Mo Gawdat: “Solve for happy”
- Valter Longo: “The longevity diet”
- Evy Pompouras: “Becoming bulletproof”
- Barry Schwarz: “Practical wisdom”
- Dave Sinclair: “Lifespan”

## TED Talks & YT videos

- Peter Attia
- Tim Ferriss
- David Goggins
- Adam Grant
- Wim Hof
- Ryan Holiday
- Leila Janah
- Rich Roll
- Jocko Willink
- + Navy SEAL 40% rule
- + Search “Stoicism” as keyword



# MONT BLANC SUMMIT



Mont Blanc @ 4810m - the highest mountain in the Alps



# THANK YOU

---

“Everything is going to be fine in the end... if it's not fine it's not the end yet” — *Oscar Wilde*

WisdomAccelerator.org & NeoWAY.org

[linkedin.com/company/getwiserfaster](https://linkedin.com/company/getwiserfaster)

@getwiserfaster (IG, TW, FB)

**Personal**

[linkedin.com/in/marcelogarcia](https://linkedin.com/in/marcelogarcia)

@poloproject (IG)