

Daily life of ancient Epicureans / 21st Century Epicureans

Post by "Patrikios" of May 26, 2025 at 6:31 PM

[Quote from Patrikios](#)

"For what I label the Lockean view typically involves the idea that preconceptions are formed passively, without any movement of thought, whereas what I call the Kantian view is accompanied by the contention that epibolē, a mental focusing, is an integral component of the formation of basic concepts."

According to [Epicurus' Letter to Herodotus](#) (37-38), students were instructed to actively focus their minds (epibolē) on the "indemonstrable starting points" (the core doctrines) so they could properly apply these principles in daily life. This mental focusing helped reinforce the preconceptions (prolēpsis) that developed naturally through experience.

What is fascinating is that Epicurus understood the functioning of our brain's reticular activating system (RAS). The RAS does indeed function similarly to how Epicureans described epibolē working. The RAS acts as a filtering system that brings relevant information to consciousness based on what we've programmed ourselves to consider important.

I find this comparison aligns remarkably well with Epicurean teaching methods.

1. The RAS, like epibolē, actively filters incoming information based on what we've trained ourselves to consider significant
2. When we consciously focus on Epicurean principles through epibolē, we're essentially programming the RAS to notice related patterns
3. The brain's "predictive mind" function works similarly to how Epicureans described the interaction between epibolē and prolepsis.

Do others here have a similar understanding of how to apply the principles of epibolē and prolēpsis to create a more pleasurable Epicurean practice?