

Amor Fati: What Does It Mean?

How Do The Stoics Practice It?

Amor is love and *fati* is fate, but *amor fati* is not love at first sight, because fate can be a pretentious princess. It won't crash into your life one day to engulf you in her passion.

The puzzle is, to see true beauty, you must first fall in love. On the other hand, beauty is a common condition for love, and Lady Fate doesn't entice at first glance. So how can you *amor fati*?

Amor fati is like a slow-burn, a consistent discipline that trains you to see the beauty of fate and affirm your love for it.

What Does Amor Fati Mean?

Amor fati, defines Merriam-Webster, is the **love of fate: welcoming of all life's experiences as good.**

It is a Latin phrase, earliest use found in The Academy, that translates into English as "love of one's fate" or "love of one's destiny." It is the philosophy and practice of accepting and embracing everything that has occurred, is occurring, and will occur in the future.

Amor fati is the attitude of welcoming the future, no matter how unpredictable it may be, while laboring towards our ambitions. It is the mindset of taking all that

happens in life as positive, or at the very least, necessary.

Amor fati empowers us to embrace all of life's hardships, sufferings, and tragedies, because they are inseparable parts of our lives, whether we prefer them or not.

Amor fati is doing our best, putting in our best efforts, without worrying about what the result might be. It is accepting the outcome, whatever it is, without being attached to it.

Nietzsche, the revolutionary philosopher who boldly declared "God is dead," gets the credit for coining the phrase amor fati. He said of it:

"My formula for greatness in a human being is amor fati: that one wants nothing to be different, not forward, not backward, not in all eternity. Not merely bear what is necessary, still less conceal it—all idealism is mendacity in the face of what is necessary – but love it."

Is Amor Fati A Stoic Concept?

Amor fati, in essence, is a Stoic mindset.

The Stoics believed destiny was an integral design of the "universal reason," the reason that governs the entire universe and its systems. Therefore, a wise

person would accept their fate and love it precisely because it is “good,” because it enables them to live a life that is “virtuous” and wholesome.

Amor fati is practical Stoicism because it gently pushes a Stoic to accept that they can only control the process, but not the outcome. Practicing amor fati also does not mean they do nothing or believe that nothing they do is going to turn out worthwhile.

Epictetus explained it this way in his Enchiridion: *“Do not seek for things to happen the way you want them to; rather, wish that what happens, happens the way it happens: then you will be happy.”*

An easier way to present that quote is this translation:

“Don’t demand that things happen as you wish; rather, wish that they happen as they do happen: then you will be happy.”

Seneca wrote in his book On Tranquility of Mind:

“We are all chained to fortune: the chain of one is made of gold, and wide, while that of another is short and rusty. But what difference does it make? The same prison surrounds all of us, and even those who have bound others are bound themselves.”

Marcus Aurelius wrote on the Stoic idea of accepting one’s destiny thus:

“Accept the things to which fate binds you, and love the people with whom fate brings you together, but do so with all your heart.”

The Stoics believed the entire cosmos was organized rationally, including the order of events across the entire time. Nature has predestined everything to happen the way it does.

Fighting this cosmic fate may only lead to misery. A better option is to embrace the outcome lovingly and work hard to make the best of it.

While the idea of amor fati was there during the times of ancient Stoic sages, the exact phrase came much later. Nietzsche coined the phrase amor fati to mean—a passionate acceptance of everything that happens in one’s life.

How To Practice Amor Fati?

On practicing amor fati, **Ryan Holiday** says,

“We don’t get to choose so much of happens to us in life, but we can always choose how we feel about it, whether we’re going to work with it or not.”

Amor fati is the conviction that you could live exactly the same life all over again, with all of your mistakes and blunders and all of your life’s intricacies intact.

But it doesn't come easy. **Guy Elgat**, professor of philosophy at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, [says](#):

“Nietzsche is well aware that amor fati could not be practiced without an initial endowment of love, in this minimal sense. Like in the case of any activity that is to be done well, some basic resources have to be presupposed as available.”

Amor fati means loving your fate, but without leaving your goals.

How to love your fate? Amor fati is acceptance of life's events as fate brings forth, but this acceptance does not mean limiting one's efforts to change or reform as a person. It is certainly not about accepting fate and then sitting back inactively.

Practicing amor fati does not mean trying to erase the past. Rather, it is about fully accepting the past—both the good and the bad, the failures and the successes. It's not about regretting and ranting about why tragic things happen to us.

Amor Fati means doing the most that we can, putting in our best efforts to make the world a better place, without worrying about what results from our practices, and accepting the outcomes with gratitude and strength.

Here is how to practice amor fati: *When a stressful event springs up, acknowledge it as a stressful situation. Then inspect it as an opportunity to practice patience, acceptance, and resourcefulness. Keep your mind from getting preoccupied with frazzled emotions and instead, focus on what you need to do to break out of the conundrum.*

Amor fati = Acceptance + Patience + Action

When we are stressed, we usually imagine a predetermined outcome in our minds. We become apprehensive that the future will disrupt our life balance. But can we truly control every aspect of the future? No.

We accept our future, our fate, whatever it may be, as we embrace amor fati. But it does not imply becoming nihilistic or pessimistic — doing nothing or expecting the worst, because we believe nothing we do will ever be worthwhile.

Amor fati means doing what you intend to do without becoming attached to the outcome. It is about accepting the outcome, whatever it is. You can only control the process, not the outcome.

Think of it as if you are setting an arrow aimed at a target, with your best technique and balance, but not much worried about where it finally stops. Accept with serenity wherever it ends up. Then keep going at it better and better with each next shot.

How to love your fate as a Stoic:

- **Strive to live virtuously.**
- **Control what you can.**
- **Do not fight your fate.**
- **Embrace all results.**
- **Be happy now.**

Final Words

A loving hug doesn't always set things right.

The main argument against practicing amor fati is that a calm acceptance doesn't change the outcome. If someone gets cancer, does it change the outcome if they welcome it lovingly?

See it this way. Getting agitated in the same stressful situation also does not change the situation. Accepting cancer does not change its finality, but it may reduce a person's angst against the world and improve their focus on the pleasant and tolerable parts of life.

That is the entire point. It can help you become less of a victim and more of an agent.

Amor fati helps to sustain serenity, which then helps use freed-up mental resources to find the best solutions to the problems at hand.

Remind yourself this as you go about your day:

"I am happy about what happened because it was intended to happen. It happened when and how it was supposed to happen, and now I'll strive to make the best of it. Amor fati."

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