

NPR Fresh Air: Dr. Anna Lembke on pleasure, pain, and addiction

Post by "Godfrey" of August 28, 2021 at 3:40 PM

Quote from Cassius

Godfrey so you are saying she sums pleasure and pain together to get a "net result" number which she then charts?

No, what she calls pleasantness and unpleasantness are represented by opposite directions on an axis of hedonic valence (+ and -). This axis is intersected by an axis of arousal, with intensity of calm in one direction and intensity of agitation in the other direction. I don't think she's trying to describe pleasure and pain; she's trying to illustrate what her data is showing her regarding what she calls "affect".

Epicurus didn't have access to today's neuroscience. He was working with observations and against Platonic abstractions. LFB's work is among the latest neuroscience so I find it extremely interesting and potentially useful that her conclusions in many ways seem to correspond with Epicurus' conclusions. Her "affective circumplex" is a modern model which is devoid of Platonic distraction. As an initial observation, I interpret "affect" as similar to "the faculty of feelings". As such, what might be considered maximum pleasure would be a point on the "pleasant" side of the hedonic valence axis and intersecting the circumscribing circle. This would represent maximum pleasantness with neither too much agitation or too much calm.



