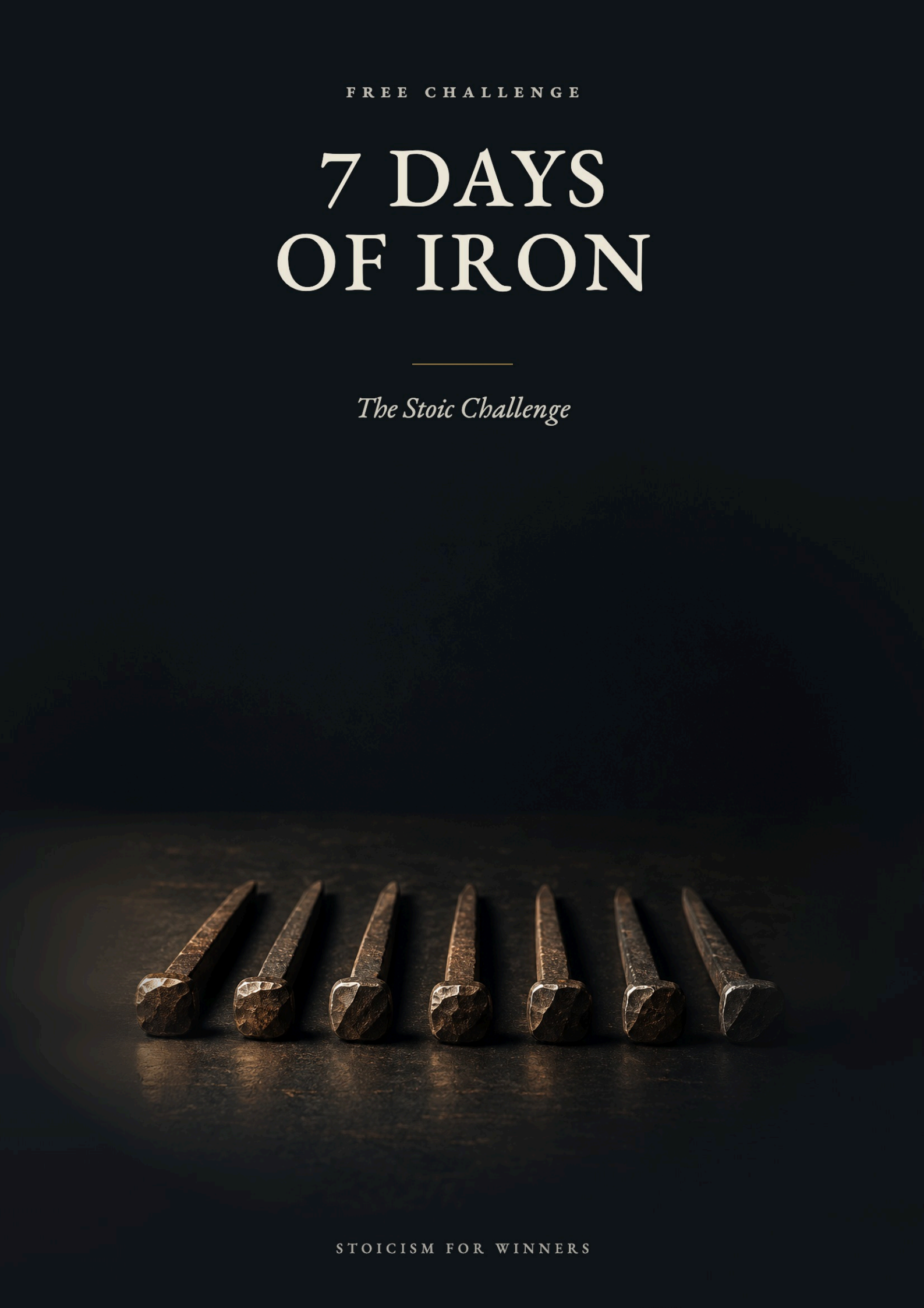
FREE CHALLENGE

7 DAYS OF IRON

The Stoic Challenge



STOICISM FOR WINNERS

SEVEN DAYS, TEN MINUTES

Seven days. Ten minutes of practice a day. A steadier man at the end.

This challenge doesn't ask you to get up at five or to change your whole life on Monday. It asks for one Stoic practice a day, small and concrete, for seven days in a row. At the end you'll have something worth more than motivation: proof that you do what you set out to do.

The four rules

1. **One practice a day.** Each morning you read the day's practice in this workbook: two minutes of reading, ten of practice, done at once or across the day.
2. **Box checked or box empty.** At the end of the day you check the box on the tracking sheet only if you did it. There is no halfway.
3. **Never two days in a row.** If you miss a day, nothing resets: you carry on the next day with the practice that comes next. Missing one is an accident; missing two is the start of a different habit.
4. **Don't announce it.** Don't post that you're doing the challenge. Do it. On the seventh day, if you want, tell people.

