

The concept of resilience vs. ataraxia

Post by “Godfrey” of November 1, 2023 at 9:51 PM

Quote from the article

Psychologists define resilience as the process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats, or significant sources of stress—such as family and relationship problems, serious health problems, or workplace and financial stressors. As much as resilience involves “bouncing back” from these difficult experiences, it can also involve profound personal growth.

Quote from the article

While certain factors might make some individuals more resilient than others, resilience isn’t necessarily a personality trait that only some people possess. On the contrary, resilience involves behaviors, thoughts, and actions that anyone can learn and develop.

To my understanding, ataraxia enhances resilience. It isn't the same thing as resilience, and resilience doesn't necessarily promote ataraxia. Ataraxia reduces the background noise which causes undue stress, anxiety and panic, so when a challenging event occurs you're more able to assess the situation and respond effectively.

The list in the article of how to build resilience strikes me as more Aristotelian than Epicurean. Some of the items overlap, such as friendship, self-care, seeking help, and healthy thoughts. What healthy thoughts are, of course, depends on your overarching philosophy. Purpose and meaning, at least for me, can be a gateway to virtue ethics or duty ethics. From my experience these add to the background noise, largely because duty and virtue are nebulous mental constructs. Living with pleasure ethics, on the other hand, you become sensitive to how your feelings are guiding you in a particular situation and, from there, can apply reasoning as to how best to deal with the situation given the pleasure or pain that it brings.