

# All Pleasure Is Desirable, Because It Is Pleasing To Us, But Is All Pleasure \*Equally\* Desirable?

Post by "Daniel Van Orman" of May 10, 2018 at 8:05 PM

"To me, it is crucially foundational to emphasize that Epicurus stressed that there are ONLY two categories of feelings - pleasure and pain. In any measurement system, if the universe is composed of only two components, then in rigorous terms YES - the absence of one IS exactly the measure of the presence of the other, and vice versa."

I have to disagree with this.

There are many times I think pleasure and pain come together, such as when one feels both happy and sad at the same time.

Using the jelly bean analogy, it started with pleasurable jelly beans and painful jelly beans, not one type of jelly bean and air. Two jars could have only painful jelly beans, but one jar could have twice as many painful jelly beans as the other.

To use a different analogy (I hope this will not be confusing), consider someone colorblind to the color blue, so they only see red and green. More red does not undo green, but blends with green to make yellow. Less green and twice that amount of red blends to make orange. However, one cannot truly see red at its maximum if green is in the way since they would see shades of yellow, gold, or orange and not red.

I realize this perspective may be in violation of PD3. That is likely because I do not understand PD3 nor "the Platonists and others who argue that pleasure cannot be the guide of life because it can never be satisfied".

It sounds like both of you have learned much from your discussion. However, I think this thread has drifted from its original topic: "All pleasure may be desirable, . . . but is all pleasure is equally desirable?".

I think Epicurus taught different pleasures have different desirabilities.

One subject this is brought up is bodily pleasures and mental pleasures: "The flesh receives as unlimited the limits of pleasure; and to provide it requires unlimited time. But the mind, intellectually grasping what the end and limit of the flesh is, and banishing the terrors of the future, procures a complete and perfect life, and we have no longer any need of unlimited time. Nevertheless the mind does not shun pleasure, and even when circumstances make death imminent, the mind does not lack enjoyment of the best life" ([PD20](#))

In other texts, he seems to point out more desirable pleasures:

"To those who are able to reason it out, the highest and surest joy is found in the stable health of the body and a firm confidence in keeping it" (Peter Saint-Andre's Selected Fragments, 68, <http://monadnock.net/epicurus/fragments.html>).

"The noble man is chiefly concerned with wisdom and friendship; of these, the former is a mortal good, the latter an immortal one" (Vatican Sayings, 78).

What do you guys think?