

Practical exercises: PD1

Post by “Godfrey” of June 28, 2021 at 9:09 PM

There has been some discussion lately as to “practice,” “therapy” or “exercises” in Epicurean philosophy, and this topic comes up regularly. My guess is that, in antiquity, this was accomplished through personal instruction and daily interaction in the garden. Lacking such a framework today, I’m posting this as a first pass at an alternative use of the Principle Doctrines as a series of practical or therapeutic exercises, not theoretical exercises, starting with PD1.

Quote

PD1: The blessed and incorruptible being has no troubles itself nor causes trouble for others; therefore it is not affected by anger or favor, for such things signify weakness. (my rendition)

Exercise: during the day, think about and emulate these paragons of Epicurean pleasure and visualize how you would live as a god among men. Specifically, be mindful of times when you are being affected by anger or favor. Experience these conditions, reflect without judgment, and carry on.

Notes: The original intent of this PD, to my understanding, was to describe and dispel the fear of the gods. This exercise is for those who are already cured of this malady, and is simply to practice the “idealist” conception of the gods. The “realist” conception of the gods is valid and important but, to me, is in the “theoretical” realm.

There is a discussion [here](#) about the words “blessed and incorruptible,” which are often translated as blessed and “immortal” or “imperishable.”

This exercise sounds like it was written by Captain Obvious, but I’m noticing that I’m affected much more than I expected and particularly relating to minor annoyances. Also the anger and favors sometimes are aroused from others, sometimes from within me.

Does this exercise eventually lead toward a state of pleasant equanimity from which to experience further varieties of pleasure?