Expanded Guide: Doing Your Part

On Stoic Living Discussion Series · Guide 6 of 12 · June

For facilitators. Read before the meeting, after the Meeting Primer and the core reading (about 15 minutes).

The Meeting Primer supplies the readings and key terms. The meeting guide gives the flow and timing. This guide helps you take the Justice Check through an actual rehearsal of words and conduct.

What the discussion and application are for

Compare the convenience of an even split with the different orders and any actual agreement. Explore defensible standards before rehearsing words, then examine what useful contribution follows from those reasons. The rehearsal tests how a reason guides speech and follow-through. It does not demonstrate completed conduct outside the meeting or guarantee everyone's approval.

June carries justice into action. The group examines a proposed response by a standard it could defend to those affected, then rehearses doing what the reasons support. A declaration of good intent needs a next act.

The dinner bill comes from Week 22. A simple arrangement benefits the person proposing it and burdens someone who ordered less. The case permits several reasonable responses, depending on what has been agreed. It lets newcomers examine fairness without presenting their own finances or relationships.

Week 22 supplies the Justice Check. Week 23 brings truth, responsibility, and purpose to speech. Week 24 makes a correction clear without contempt. Week 25 asks what useful contribution can be carried through. The four questions remain one practice. Speech, correction, and service show how its reasons take effect.

Week 26 informs the fifth discussion question. It asks how a more careful judgment and wider concern could support the action in this same case. Participants need no previous lessons to answer it. Keep the connection brief enough that the meeting stays with the fitting response people are learning to carry out.

Progress concerns whether relevant reasons guided conduct. A reasoned pause to find out what was agreed can be appropriate. So can an adjustment after new information. A friendly reception is welcome, but the group should ask what the response actually did and what remains to be completed.

Leading it Socratically

- **Give the simple proposal its reason.** Convenience matters, and the check asks what else matters. Ask whose work simplicity saves and whose money it spends.
- **Ask for the standard.** A particular total can be fair for more than one reason. Hear what rule would justify the proposed share.
- **Reverse positions carefully.** Keep relevant differences in view when asking what someone would accept.
- **Invite a second fitting response.** Compare the reasons without turning discussion into a vote on the right answer.
- **Rehearse the sentence.** Hear whether it names a problem and gives someone room to answer.
- **Ask for the next act.** Once a response is chosen, identify what can be carried out by the person making it.

0–10 minutes — Open and encounter the case

Welcome everyone, explain the discussion agreements, and read the case aloud:

> After dinner with five friends, you suggest splitting the bill evenly. You had steak and two drinks. One friend ordered only soup. Splitting is simpler, and nobody wants to do the math.

Ask the opening question printed in the meeting guide. Hear two or three interpretations without settling them. Carry the differences straight into question 1. Prior weekly experience is welcome, but everyone has the facts needed here; no personal disclosure or practice report is required.

10–55 minutes — Discussion: five questions

Compare the convenience of an even split with the different orders and any actual agreement. Explore defensible standards before rehearsing words, then examine what useful contribution follows from those reasons. Hear competing reasons before introducing the full application method. The follow-ups are resources for inquiry, not a script that must all be completed.

Each question has a purpose, two follow-ups, and something to listen for. The first follow-up is the booklet's probe.

1. What might convenience leave out of the proposed split?

Purpose: expose benefits and burdens hidden by the apparently simple arrangement.

- Who gains or bears a burden under the simple arrangement?
- What would we need to know about any agreement made before ordering?

Listen for a truthful account that includes the proposer's advantage. Convenience can be a reason without settling what is due to each person.

2. What standard could you defend if your places were reversed?

Purpose: test fairness through consistent treatment of comparable claims.

- What relevant differences should affect each person's share?
- How would a freely offered gift change the account?

Listen for the standard being applied to whoever occupies the role. Equal treatment may support different payments when orders differ. Ask what the difference justifies.

3. How could your words make a fair arrangement easier to reach?

Purpose: bring the check into speech and correction.

- What could you say without assigning motives or embarrassing anyone?
- If you made the original suggestion, what could you now correct plainly?

