

Welcome Philia!

Post by "Don" of August 7, 2021 at 11:23 PM

Apologies to [Kalosyni](#) ...

At the risk of bogging down this Welcome thread (Feel free to branch this off, [Cassius](#)) , I think [Cassius](#) and I have slightly different views on this topic. Not opposed, necessarily, but different emphases starting with different interpretations of [PD10](#).

I completely agree that Epicurus did not dictate or mandate THE Way to Live. No commandments, no mandatory sacrifices, no divinely-inspired edicts, etc.

However, on the other hand, I think that Epicurus would have had no hesitation in telling someone their choices were ill-conceived or detrimental to their leading a pleasurable, less painful, life (a la [PD10](#) and the Letter to Menoikeus). He would have said (and did say from my interpretation): *"You are more than welcome to choose to lead a life of indulgence, sex-drugs-and-rock-and-roll, etc.; however, though you may find pleasure in the moment in that, you are not going to lead a pleasurable life for long. That path is going to lead to more pain than pleasure."*

Voula Tsouna's [The Ethics of Philodemus](#) also has a discussion of Philodemus's "On Frank Speech" where Philodemus goes over some of the faults the teacher will admonish the student for, using frank speech, including "flattery, arrogance, irascibility, slander (13.2), envy, and malicious joy [especially joy at finding faults in others], a misplaced sense of dignity and shame, vanity, self-conceit, ...stubbornness and overconfidence, harshness and insolence, egocentrism, insecurity and ingratitude, laziness and procrastination..." Philodemus is basically saying these are not traits that an Epicurean should have. They seem, to me, a practical list of traits that will lead to pain, unhappiness, and a less-pleasurable life overall. If a student is exhibiting these traits in the Garden, the teacher will engage them in some frank speech to (a) make the student aware of their faults, and (b) get the student to apply corrective action.

To my understanding, this dovetails with PD5:

Quote

It is impossible to live a pleasant life without living wisely and well and justly, and it is impossible to live wisely and well and justly without living pleasantly. Whenever any one of these is lacking, when, for instance, the person is not able to live wisely, though he lives well and justly, it is impossible for him to live a pleasant life.

So, there is not a Universal "Best Way to Live" but there are activities and traits that are going to - judging from observation over time of human beings generally - lead more than likely to

eudaimonia and a pleasurable life with less pain.

When [Cassius](#) says:

[Quote from Cassius](#)

that something gives you the right to enforce that view on everyone else

I don't think I'm advocating a "right to enforce" a view. What I think Epicurus and Philodemus are saying is that every person has the ability (NOT "right" - there are no abstract "rights") to make their own choices and avoidances. However, neither Epicurus nor Philodemus are going to stand by if a student in the Garden is making choices that will impede their progress to leading a pleasurable, less painful, life. Letting someone stumble willingly into pain is not the act of a friend.