

# what did epicurean actually mean by free will ? i think the article on the main page is confusing determinism with fatalism

Post by "Cassius" of December 16, 2024 at 6:29 AM

[Quote from UnPaid Landlord](#)

after all there is no empirical scientific evidence on either side so we don't really know for sure, there are only arguments, better to think you are in control and honestly try and then give up and be passive.

I don't have a full and complete explanation for you but this phrasing helps emphasize to me that we need to talk more here on the forum about what it really means to "know for sure" and the relationship of that to "empirical scientific evidence."

Is everything always simply a matter of argument, or when do we shift our opinion so that we hold that we "know for sure" that something is true?

Do we wait for "empirical scientific" opinions to be issued, as if we are doctors waiting for an article from the Journal of the American Medical Association to be issued? And if fact if JAMA does issue an article, how many times have even they changed their opinions in the past? And if we in fact in our clinical fact find success with a treatment that has not yet been "approved" by the JAMA, do we stop our treatment of our patients and wait for a go-ahead from a published empirical scientific opinion journal?

I think the answer is found in the direction of "[all sensations are true](#)" in that the ultimate standard for us as humans involves trusting the senses as our ultimate tests of truth. If we sense the same thing over and over again under repeatable conditions, then we hold it to be true for us regardless of what any number of experts might say that "the science" really is.

And for example what I sense over and over again is that I can choose to eat, or not to eat, one more bite of food. I know that there are many influences that led me to be hungry and the food to be available and for me to assess what is a proper thing to eat, but in the end I sense that I have the mental ability to choose to eat one more bite or not.

And that's sufficient for me to conclude that Epicurus was correct: some things are under our control, some are not, and some happen purely by accident.

Once we agree that there's such a division then there is plenty of room for discussion about the causes that led up to a particular decision. The problem is not that past influences don't exist, but that the hard determinists deny that we as conscious organisms have any role to play in

any decisionmaking. And if you conclude that to be the case, you've got a cascade of negative logical and psychological effects that follow.