



LAZINESS AND GIVING EFFORT (MUNDRAGON/EXCELDAGON)

Lesson inspired by Marcus Aurelius (Meditations 8.50)

Marcus Aurelius was a powerful man. He was given the responsibility of being the ruler of the largest empire and army in the world. This came with power, wealth, and prestige. But there were also many difficulties. Marcus, like all of us, had to overcome obstacles and struggles in his life.

In his journal called *Meditations*, Marcus wrote about some of the difficulties he faced in his life. But Marcus didn't let these obstacles stop him. He made intentional choices each day to persevere. To be resilient. To never give up. It wasn't always easy, but he continued to try.

In one journal entry, he wrote about his approach:

"If you are annoyed by the briars in your path, go around them."

What does he mean?

Briars are bushes with very sharp thorns. If you fall into one, it would be painful. But these bushes can also be hard to escape because everything gets caught on the thorns.

So, Marcus saw that struggles and hard things we encounter in life are often like these briars. They can hurt. They can be difficult to get out of. They become obstacles.

So, his solution when we come across briars in life? Find a way around them.



Marcus didn't say we would never face difficulties, because we will. He didn't say to pretend the briars aren't there. And he didn't say that the answer is to complain or blame others. None of these choices will remove the briars from our path.

Instead, Marcus believed we should look for solutions, adapt, and keep trying.

Marcus believed that when we encounter briars, what matters most is how we respond to them. Hard things can make us feel frustrated, worried, stuck, or afraid. These feelings are normal. But we cannot let these feelings stop us from moving forward. The path is our life, and these briars are obstacles. So, Marcus would ask: how can we find a way around them so we can keep going?

As Dragon Slayers, sometimes when we encounter briars in our path, we might hear the whispers of Mundragon. He says things like: "*This is too hard.*" "*This shouldn't be happening to me.*" "*I can't do this.*" "*What's the point - I'm only going to fail.*"

But we can't listen to him. Instead, we need to listen for the voice of Exceldragon when we face briars. He says things like: "*Okay, this is hard, but what can I do next?*" "*How can I find a way around this obstacle?*" "*I may not solve this problem immediately, but I will keep trying.*"



LAZINESS AND GIVING EFFORT (MUNDRAGON/EXCELDRAAGON)

Dialogue

[If you prefer to teach the content in dialogue form, here is a guide]

Dragon Master: Marcus Aurelius was an emperor of the largest empire in the world during his lifetime. And this means that he had more problems in one day than most people have in a month. Marcus reflected on his life and wrote in his journal: 'If there are briars in your path, go around them.'



But Marcus wasn't speaking literally. He didn't mean simply that if a thorny bush blocks our path, we should walk around it. The path represents our life, and the briars represent struggles and obstacles we face. So, when he says: 'If there are briars in your path, go around them,' what do you think Marcus meant by that? See what they say.

Dragon Master: What are some briars in your life right now?

See what they say. *[Siblings, homework, a hard class at school, a mean teacher, a bully at school, a struggle in a sport/hobby, etc.]*

Dragon Master: When something is hard, it seems like it blocks us from doing what we want, right? So, when we face a briar, it can be tempting to complain, blame others, or give up. But what else can we do? See what they say.

Dragon Master: Do you think there is a difference between asking for help and simply complaining?

See what they say. *[Guide them to see that asking for advice, encouragement, or support is not complaining and important to do when we need help.]*

Dragon Master: If we face a briar in life and complain, what does complaining change?

See what they say. *[Include follow-up questions like: does complaining make the briar smaller? does it make the briar go away?]*

Dragon Master: So, if complaining doesn't change the briar, why do people complain?

See what they say. *[It feels easier. It feels good to complain. It shows others why I am giving up.]*

Dragon Master: If we see the briar in our path, what do you think makes you stronger: complaining or finding a way to go around it?

See what they say. *[Include a follow-up of 'why' when they give you answers.]*

Dragon Master: Can facing difficult things and then overcoming them make us stronger or wiser? How?

See what they say. *[Encourage them to explain their answers.]*

Dragon Master: When we talk about becoming your best self, what we do when we face briars matters. If we want to become our best self, next time we face a briar in our path, what questions should we ask ourselves?

See what they say. *[Guide them to answers like: What can I do now? How can I overcome this? How can I find a way around this? This is hard but I need to keep trying.]*



LAZINESS AND GIVING EFFORT (MUNDRAGON/EXCELDRAAGON)

Activity

Key theme: Your life is a path. Hard things and obstacles are like briars that you face. Marcus wrote: “If there are briars in your path, go around them.” So, when we face braces, how can we find a way around them?

