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The Emperor's Handbook: A New Translation of the Meditations

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among employees and the organization is one of the most important aspects of achieving a state in which everyone is working together, with a common purpose. He also provides some useful insight for older leaders working with an emergent Generations X and Y workforce.

This is a well written book that offers some time-tested and proven ideas to new leaders and serves as a good reminder to seasoned leaders, who may have gotten into bad habits.

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Aurelius, Marcus. Translated by C. Scot Hicks and David V. Hicks. *The Emperor's Handbook: A New Translation of the Meditations*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2002. 150pp. \$22

Whether or not the first-century Roman emperor Marcus Aurelius ever intended his personal musings to be shared with anyone, his *Meditations* has been translated and published numerous times over the centuries. Writing at the end of long days campaigning against Rome's enemies, Aurelius sought to capture his personal thoughts on the best way to approach the many challenges presented by life, not only as a military leader and emperor of Rome but also as a father and a man. His thoughts are presented within the framework of the Stoic philosophy, one of the prevailing schools of thought in the first-century Roman world. *The Emperor's Handbook* is Scot and David Hicks's translation of this great philosophical work. Does it offer anything to the reader that other translations do not? The short answer is yes.

For ease of reading alone *The Emperor's Handbook* soars above both previous and more recent editions of *Meditations*. The prose is rendered in modern American English—clearly delivered and designed to present Marcus Aurelius to a contemporary audience. Short sidebar quotes presented every two or three pages allow skimming through the book while still capturing the enduring wisdom it contains; even the most casual readers can become acquainted with Aurelius's thoughts in a very short time simply by reading them. What they would miss, however, is the extensive notes that support much of the text and contribute to the book's strength. For those interested in pursuing further study on either the *Meditations* or the Stoic philosophy of which it is a part, the translators list plenty of additional reference material in their short introduction. There is a short index.

Scot and David Hicks believe that anyone can benefit from reading Marcus Aurelius's thoughts. Many previous editions of his *Meditations* are specifically geared toward military leaders or to leaders in business or government. However, these translators have aimed their work at a much wider audience. The back flap of the book states Aurelius's wisdom "speaks to the soul of anyone who has ever exercised authority or faced adversity or believed in a better day." That means almost all of us, and if this book can spark interest in readers who might not otherwise have turned toward the Stoic mind-set or these particular precepts, it can only be considered a success. *The Emperor's Handbook* is recommended highly for anyone—whether student of philosophy, person in authority, or someone

who, as the authors say, believes in a better day.

The last sidebar, presented on page 144, asks, “Are my guiding principles healthy and robust? On this hangs everything.” *The Emperor’s Handbook*

delivers possibly the most robust translation yet of this great philosophical work.

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