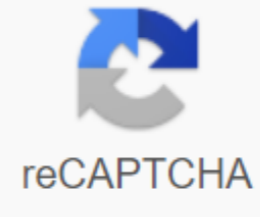




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Struggle for smarts

Photo: the.mutator>Welcome back to Mid-Week Meditations, Lifehacker's weekly dip in the pool of stoic wisdom, and a guide to using their water to reflect on and improve your life. Welcome back to Mid-Week Meditations, Lifehacker's weekly dip in the pool of stoic wisdom, and a... Read more This week's selection comes from Seneca in On Providence. He asks why we waste our energy complaining when we are destined for hardship: Therefore, everything must be patiently endured, because events do not fall in our way, as we imagine, but come by a common law. It has long since been decided what you should rejoice in and about what you should weep for, and although the lives of individual men seem to differ from each other in a great variety of tasks, and yet the total sum comes in total: we will perish soon, and the gifts that we will soon perish. Pay close attention to this section: Why, then, should we be angry? Why should we regret it? We are prepared for our destiny: let nature handle as she comes with her own bodies; let's be happy whatever happens, and stoutly reflect that it is nothing of our own that perish. What is a good man's duty? To submit to fate: it is a great comfort. To be swept away together with the entire universe: no matter what law is laid upon us that we must therefore live and thus we must die, is imposed on the gods. What it means Everything that happens to us in life -good or bad - must be endured because it is nature in our universe. Adversity is built into reality. To exist, there is no alternative but to endure the struggles set forth by the ever-changing world around us. It's the same fight that others have faced before, over and over again. What will make you happy and what will make you sad are the same things that have affected people since the dawn of man. You may think you're different, but this is untrue. You will fight, you will die, and all the material items you have collected will no longer be yours. These things are known and non-negotiable, so why be upset? Why spend time and energy complaining about what can't be changed? Be glad you have the gift of life, but remember that nothing of yours is lost when you die. Our bodies belong to nature, so you have to be ready to give back yours when the time comes. Accept this as your destiny. Find comfort in it. You must live and die according to the nature of our universe. Only the gods could change the rules. What to take from it If you are struggling right now, know that you are only fulfilling your duty as a living thing in this world. To live is to fight. A hungry animal clears for food, a thirsty plant hopes and reaches for rain, a metal beam battles gravity to carry great weight, and a struggling human being overcomes a challenge that in front of them. This is our and it cannot be changed. So, try and catch yourself when you you when you call out in anger, when you sulk and wonder if anyone else is having it as bad as you. Someone does, and a lot of people are worse off. Save the energy spent on emotional turbulence and use it to find a way forward. Now, this concept—to struggle—is only natural—is not meant to be depressing, or to say that life is nothing more than a slog through miserable experiences. This idea is supposed to be liberating and comforting. You're not, you're not smited, and you're not incapable of riding out the storm. So you face a difficult challenge—fight through what everyone else has, as everything else does. Easier said than done, of course, but if everything was nice and simple, we would be gods, not people. Styled by: Neely Dykshorn; Photographer: Erik Johnson Photo: Erik Johnson SHOW MORE PHOTOS What it lacked in space, it more than made up for in views, says Lisa McConkey of her home, which sits along the Magothy River in Servera Park, Maryland. My husband, Scott, had always wanted to live on the water, and he bought this house in 1993, just before we met, she said. It was charming but not very functional, especially after we had our two daughters. A full kitchen renovation in 1998 improved the livability of the two-story cottage, but the home still had a cramped living room, no dining room, and a main entrance from the street that led directly into the kitchen. The wide-open bedroom was spatially but impractical, as one of the additions that was put in without much thought, says Lisa. We didn't want the house to be much bigger, just more functional. Photo: Erik Johnson The couple called in architect Joseph Mayer, AIA, principal of J. Mayer Architects in Annapolis, Maryland, to make their home more family-friendly. Doing so while keeping its size in check was not a problem, Mayer said: There is a limit to party coverage in this area, so additions were kept to a minimum. The challenge, however, was to make the most of the existing structure, while creating a welcoming entrance to the home whose utilitarian side met the street. They really wanted to keep the home's cottage feel, Mayer says. With Scott serving as prime contractor, Mayer began by creating a new freestanding garage, angled to tone down his presence and attached to the house with a covered walkway leading to the existing kitchen entrance. The old attached garage was transformed into a living room, complete with fireplace and cozy niches, and for a bit of drama, a 12-foot arched ceiling paneled in natural cedarwood. New oak floors were colored to match the home's existing wooden floor, which was refinished. Mayer has also added a new portico and hallway for a more grand entrance. The former living room became the new formal dining room the family wanted. We're relaxed, but we like to have big together, says Lisa. In order to open the new dining rooms to each other, the fireplace separating spaces was removed, and the new one built in the living room is placed so that guests can see it from the dining table. On the opposite side of the dining room, Mayer opened the stairs, once a closed tunnel with steep path pipes. For texture and contrast, we added raised panels to the wall and colored railings darker than the floors, Lisa says. The stairs went from being indescribable and strictly functional to a real focal point. Photo: Erik Johnson WHAT WAS DONE Expanded interior square meters from 2,100 square meters to 2,800 square meters converted previously attached garage to new living room with fireplace; created new front entrance hall En Added separate garage, new covered walkway and front portico Rebuilt old living room to formal dining room, and opened staircase leading to the second floor Created a master suite and other bedrooms with en suite bathroom on upper level Refinished existing wooden floors, and made cosmetic updates to Kitchen Upstairs, the former master bedroom, which had been fully open to the stairs, which makes it feel like a public space instead of a private retreat, turned into two bedrooms with en suite bathrooms. We had planned the second bedroom to be a guest suite, says Lisa, but the girls have taken over for now. Like the new living room, the bedrooms have arched, cedar ceilings, cozy niches and views of the water. The master suite also has a small private balcony overlooking the river. The existing first floor bedroom and bath received cosmetic spiff-ups, as well as the kitchen, whose previous remodeling still suited the family's needs. To further emphasize the view, Mayer listed corner windows in each of the rooms. There are views from all sides, he says, including straight through to the water from the new entrance. That's exactly what we were hoping for, says Lisa about the redevelopment. I can't imagine ever leaving the water—we'll never move. This content is created and maintained by a third party, and imported into this page to help users enter their email addresses. You may be able to find more information about this and similar content on piano.io Opinions expressed by Entrepreneur Contributors are their own. Q: I'm the kind of person who thinks of a new idea almost every day. In the last six months or so, I've come up with some ideas, haven't taken action for one reason or another (usually because I'm not convinced of the validity of the ideas) and have seen these ideas appear as products or services elsewhere in the market. What I'm struggling with right now is how I can determine which of my ideas has the most potential so I can be motivated to pursue them. A: You seem to be a person who has a lot of creativity and has just started unleashing it. That process can be both exciting and frightening. entrepreneurs are blessed (some (some say damn) with having idea abundance. The key is to learn how to sown out the weak ideas so that you don't lose the energy (and motivation) of the strong. The first thing I recommend is to make a grid that describes the parameters for running with an idea. This may include sections such as money required, time involved, the area or industry the idea applies, the complexity of the idea (rate it) and the potential target market. You will use this to dissect each of your ideas so

