

Epicurean strategies for dealing with bad habits and urges.

Post by “Daniel188” of November 24, 2025 at 4:14 AM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

Right and I see that your thread title is "bad habits and urges." But it seems clear that Stoicism and other aspects of Greek thought deemed all emotion as bad, and I wanted to get that point out front in the discussion. Once it's clear that emotion itself is not a bad thing, I would think the next question would be why the emotion has arisen and whether it is justified. I think it's well documented that Epicurus held that there are times when anger are both well justified, and I don't see how you can proceed without first evaluating the facts that led to them. As for "fear" in general, there's nothing terrible in life for those who understand that there is nothing terrible in not living, but that doesn't mean that particular situations aren't going to generate natural reactions of fear that should be heeded (e.g. standing at the end of a canyon looking down).

So I'm still thinking that the first thing to do is examine whether the feeling is justified. If it is justified, the first step is to take appropriate action. If it's not justified, then there's a problem in how the person is processing reality, and often there you've got the false framework that is at the root of stoicism and much religion, that of thinking that there is some other or higher reality that is more important than this one.

Well, the title is probably inappropriate because I used the word "bad" as if such things were somehow supernaturally evil. But I was referring more to useless habits or emotions that harm a person. How can we practically get rid of them? For example, we know that reaching for unhealthy foods is harmful in the long run. How can we plan to change such habits? What are some effective strategies? That intrigued me.

As for the rest, I agree. You can't reject an emotion without considering whether it's useful or not. But I wouldn't necessarily agree that all other philosophical schools completely rejected emotions. The Stoics, for example, completely rejected anger and fear, but often used strictly technical definitions of these emotions. For example, they criticized fear, but considered caution to be *eupatheiai*. Therefore, emotions "in accordance with reason" were also recognized. Another example is Aristotle, who refers to the doctrine of the mean. He essentially viewed all emotions as beneficial when integrated with reason.