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My thoughts on the content will be reflected in footnotes at the bottom of each respective page. With the exceptions of annotations, page numbers, changes in font (for readability), name replacements or identifiers (protecting and indicating participants in discussion-based content), the original content is unedited.

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Date of commentary: 3/25/17

Date of original content (Approximate): January, 2014

Format: Self-reminder

Subject (Approximate): Acceptance, Courage, Resilience, Patience, Impression

Participants: 1

Part (if Applicable): 1 of 1

Synopsis: The content is a self-reminder written during the latter half of my undergraduate experience. It is a response to becoming aware that an ex-partner was attending a class I had started. The content was written shortly after the ex-partner entered the classroom, and describes my heightened state of caution in handling my judgments correctly.

~ Start of Original Content ~

In this moment, you are confronting something that would consume you if you weren't mindful of what it truly is. When the various objects in this situation are arranged before your mind's eye, you can disentangle substance from impression. It's when you fail to do this that things are left unexplored, erroneous judgments may form, and you suffer accordingly.¹

With practice, tact, and experience, even the initial storm of difficult circumstances will not wrack you. The evidence lies in this situation. Your impulse is quiet and controlled. Your priority lies, as it should, with your thoughts and appropriate exercises of choice.²

I ask you this: If you can maintain command of yourself in this situation, truly, without self-deceit, who can compel you to act one way or another in another situation? There is no fear that will last forever when approached accordingly; peace will necessarily follow.³

¹ The first paragraph was written ten minutes after my ex-partner entered the classroom. I understood that I would not have a second chance to make use of the situation for self-improvement. In addition, I was thankful to determine that this wholly unexpected, strongly non-preferred circumstance was not arresting. Rather, it felt as if I had been preparing for this particular kind of moment for some time; a sentiment that I understood to be accurate, given that the Stoics consider such situations to be ideal proving grounds for the philosophy. I remind myself in the latter half of the paragraph that this kind of situation would have caused me great distress at some past time. I recall and apply a statement by Marcus Aurelius (paraphrasing): "In your mind, take apart the things in the given situation, examine them, call them by their individual names, and ask yourself what they are in relation to you, and how long they will last."

² I aim to instill in myself the awareness that this kind of test (the more severe forms of non-preferred events) is not the first of its kind, and will certainly not be the last. I sought to view my ex-partner as I sought to view any other person, regardless of their history in relation to me: As a brother or sister not by blood, but by a shared property of reason. I could assure myself that though it were likely that my ex-partner still harbored negative feelings towards me, I was in no way commanded to share those negative feelings. To turn myself inwardly against her was synonymous with causing harm to myself to no end.

~ End of Original Content ~

³ I made certain that I approached the whole of my relationship with this ex-partner to the best of my ability. This included the occasional self-reminder that it will one day end. The temporary nature of the things we prefer allows us to appreciate them more meaningfully when kept in mind. In the same frame of mind, the temporary nature of fears and pains allows us to subdue them in place of being subdued when kept in mind. To make this mentality enduring and firm, one must be willing to apply it to each non-preferred situation as it arises, and if this results in failure, a willingness to stand upright and apply it elsewhere – training our ability to exercise the frame of mind most likely to carry us through rigorous and harsh events.