that you can see what you need to pursue the idea. You can also use it to kick out ideas that are not within reach or require a lot of effort in an area that doesn't motivate you. For example, if you have an idea, but it would take \$2 million to start it, staying motivated to pursue this idea will be very difficult, until you eliminate the hurdle of adequate funding. You should also have your grid reflect and measure what values your idea matches. When we tie our actions to our values, great motivation results that we are now motivated from within and not by external forces. I suspect that if one of your values is to preserve the environment, for example, you probably won't have much motivation to pursue your idea for colored Styrofoam packing peanuts. You may want to plug several of your old ideas into the web to see how they stack up—especially those that were later developed and implemented by others. The grid can help you see what blocked you. How did the person who did implement your idea get around that block? What were the payoffs for implementing an idea you didn't pursue? (That in itself can be very motivating.) Finally, take an idea (preferably a simple one) and take it through the net and on to implementation. Successfully launching an idea will definitely motivate you to deal with others. Sharon Keys Seal is a Baltimore-based company, career and personal coach. Her clients include entrepreneurs, entrepreneurs, managers and CEOs of non-profit organizations. She works to help her clients formulate and achieve their professional and personal goals, while improving their focus and improving their efficiency and productivity. Sharon welcomes questions and comments from readers. You can contact her at (410) 433-0011, or visit her at www.CoachingConcepts.com. The opinions expressed in this column are those of the author, not of Entrepreneur.com. All replies are intended to be general in nature, without regard to specific geographical areas or circumstances, and should only be invoked after consultation with an appropriate expert, such as a lawyer or auditor. Auditor.

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