

An Epicurean Understanding of Valentine's Day: Love, Romance, and Free-will

Post by "Don" of January 16, 2022 at 7:09 PM

Since [Kalosyni](#) was kind enough to start this thread, I wanted to directly respond to some of her posts:

[Quote from Kalosyni](#)

Love is like oxygen,
You get too much,
You get too high,
Not enough,
And your gonna die."

So thinking about just these words...this talks about a human need.

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I do find it interesting that the oxygen analogy is used. I can't remember the song context (although I did remember the song!) and whether we're talking eros or philia or another flavor of "love." However, even Epicurus seems to caution a balance between intoxication (as [Cassius](#) has mentioned) and no love at all. He certainly didn't prohibit it in his students. Some of his handpicked closest students and fellow teachers in the Garden were married and had children. He expressed (friendly) affection for Themista, the wife of Leonteus. If Epicurus had a completely negative view of sex or romantic love or marriage, I find it hard to believe he'd allow a number of his students to engage in the activity. So maybe you do need just "enough."

[Quote from Kalosyni](#)

From a modern understanding...what kind of "harm" are we talking about now, in our times?

Oh, all kinds of psychological harm for sure. Romantic entanglements can lead to all kinds of problems. Let's say one partner falls out of love, but the other partner doesn't accept that. If one partner cheats on the other. If one partner gets in trouble and drags the other one into a dangerous situation or legal problems. And so on and so on. I am can envision all kinds of harms, Ancient and modern.

(Let me clearly state: I'm not talking from experience! I'm quite happy and blessed! 😊)