

# Being content in your situation or taking a risk for greater pleasure.

Post by "Cassius" of May 21, 2024 at 10:41 AM

## [Quote from Kalosyni](#)

Pondering the Hedonic Calculus or prioritizing "smart choices" would lead one to choose less risky activities.

I think as stated that's overbroad. Risk is only one aspect of the equation, and the major (and really only elements ultimately in play) are the pleasure and pain that result - the question is your prediction as to each and is not limited to chance of failure.

As Godfrey illustrated in post 3 above, sometimes the biggest improvements in life come through the greatest risk. The problem is that no one can make that risk/reward decision for you but yourself, in part because only you can factor in the pain that will come from thinking "you didn't even try" when you get to the end of your life and realize that you have no further options forward.

Certainly everyone has different tolerances for risk and there's no single right or wrong answer, but to adopt a general rule to \*always\* choose the less risky alternative would almost certainly lead to huge regret in the end.

We have at least one clear example of Epicurus noting this himself, and I would say that he would apply the same rule across the board with all aspects of the context needing to be considered all the time:

VS28. We must not approve either those who are always ready for friendship, or those who hang back, but for friendship's sake **we must run risks.**

This is a very important point because I think we see a large number of people who otherwise listen to Epicurus's suggestions think that he is always telling them to flee from ALL pain and ALL risk ALL the time - which I think is perversely wrong in the big Epicurean picture. The \*only\* way to succeed in a goal stated that way is to choose death.

## [Quote from Kalosyni](#)

But this does have me wondering...if the failure is in the mental realm of the mind, such that it doesn't affect the body, but only the mind could be affected by the thought "I tried but I failed" then seems like the risk of failure shouldn't be feared, and because you know that you can then just move on to something else.

But you CAN'T always move on to something else, and that's the point of why it is so important to emphasize that death leads to nothingness. You generally don't know how much more time you have to live, but one thing you know for certain is that once passed you never get that particular moment back again. And you add that to the observation that mental pain and pleasure are often more significant, because the mind is aware of the past, present, and future, while the body is aware only of the present.