What you need

- This workbook, printed (or open on your phone), and a pencil.
- Ten minutes a day, at whatever time you choose.
- Each morning, reading the day's practice on its page in this workbook.

I

THE FIRST HOUR IS YOURS

> *"Everything else, Lucilius, belongs to others; time alone is ours."*
>
> SENECA, LETTERS TO LUCILIUS, 1, 3

The practice

For the first thirty minutes after you wake up, you don't touch your phone. Not to check the time, not for a "quick" message. If it's your alarm, put it far from the bed tonight. Use that half hour for yourself: water, fresh air, moving, thinking about what you'll do today.

Why it works

Whoever opens his phone on waking starts the day answering other people's emergencies. Before he has a single thought of his own, he's already reacting. The first half hour is the only time of day when the world isn't asking anything of you yet. Defend it, and the day starts out yours.

TODAY'S BOX

30 minutes without the phone after waking

2

CHOOSE DISCOMFORT

> *"Set aside a few days on which you are content with scant and cheap food, with coarse and rough clothing, and say to yourself: 'Is this what I was afraid of?'"*
>
> SENECA, LETTERS TO LUCILIUS, 18, 5

The practice

Pick one of two. Either you end your shower with sixty seconds of cold water, without getting out early. Or you walk for twenty minutes without earbuds: no music, no podcast, no phone in your hand. Pick the one that costs you more.

Why it works

Seneca was a rich man, and still he practiced poverty for a few days at a time. Not as punishment, but to prove he could bear it and to lose his fear of it. The man who chooses a small discomfort every day becomes hard to break when the big one arrives, because he already knows he can take it.

TODAY'S BOX

60 seconds of cold water or 20 minutes without earbuds

3

24 HOURS WITHOUT COMPLAINING

> *"Let no one hear you complaining about life at court anymore; not even yourself."*
>
> MARCUS AURELIUS, MEDITATIONS, VIII, 9

The practice

For twenty-four hours you don't complain out loud. Not about traffic, the weather, your boss, the government or being tired. If a complaint slips out, no big deal: write it down and carry on. When you feel one coming, swap it for one of two things: "What here is up to me?" or simply silence.

Why it works

Marcus Aurelius lived in a court full of intrigue and forbade himself to complain about it, even inwardly. Complaining changes nothing about what it criticizes, but it changes you: it trains you to stare at what isn't up to you. One day without complaints shows you how many times a day you were giving your energy away.

TODAY'S BOX

A whole day without complaining out loud

4
THE HARD THING FIRST

> *"While we put things off, life runs past."*
>
> SENECA, LETTERS TO LUCILIUS, 1, 2

The practice

Tonight, or early today, write down on a piece of paper the task you've been putting off the longest. Just one. Today you do it before noon, before anything else that can wait. If it's too big, do the first twenty-five minutes without interruptions. What counts is starting before twelve.

Why it works

What you put off doesn't disappear: it sits on you all day. Every time you look at it, it takes a little of your energy. Doing it first is the simplest way to take back command: after noon, everything else feels lighter, because the worst is behind you.

TODAY'S BOX

The hard task, started before 12:00

5
TEN SECONDS

> *"Wait for me a little, impression. Let me see who you are and what you are about; let me put you to the test."*
>
> EPICTETUS, DISCOURSES, II, 18

The practice

Today, before answering anything that bothers you (a message, a comment, an awkward question), you wait ten seconds. Count ten breaths to yourself with your mouth shut. Then answer, if it's still needed. It applies to face-to-face conversations, texts and emails alike.

Why it works

Epictetus used the word "impression" for the first thing that shows up in front of something: the heat in your face, the urge to answer back. His advice wasn't to deny it, but to make it wait. In ten seconds the impulse drops and judgment comes back. Almost everything we regret saying would have fit inside those ten seconds.

TODAY'S BOX

At least one ten-second pause before answering

6
REMEMBER YOU WILL DIE

> *"You could leave life right now. Let that decide what you do, and say, and think."*
>
> MARCUS AURELIUS, MEDITATIONS, II, 11

The practice

Write a short letter, one page, addressed to yourself. Begin like this: "If this were my last year..." Write what you would stop doing, what you would start, whom you would call and what you would say that you haven't said. Ten minutes, by hand. Don't share it. Keep it where you'll find it a year from now.

