

# Tips On Offsetting Pleasures Against Pains

Post by "Cassius" of November 28, 2023 at 10:02 AM

## [Quote from Don](#)

From my perspective, Epicurus was able to "offset" his physical pain with the "kinetic" pleasure of memories precisely because he had cultivated his katastematic pleasure of a mind free from anxiety and trouble.

Can someone who fears the gods not also offset pleasure against physical pain?

## [Quote from Don](#)

If he had been worried about what happens after he dies, would the gods punish him for some transgression, would he become a shade in the underworld... He wouldn't have been able to find joy in memories of past times with friends.

Basically I'd repeat the same question. Can't Catholics (to take one example) not find joy in memories of past times and friends? (I suspect @Eoghan will have a comment there! 😊)

## [Quote from Don](#)

His body was not free from pain or working effortlessly and without struggle or suffering (which I think is a better way to think of aponia rather than just "freedom from pain"), but he could still have ataraxia. Ataraxia and aponia do not arise together. You can have one without the other.

I think this is an interesting discussion. I can see how it is possible to talk about "ataraxia" and "aponia" productively even without being an ancient Greek, but I can also see that these words can get in the way of a more practical understanding. Isn't the bottom line that life comes down to a practical combination of mental and physical pleasures and pains, and we all do our best from moment to moment to try to make sure the pleasures predominate over the pains?

If those words would appear to lead to the conclusion that Catholics can't experience joy in thinking about their friends, or that they can't otherwise offset pleasures against pains, then I would think many people would think such an argument would be contrary to common experience.

Now I think we all agree that such people won't be as fully successful in offsetting pleasures against pains, because they won't be able to completely get rid of fear of death or of the gods. But if that's the issue why don't we just say so in plain English?

[Again, the context here is to help with a practical view of how to offset pleasures against pains, as against those commentators who say that Epicurus held that "katastematic" pleasure is the real goal of life, the only kind of pleasure even worth having, and the very reason for which kinetic pleasures even exist.]