

Imagery On The Interplay Between "Pursue Pleasure" and 'Avoid Pain'

Post by "Cassius" of March 28, 2023 at 10:12 AM

I did not realize that [Evel Knievel](#) survived all his jumps and lived to die of diabetes and pulmonary fibrosis at age 69. So he apparently was prudently planning his jumps and thought it to be worthwhile and did not have a death wish at all.

Now I wouldn't hold him up as a paragon of philosophy because his statements apparently tend toward a view that people will interpret as Stoic:

Core values (48)

Evel Knievel took great pride in his core values. Throughout his career and later life he would repeatedly talk about the importance of "keeping his word"¹⁰¹ He stated that although he knew he may not successfully make a jump or even survive the canyon jump, he followed through with each stunt because he gave his word that he would. Before the canyon jump, Knievel stated, "I sometimes says to you, 'That guy should have never jumped the canyon. You know if he did, that he'd lose his life and that he was crazy.' Do me a favor. Tell him that you saw me here and regardless of what I was, that you know me, and that I kept my word."¹⁰²

In *Last of the Gladiators*, Knievel discussed the crash of a 1973 Pepsi-Cola sponsored jump in *Yaleva, Washington*. Knievel knew the jump was very questionable, but stated, "I went ahead and did it anyway. When you give your word to somebody that you're going to do something, you've gotta do it." In the 1971 biopic, *George Hamilton* (as Knievel) emphasizes in the opening monologue that a man does not go back on his word.

But just as many people observe, including I think Emily Austin in her articles on Stoicism, someone who thinks that "keeping your word" is a prime value is virtually indistinguishable in reality from "I get great pleasure from knowing that I keep my word."

So I could see Evel Knievel as entirely Epicurean.

Especially since he apparently started framing things in terms of Christianity only at the end of his life:

Christian conversion (48)

On April 1, 2007, Knievel appeared on Robert H. Schuller's television program *Hour of Power* and announced that he "believed in Jesus Christ" for the first time.¹⁰³ At his request, he was baptized at a televised congregation at the *Crystal Cathedral* by Schuller. Knievel's televised testimony triggered mass baptisms at the *Crystal Cathedral*.¹⁰⁴

Not all of us are going to rank the pleasures of risk and danger as highly as Knievel did, but since there is no absolute standard of how you *should* rank your pleasures, I would say Epicurus would have no issue with Knievel's choices, at least on an abstract level.