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An Epictetus Quote a Day Keeps the Anxiety Away

For Project 3, I chose to remediate the text from my literacy narrative, the Enchiridion. The Enchiridion is a collection of sayings from Epictetus, an ancient Greek philosopher of the Stoicism movement. In my literacy narrative, I discussed how this text helped me cope with my anxiety and toxic perfectionism, specifically the eighth of the 52 maxims: “Don’t demand that things happen as you wish, but wish they happen as they do happen, and you will go on well” (The Enchiridion). Epictetus shared these mantras with his students in the form of conversations and lectures, so the original audience was Epictetus’ students. The original exigence was his students’ questions and problems. To remediate this text, I used two genres: a calendar and jewelry.

I chose the calendar genre because of its practicality and usefulness. Calendars can be used by anyone, and are used particularly by the intended audience. They are easily accessible, as one could buy it in a local store or order it online for an inexpensive price. Calendars also do not require any form of technology or electricity to work. Calendars have a classic format that is pretty much set in stone. They are typically themed, with pictures corresponding to the theme for each of the twelve months of the year. The pictures are coupled with a table of the days and weeks of the month. Sometimes, there are additional fun facts or quotes included as well.

The exigence of the calendar is the need to keep up with dates and be motivated daily. The idea behind the calendar was that people would use it daily, therefore looking at the quote

from the Enchiridion and gaining inspiration. Anxiety affects everyone at some point, and the purpose of the calendar is to help people remember to embrace logic and reason and to just go with the flow. Keeping up with important dates is something most people do or need to do, and a calendar is the perfect tool to do this. The intended audience of this remediation is geared toward people who are not as frequently considered as a young, tech-savvy person or a college student. The audience of the calendar includes people who suffer from anxiety, older people, people who are not technologically literate, people who just want some daily inspiration, and gift-givers.

Several constraints were encountered and considered in this remediation. I wanted it to have a clean, organized, minimalist format to reflect the principles of Stoicism. The chosen colors were basic, not bold and eye-catching. The font and size of the mantras included were simple and could be easily read. The photos were originally going to be me dressed in a fake beard and traditional ancient Greek clothing as Epictetus, but I ultimately decided against this. I felt that it would have been a large constraint, as I am not Epictetus. I realized that this would appear random and confusing for someone who has just been introduced to philosophy. Not including images of Epictetus himself would have also given the calendar a knock-off, unprofessional air. However, finding pictures of Epictetus was a challenge, and provided another constraint. There are few circulated images of him, and the only ones I could find were statues or drawings. They all look just slightly different, causing an unintended inconsistency. The type of calendar is a constraint as well. In the United States, we use the Gregorian calendar. For someone who uses a different calendar, such as the Chinese or Hebrew calendar, this may render the dates as useless.

To create this calendar, I followed all of the regular conventions of the genre. Using one of the many templates provided by Canva, I decided on a plain layout. For the maxims, I used

direct quotations from the Enchiridion. Some of the chosen ones were a bit long, so I shortened them and took out words that were unnecessary to the meaning of the quote while ensuring that the original meaning was kept. In the original text, the sayings are numbered, but I did not number them in the calendar because it is out of complete context. Pictures of Epictetus were also not included in the Enchiridion, so this was an adjustment from the original text. To find images of him to feature in the calendar, I used Google. The color scheme for each month was decided on based on the colors of the respective photo to make the layout aesthetically pleasing. The format of each month is slightly different because of the placement of the elements, but is consistent throughout; the slight differences also keeps the calendar not repetitive and engaging.

In my opinion, the strongest aspects of my project are its look and its appeal to a variety of people. I enjoyed designing the calendar, and I feel that I did an excellent job. A great deal of consideration went into every detail of the calendar to make it the best it could be. This project turned out exactly the way I had pictured it. On the other hand, the weakest aspect of the project is the possible obsolescence. Calendars are not necessarily a necessity for life, so there is a lot of opportunity to just not have one. As technology advances and more people become tech-literate, physical calendars will become out-of-date.

The intent behind the second remediation, the jewelry collection, was similar to that of the calendar. This project was inspired by the popular LiveStrong bracelets. The exigence is the need for inspiration in tough moments. The idea was that the piece would be a constant, simple reminder that the wearer could have at virtually any time; when anxious, the wearer could look down and be comforted by the phrase. The audience is anyone who suffers from anxiety, wants this reminder, or just wants a piece of jewelry. I chose to remediate the text in this genre because

it would be a constant reminder to go with the flow and I felt that obtaining a piece of the collection would be easily accessible for mostly everyone.

The genre of jewelry as a whole has few fixed conventions, as pieces can be of any length, material, and color. Typically, jewelry with words or phrases on it does not include long quotes, only a few words. Jewelry can be flashy and statement-making, but recently the minimalist look has become popular. Minimalism embodies traditional metals like silver and gold, and features small charms, dainty chains, and short engravings. The colors are reserved and only two or three words are used if referring to a phrase. Following the conventions of minimalism and phrasing, I chose to feature the first two words of my favorite quote: “Don’t demand” (The Enchiridion). These two words had the most impact for me personally, and I felt that they are the epitome of the mantra and Stoicism. When anxious, most people are thinking about the future or something that they want to happen; “Don’t demand” is encouragement to resist doing this in favor of accepting things happening as they will.

There were many constraints considered while remediating. I did not set a price for the pieces because the collection is just a concept, but if the products were to actually be sold, I would set the price at about \$20-25 per individual piece. Most people do not have the means or choose to spend money on expensive jewelry, so I would plan for the price to be low so more people could be exposed to the mantra. The part of the quote I chose, “Don’t demand,” may not make sense to someone who is not familiar with the Enchiridion. This leaves more room for personal interpretation, which is not necessarily a negative consequence but does not exactly align with the original intent. Like the calendar, I chose a font and size that were easily legible. I also wanted the collection to include more products than just typically feminine jewelry like bracelets and necklaces, so I added a key chain and cufflinks. I designed the jewelry to be made

of sterling silver because of its relatively inexpensive price and low value, inspired by the Stoic principle of casting possessions aside in favor of chasing virtue.

Designing was very easy. To create this collection, I used Google to find a website to design the jewelry. The website I used was one of the first to pop up, so finding it was not a challenge. I selected the pieces - bracelet, necklace, ring, cufflinks, and key chain - and centered the words "DON'T DEMAND" on each. Then, I changed the font size so that it would not be too small, but would fit the piece and could be easily read. I did not make any adjustments to the categories of the pieces or to the conventions of minimalism.

The strongest aspect of my project is the modern flair on an ancient work. Not many people think about combining jewelry and philosophy, and I feel that this makes this remediation very unique. However, the philosophical element is a double edged sword. The weakest aspect of my project is how niche it is. Philosophy is a subject that most people do not dabble in if they are not in college or genuinely interested in it. If a buyer not familiar with philosophy were to look at any piece of the collection, they would probably not automatically connect it to the Enchiridion or any deeper meaning.

For Project 3, I remediated the Enchiridion into a calendar and a jewelry collection. Both of these genres were meant to serve as an uplifting reminder. If either of these products were actually produced, I hope that they would introduce more people to Stoicism and that the mantras would be as influential to someone else as they were for me.

Works Cited

“The Internet Classics Archive: The Enchiridion by Epictetus.” Translated by Elizabeth Carter,

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