

Honesty among Friends

Post by “Elayne” of July 10, 2019 at 12:46 PM

“The wise man alone will know true gratitude and in respect of his friends, whether present or absent, will be the same throughout the journey of life.” Epicurus, DL, trans. Hicks, 10.118.

Sometimes a post from The Daily Stoic shows up in my newsfeed, and usually I ignore it... but every so often, I check to see what the Stoics are up to. Today’s bit of unwise advice is to distrust your friends, because everybody lies. If they say they are enjoying life, they are probably lying, so no need to ask them how they have accomplished their joy—you can be safe knowing they are just as miserable as you. <https://dailystoic.com/assume-everyone-is-lying/>

What a miserable way to live! Of course, sometimes people lie—but that does not mean everyone lies all the time, or that there are no deeply honest people—people who say the same thing whether they are with friends or alone in the room. Sometimes people do not broadcast their unhappiness online, but this also does not mean the pleasures they post are not real or that there are no people who are truly having an enjoyable life.

Sometimes, after being betrayed by someone who pretended to be an honest friend but who was not, we may feel like believing we can’t trust anyone at all. But that is a path to a sad, painful life, without the true friendship which is one of life’s greatest pleasures.

Let us seek to find friends whom we trust and with whom we will be trustworthy and honest about our lives, so that we may enjoy ourselves together. Parents, I advise you to teach your children from an early age how to recognize honest people and how to be honest themselves, by demonstrating your own honesty in their presence.

In your comments, I invite you to give examples of the pleasures of honesty among friends, from your own lives. If you are a parent, how have you taught your children about this pleasure?

*** This is a potential post in my planned "The Daily Epicurean Parent" website, from which I will eventually construct the book I've discussed earlier. Any editing suggestions are welcome!