Why it works

Memento mori, "remember that you will die," isn't a sad idea. It's the one that puts everything in order. The man who looks it in the face stops postponing what matters and stops wasting days on small grudges. The letter turns that idea into something concrete: three or four decisions you can start on this very week.

TODAY'S BOX

The letter, written by hand

7
THE REVIEW

> *"Do not let sleep close your eyes before you have gone over each deed of the day: Where did I go wrong? What did I do? What duty did I leave undone?"*
>
> PYTHAGOREAN VERSES QUOTED BY EPICTETUS, DISCOURSES, III, 10

The practice

Sit down for fifteen minutes with this workbook and a pencil. Count your boxes. Answer the three review questions in writing (on the pocket-card page, right below the card). Then pick one single practice out of the seven to keep up next week, every day.

Why it works

Epictetus reminded his students of these ancient verses so they would end no day without looking back at it. Seneca did the same every night. The review isn't there to punish you for what you missed: it's there to find out what works for you. One week honestly reviewed is worth more than a month of good intentions.

TODAY'S BOX

Review done and practice chosen

MY WEEK OF IRON

NAME _____ START DATE _____

Check the box only if you did it. In the notes column, one line: how it went, what it cost you.

DAY	PRACTICE	DATE	ONE LINE	
DAY 1	**The First Hour Is Yours** 30 minutes without the phone after waking	__ / __		☐
DAY 2	**Choose Discomfort** 60 seconds of cold water or 20 minutes without earbuds	__ / __		☐
DAY 3	**24 Hours Without Complaining** A whole day without complaining out loud	__ / __		☐
DAY 4	**The Hard Thing First** The hard task, started before 12:00	__ / __		☐
DAY 5	**Ten Seconds** At least one ten-second pause before answering	__ / __		☐
DAY 6	**Remember You Will Die** The letter, written by hand	__ / __		☐
DAY 7	**The Review** Review done and practice chosen	__ / __		☐

Boxes checked: _____ of 7

THE WEEK ON ONE CARD

Cut it out and keep it by your bed or in your wallet. Below it, the three review questions for day seven.

7 DAYS OF IRON

1. The First Hour Is Yours · No phone for the first 30 minutes
2. Choose Discomfort · A cold shower or a walk without earbuds
3. 24 Hours Without Complaining · Not one complaint out loud
4. The Hard Thing First · The hardest task before noon
5. Ten Seconds · A pause before you answer
6. Remember You Will Die · The letter to yourself
7. The Review · What held, what fell, what comes next

NEVER TWO DAYS IN A ROW · STOICISM FOR WINNERS

CUT ALONG THE DOTTED LINE

The day 7 review

1. Which practice cost me the most, and why?

2. Which practice changed something in my day?

3. Which one do I keep next week, every day?

THE SEVEN QUOTES OF THE CHALLENGE

One a day, with its exact source. If you like, copy it out by hand in the morning.

"Everything else, Lucilius, belongs to others; time alone is ours."

DAY 1 · SENECA, LETTERS TO LUCILIUS, 1, 3

"Set aside a few days on which you are content with scant and cheap food, with coarse and rough clothing, and say to yourself: 'Is this what I was afraid of?'"

DAY 2 · SENECA, LETTERS TO LUCILIUS, 18, 5

"Let no one hear you complaining about life at court anymore; not even yourself."

DAY 3 · MARCUS AURELIUS, MEDITATIONS, VIII, 9

"While we put things off, life runs past."

DAY 4 · SENECA, LETTERS TO LUCILIUS, 1, 2

"Wait for me a little, impression. Let me see who you are and what you are about; let me put you to the test."

DAY 5 · EPICTETUS, DISCOURSES, II, 18

"You could leave life right now. Let that decide what you do, and say, and think."

DAY 6 · MARCUS AURELIUS, MEDITATIONS, II, 11

"Do not let sleep close your eyes before you have gone over each deed of the day: Where did I go wrong? What did I do? What duty did I leave undone?"

DAY 7 · PYTHAGOREAN VERSES QUOTED BY EPICTETUS, DISCOURSES, III, 10

YOUR NEXT STEP

Seven days are enough to prove you can. To make it stick, you need more time and a method that carries you on the days you don't feel like it.

FORGE DISCIPLINE

Thirty days to do what you say even when you don't feel like it: a short reading, a mission and a log for each day, with a tracker and a certificate.

masterstoic.netlify.app/library/forge-discipline

IRON MORNING

Fourteen days to win the first hour: a thirty-minute routine in four blocks, built piece by piece.

masterstoic.netlify.app/library/iron-morning

If you'd rather keep going on your own, repeat these seven days with the practice you chose. What matters is not letting go.