



Aristotle's Way: How Ancient Wisdom Can Change Your Life

Edith Hall

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Aristotle was an extraordinary thinker, perhaps the greatest in history. Yet he was preoccupied by an ordinary question: how to be happy. His deepest belief was that we can all be happy in a meaningful, sustained way – and he led by example.

In this handbook to his timeless teachings, Professor Edith Hall shows how ancient thinking is precisely what we need today, even if you don't know your Odyssey from your Iliad. In ten practical lessons we come to understand more about our own characters and how to make good decisions. We learn how to do well in an interview, how to choose a partner and life-long friends, and how to face death or bereavement.

Life deals the same challenges – in Ancient Greece or the modern world. Aristotle's way is not to apply rules – it's about engaging with the texture of existence, and striding purposefully towards a life well lived.

This is advice that won't go out of fashion.

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From Reader Review Aristotle's Way: How Ancient Wisdom Can Change Your Life for online ebook

Mark says

Excellent book.

Efthalia says

An easy to read and wonderful self-thinking guide using Aristotle's wisdom.

Very fresh approach and totally recommend it to anyone wanting to understand the nuts and bolts of what the human mind associates happiness with.

Gisela says

Not avail in local libraries yet.

Want to read this after hearing an interview with the author on our local public radio programme: "Edith Hall read Aristotle and tried to place him as the basis for a 21st century modern ethical scientific rational person. She says Aristotle provides fruity philosophical ideas to bolster someone who is secular, rational, pro-progress and who longs for a successful personal life. Edith Hall's book, Ten Ways Aristotle Can Change your Life will be available from mid-January 2017." (see <http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/p...>)

Emma says

With these kind of books, it's really difficult to get the tone right. On the one hand you have a thinker who is considered one of the 'Fathers' of Western philosophy, on the other you have that modern pop psychology that aims to tell you how to live in however many steps. For the most part, Edith Hall does well to make Aristotle accessible and there are parts, such as the notions about good decision-making, education, and personal responsibility, that might as well have flashing neon signs to highlight their relevance to modern society. Yet when she gets it wrong, it's Theresa May dancing kind of wrong. It's just too easy, full of simple platitudes and more than a few sections which stretch the limits of believability- can Aristotle really tell me that much about my cv writing or is it included because that's the kind of inane shit that sells these type of books? Edith Hall is usually about boundary pushing and I expected this to be so much more exciting, more challenging, and less like dodgy life coach material.

ARC via Netgalley

Steve Pickard says

Aristotle's Way is an exploration of the famous philosopher's work which has been helpfully curated and thematically organised by Professor Edith Hall. I would describe it as a well-being oriented book, that explores themes such as happiness, society and the fulfilment of potential. I really enjoyed the sections that promoted interacting with "the texture of reality", and responding to every situation in a way unique to its own circumstances. There were some great passages about justice, and equality versus equity, and some useful tips about making the most of your leisure time. It's quite amazing to read that man has struggled with very similar issues for so many thousands of years, but the well thought out guidance presented in this book appears to be timeless.

Richard Smith says

I've written two blogs on this book, which are well worth reading:

<https://richardswsmith.wordpress.com/...>

<https://richardswsmith.wordpress.com/...>

Barbara says

5 stars is not enough, I would give it 10. But I am already very keen on Aristotle and bore my friends and family with the word 'balance'. I now have a much better view of all his philosophy, from the virtues and developing your talents to mortality. I think it would be possible to tie this in with Christianity. There is a lifetime of scholarship here, artfully crafted into a coherent and readable account with just the right amount of gentle personal touches. Edith I believe is behind the charity Classics for All in State schools and I am back doing Latin again through the U3A because we were that generation. I borrowed from the library but will be buying the paperback and reading it again.

Jericho Eames says

Okay to be honest I'm not sure what Aristotelean philosophy is like but through reading her breakdown on twelve different areas of life, I kind of get a sense of what it is all about. I think his philosophy is indeed still relevant to our lives today and am trying to actively adapt the lessons into my life.

James Miller says

Drawing ideas from across Aristotle Hall seeks to show what a life lived virtuously (and by that she follows Aristotle in meaning excellently in accord with the capacities and nature we have rather than Christian ideas of virtue many alien to Aristotle) might be. There is a wide peppering of film and book references and some of those sound worth following up. I already think that Aristotle gets much of this about right, but I enjoyed the book's focus on particular instances and areas of life. My one gripe is that the notes/references are so thin (it is deliberately non-technical) that it would be difficult to follow up passages and ideas.

Ryan Boissonneault says

When writing a book like this, there's a fine line between 1) staying true to the philosophical complexity of the original thinker, and 2) presenting those views in a simplified manner for popular consumption. Edith Hall perhaps leans a little too far to the latter, but I can't fault any author for trying to popularize Aristotle's ethical system for wider familiarity and practice.

It is much needed. Religion is losing its appeal, which is a good thing, but for some people this has created a gap. People need a framework from which they can act, and ancient Greek philosophy can provide this framework.

In fact, I'm usually surprised when I hear of the conflict between religion and science as if there is not an extensive philosophical literature concerning moral behavior. So again, any author that can bring this to popular attention is performing a great service. This has been done with Stoicism but not, as far as I know, with Aristotle's virtue ethics.

Hall does a reasonable job of presenting Aristotle's philosophy as a new way to envision ethics that stands in sharp contrast to modern moral discourse. Rather than thinking in terms of universal laws or obligations or theoretical calculations, morality is presented as a more personal endeavor tied to virtue, behavior, habit, and inner contentment and happiness. Hall covers most of the main ideas and does particularly good job in the first few chapters on happiness and potential.

Where the book at times falls flat is with the monotonous and vapid contemporary examples where she overextends what Aristotle would have thought, for example, about how to craft a cover letter for a job. She also apparently has a very superficial understanding of Stoicism, as she called it "a rather superficial and grim affair. It requires the suppression of emotions and physical appetites. It recommends the resigned acceptance of misfortune, rather than active, practical engagement with the fascinating fine-grained business of everyday living and problem-solving"

This is simply not true, and is a common misconception of Stoicism, an easy and superficial criticism. Stoicism recommends the acceptance of what one cannot control, not the resignation from the business of everyday living and problem-solving. If this were true, Marcus Aurelius would not have been the emperor of Rome!

There is a difference between actively working to solve problems within your control and not worrying about that which you cannot control. This is not complete resignation. And, what's most ironic is that, later in the book, Hall writes "Time spent worrying about things you cannot change is wasted." That's a very stoic thing to write from an author that 50 pages earlier called the philosophy a "superficial and grim affair." In fact, much of Aristotle's teachings were consistent with Stoicism in many ways (while differing in less important ways).

Overall, this is decent book if you have little knowledge of Aristotle and virtue ethics, but after the first few chapters the quality and insightfulness drastically decline.

Paul Hayman says

Superficial self help garbage: from the nauseating dedication to the banal last paragraph.

Asia says

Edith Hall has summarised Aristotle's teachings into 10 topics. I feel that the book would be easier to digest if there could be sub-sections within each chapters.
