

ACT - a bridge which translates Epicurean philosophy into life goals (thread started by Julia)

Post by "Julia" of September 11, 2024 at 12:31 PM

ACT values are not prescriptive, but descriptive. They are also not considered absolute (like Stoic/Platonic virtues), and they are not considered ultimate (like Epicurean pleasure). They're simply a method of figuring out what brings pleasure and to remember that. If you don't need an intermediate step between Pleasure/Pain and specific, individual actions, that's fine. For me and countless others, however, knowing what *type of* actions/objects/behaviours/... consistently result in a net-gain of pleasure is very helpful. And that, among many other problems, can be solved by using ACT.

[Quote from Kalosyni](#)

it appears there is a kind of "language of abstractions" at work

This is both incorrect and correct. It is correct, because the ACT value of "Order" is more abstract than "put the trash in the trash bag"; it is incorrect, because "order" is less abstract than Pleasure. And also: ACT values are *explicitly not* virtues (and they're also only one of many things ACT entails). Values are simply *types of* things/behaviours/... you value, as in which bring long-term net pleasure. The *types of* or categories of things/behaviours/... which bring pleasure aren't obvious just like that to everybody. When you've been raised by wolves, how would you know that chocolate is fun? And once you've figured that out, why would you conclude from it that there is an entire category called "candy", that there's an entire *type of* things which are fun in a similar way to chocolate? Just because I know I like my trash in the trashbag doesn't mean I recognise I might also like a clean sink. And once I know I like trashbags and clean sinks, how do I know which is more important to me and how they compete against each other and against eating candy? Not everyone is already conscious of the *category of* things which they appreciate, can conceive of all relevant categories on their own, can easily figure out how important they to them - or how important they would be, had they known them. You cannot hold a value firmly in your mind until you've experienced it, and unless you want to wait until your mind, on its own, comes up with all that's good and available, you need to learn about it from somewhere. Then, once you know it exists, how to think about it? Which patterns of thought are useful, when it comes to values? There's nothing wrong with using a flexible and non-prescriptive framework to help oneself think, and there's nothing wrong with bootstrapping it all by using a descriptive list of categories of things many people find pleasurable as a basis for inspiration.

I never claimed ACT was a replacement for Epicurean philosophy and I never claimed it was a replacement for to-do lists, because it isn't. I simply say is that it fits neatly in the middle and

connects the two. This implies that people who have no trouble in making that connection stand nothing to gain in that respect. They might still benefit from other ACT aspects (because, as I said, it is much more than that), but I imagine those aspects should better be discussed at TherapistsCorner, than at EpicureanFriends 😊