Listen for a concrete description and request. "I overlooked the different orders" gives a clearer correction than labeling the friends selfish or the soup-ordering diner fussy.

4. What useful contribution is yours to carry through here?

Read On Duties 1.20–23 here, as the discussion moves from a fair standard to a contribution. Cicero's account draws on Stoic thought; he was not himself a Stoic. Ask how failing to help or protect can matter alongside direct harm at this table, without treating every omission as equally serious.

Purpose: turn the reasons into a bounded act of service.

- What can you actually do, and what needs someone else's agreement?
- How would you know your part was complete rather than merely offered?

Listen for a useful action such as checking one's own items, explaining a disputed cost, or helping divide the shared portion. Avoid letting a generous promise transfer work or payment to someone who never agreed.

5. How could fairer judgment and wider concern help you act justly here?

Purpose: connect the quarter's Assent, Desire, and Action lightly through the case.

- What assumption or demand might otherwise weaken your response?
- How would hearing "I don't want to make a fuss" differently change what you did next?

Listen for a specific connection. The friend might be trying to avoid embarrassment. Concern for their fair participation can change the words spoken and the share offered. The group can make this connection without recounting a quarter of practice.

Going deeper, for a room that is ready: When people freely agree to an unequal share, what makes it fair? Consider what counts as a fair opportunity to refuse.

55–80 minutes — Application: carry a fair reason into action

Compare two defensible arrangements and explain what would justify each. Use Honest → Fair → Reciprocal → Common life once on one proposal. Try the words aloud and identify the next act. The friend's reluctance to make a fuss can then test whether apparent agreement settles fairness.

The rehearsal tests how a reason guides speech and follow-through. It does not demonstrate completed conduct outside the meeting or guarantee everyone's approval.

Keep sample responses in reserve until participants have offered and questioned their own accounts. Use the method once to test the discussion's conclusions.

Take two or three short answers per question. The fourth step includes a brief rehearsal so the check reaches conduct within the application segment.

1. Honest. Am I giving a truthful account of the facts and my reasons? Hear the convenience claim without allowing it to hide the different orders.

> **Sample response:** "An even split would save us some calculation. It would also mean someone who ordered less pays for part of my meal."

If someone says the friend can afford it, ask whether that fact is known and what bearing it would have. Capacity to pay and what someone has agreed to pay are separate considerations.

2. Fair. Could I defend how this shares benefits and burdens? Ask what earlier agreement, differences in orders, or freely offered generosity might matter. Do not assume any agreement that the case has not supplied.

> **Sample response:** "We haven't established an earlier agreement to split evenly. We should give the different orders a fair hearing before treating simplicity as decisive."

More than one arrangement may be defensible. For example, someone could freely offer to cover a larger share. Ask what makes the offer free and what expectations would attach to it.

3. Reciprocal. Would I accept this standard if our places were reversed? Have someone speak from the soup-ordering friend's place. The test concerns a consistent reason under comparable circumstances.

> **Sample response:** "If I had ordered only soup, I'd want a chance to say so without being

> treated as difficult. I should give my friend that same opportunity."

Someone may personally enjoy treating friends. Ask whether that preference authorizes assigning the same cost to someone else. Hear the difference between offering one's own money and volunteering another person's.

4. Common life. What does our shared life require me to do now? Let the group choose one next response and perform it aloud. The words should make the arrangement clear while keeping the other person able to answer.

> **Sample response:** "We ordered quite differently. Shall we each cover our own food and drinks and agree how to share the rest? I'll help work it out."

Ask what follows the sentence. Someone needs to check the items and any shared costs. The person offering help should be able to perform that part or ask for the assistance it requires. This modest contribution gives justice practical form.

The reveal (if time allows). The soup-ordering friend says, "I had less, but I don't want to make a fuss." Does that settle the question?

> **Sample response:** "I'm glad you said so. You shouldn't have to cover my drinks just to keep this simple. Let me check my part, and we'll see what remains."

Ask whether a different reply could be equally fair. If the friend freely chooses to share more, that can matter. Their wish to avoid embarrassment also deserves attention. The group should hear the answer without pressuring them into another public concession.

