

A disciplined way to think after loss

Acceptance of what happened need not mean passivity: make your own next action just, truthful, and useful.

Subject: A disciplined way to think after loss

After a death in the operating room, it is natural to review every decision-and difficult to know when responsibility becomes self-punishment.

Marcus Aurelius's **Meditations** offers a rigorous distinction that may be worth considering: accept what lies outside your control, while remaining fully responsible for the judgment and action that are yours. Begin with the event itself, before adding conclusions that it proves shameful or unbearable. Then ask what the next action requires: Is it necessary, rational, just, and directed toward the common good?

The aim is not reassurance or emotional escape. It is to preserve the clarity required to learn, correct what can be corrected, and serve patients and colleagues without allowing grief or pride to govern the next decision.

Would you be open to reading a short passage from the book?