Materials:

Pencil

Paper

First Step:

Think of your life like a pathway that you are walking on.

A briar is a thorny bush that gets in your way. We all will face many briars in our lives. These are things that are hard, that make us feel sad, that make us feel hurt or scared. Many times these briars might make us feel like we want to give up and stop trying.



List some things that our briars in your life right now:

Briar A: _____

Briar B: _____

Briar C: _____

Briar D: _____

Briar E: _____

Briar F: _____

Briar G: _____

Briar H: _____

We all face briars in our lives, but we can't let the briars stop us! We can't give up. We shouldn't make excuses. Even if we feel worried or afraid, we can't let these emotions control us. Excellence doesn't mean perfection but it means that no matter what, we keep trying and persevere. Excellence = resilience, effort, growth, and not giving up!

And always remember what Marcus teaches us: When we see a briar in our life, we must find a way around it!

(continued on next page)



LAZINESS AND GIVING EFFORT (MUNDRAGON/EXCELDRAON)

Second Step:

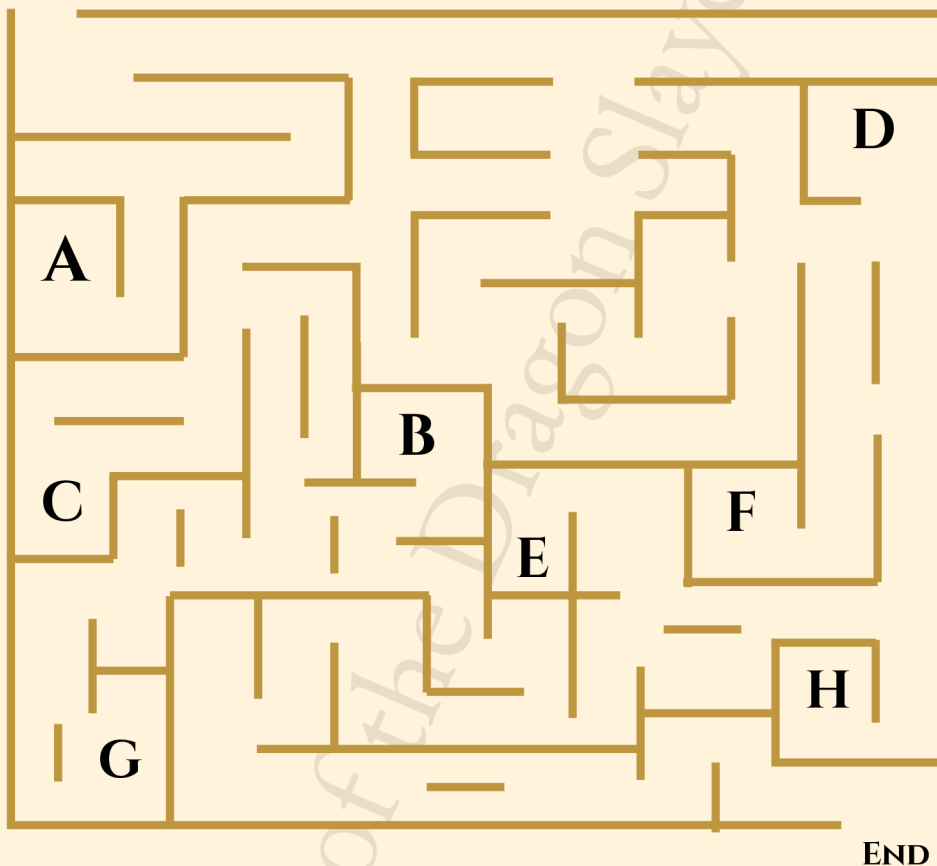
This maze represents your life right now.

You will start at the beginning of the maze, but this lesson has two parts.

Part I: Trace a line to each letter A-H. Each letter represents a briar in your life. Every time you hit a dead end, stop and go to the side bar. Find that letter and answer the question related to that briar.

Part II: After you have hit all of the dead ends, start again at the beginning. Now, trace one line from the start to the finish and avoid all the dead ends.

START



Side Bar:

Briar A - Refer to your list. How can I overcome this briar?

Briar B - Refer to your list. How can I overcome this briar?

Briar C - Refer to your list. How can I overcome this briar?

Briar D - Refer to your list. How can I overcome this briar?

Briar E - Refer to your list. How can I overcome this briar?

Briar F - Refer to your list. How can I overcome this briar?

Briar G - Refer to your list. How can I overcome this briar?

Briar H - Refer to your list. How can I overcome this briar?