80–90 minutes — Close

Ask what became clearer or what question remains unsettled. Invite the reason for a changed view, and let a well-supported disagreement remain. End with the single take-home invitation and a brief transition to the next theme. The full method has already appeared during application; do not repeat its steps as an assignment.

Misunderstandings to watch for

IF YOU HEAR…	THE MISUNDERSTANDING	TRY
"Everyone agreed, so it must be fair."	Agreement settles every question about a burden.	Ask what opportunity there was to decline or clarify.
"Fair means identical shares."	Relevant differences have no weight.	Ask what the different orders justify.

IF YOU HEAR...	THE MISUNDERSTANDING	TRY
“I’d pay it, so they should.”	Personal generosity authorizes another person’s cost.	Ask who has offered what and who can choose.
“Justice means correcting them sharply.”	Humiliation gives correction its force.	Rehearse a clear request with the label removed.
“My intentions were good.”	Intention establishes appropriate execution.	Ask what the person actually said and did.
“Helping means handling everything.”	Service requires taking over.	Ask what bounded contribution is useful and whose permission it needs.
“They were annoyed, so I acted badly.”	Another person’s reception decides the action’s worth.	Review the grounds, wording, and follow-through.

Facilitating the people in the room

WHO	WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE	TRY
The efficient organizer	Treats calculation as the only cost.	Ask whose burden the shortcut creates.
The generous payer	Offers to cover everyone.	Welcome the offer, then ask whether it answers the question about a fair standard.
The reluctant dissenter	Identifies with the person avoiding fuss.	Let them discuss the shared case without giving a personal example.
The rule keeper	Wants one formula for every meal.	Introduce a prior agreement or freely offered gift and test the reason again.
The corrector	Calls someone selfish or cheap.	Ask for the conduct, its effect, and a clear request.
The overcommitted helper	Promises more than they can carry out.	Ask which complete action fits their actual capacity.
The talker	Answers before alternatives can be heard.	Invite another willing voice with a different reason.
The newcomer	Worries about mathematical precision.	Return to fair consideration and the next useful action.

When an example is painful. Money and exclusion can carry private pressures. Thank the speaker and offer the bill case, passing, or moving on. Ask the group to examine the reasoning in

the shared example rather than judge someone's private arrangement.

Questions you may be asked

"Is the Justice Check ancient?" The four-question checklist is a modern decision aid in On Stoic Living. It translates principles about justice, good faith, reciprocity, and social responsibility into an ordinary choice.

"Is Cicero a Stoic?" He was not. His discussion in *On Duties* draws heavily on the Stoic Panaetius. The curriculum uses it as an important account of justice and duty while preserving that distinction.

"Does justice require checking every small act?" Begin with one ordinary social action worth attention. The exercise makes relevant reasons easier to recall. You can use a shorter reversal of places when time is limited and consider the fuller check afterward.

"What if somebody takes advantage of my fairness?" The check includes your legitimate claims and responsibilities. A fitting response may be a limit, a correction, or a refusal. Being fair gives no general reason to ignore misuse of your time or resources.

"Can the action count if completion is prevented?" Review what you chose, attempted, and adapted. Completion can depend on others. Be clear about what you performed and what remains an intention or a further responsibility.

Adapting the practice and discussion

- **Mostly newcomers.** Keep the bill visible in the spoken case. Explain one question at a time and rehearse a short reply.
- **Mostly experienced members.** Use the reveal and explore a freely offered unequal share. Ask what fair participation requires.
- **Online.** Read the four questions aloud and invite one response to each. Use volunteers for the short dialogue.
- **A large group.** Let small groups apply the same four questions and rehearse a response. Compare reasons without grading answers.
- **Short on time.** Omit the reveal. Keep the final act and one brief quarter connection in question 5.

After the meeting, send a short recap through your group's usual channel with one or two insights or open questions and the single take-home invitation. Experiences and fresh questions are equally welcome at the next meeting.

Source lessons: On Stoic Living, Weeks 22–25; Week 26 informs the integration question.