

# Why Parrhesia is Necessary

Post by “smoothiekiwi” of January 7, 2022 at 4:40 AM

Yep, you're right! I think that Aristotle has a good thing to say on that- "virtue is the middle of two excesses". Sometimes it's necessary to stand your ground and defend what you believe is right, but more often than not the source of disagreement is misunderstanding, ignorance, etc.

That's also one of my main flaws with Pyrrhonism: if I understand this philosophy correctly, every viewpoint has the same right to be right. Yet I refuse to accept that a Nazi or a mass murderer deserves my tolerance. I will try to be compassionate and understanding, and I will try to understand where their hate comes from, but I won't tolerate their opinion. Obviously, in dealing with friends and family, these cases don't appear so often, but I have a recent example (maybe I'll do another thread on this, because I'm still struggling this situation).

The situation is as following. January 1st, and my family decided that it would be a good moment to go visit my grandma. We would simply bring her a bit of salad, say hello to her and then head home.

My family expected me to come along, but I refused. I've thought about the "why" for a while: they assumed that I was lazy, and that's probably how I communicated it. But inside of me, there was such a strong resistance that it couldn't be simply due to laziness or the cold weather outside. I can't really say what it was, but it screamed out: "no, don't go!" And, after doing a hedonistic calculus, I decided that I would endure the discussion and the anger of my family, but stay true to that inner feeling. There was a lot of anger and the "you're lazy"- argument, but I'm happy that I listened to that inner feeling and stayed strong.

I draw three conclusion out of this whole event. First, that Epicurus's focus on pleasure and the hedonistic calculus allowed me to stay true to myself. A Stoic would get up and go, because it's his duty. A Pyrrhonist would also stand up and go, because he should suspend judgement on whether it's worth to go or not. But Epicureanism allowed me to listen inside me and realize that there was something inside of me which simply refused to go to my grandma. And, even a week later, I still believe that it was the right choice. It obviously hurts a bit to know that my grandma had to enjoy January 1st alone, but because my only job is to listen to me, I could do the best thing for all of us.

The second conclusion is that Epicureanism isn't egoistic. That may sound strange, but by watching me and my feelings, I also managed to care for my grandmother. I can't really put it into words, but it probably goes into the direction of "before you love other people, you first have to love yourself".

And, the last conclusion, is that it's necessary to employ parrhesia in order to come to peace with myself. I (sadly) didn't had the choice of simply not coming with them without explanation.

And, although I couldn't really explain to my family **why** I couldn't come with them, I draw a conclusion for **myself**. And that's the most important part, in my opinion.