

How can writing a will be justified in Epicureanism?

Post by "Cassius" of February 5, 2026 at 7:50 AM

I agree with your concern Wbernys. I strongly object to Cicero's analysis and my objection applies to Warren too. Getting rid of the fear of our own state in "being dead" is the issue I think Epicurus is addressing. There are many other aspects of issues that arise from the fact that we die that are entirely appropriate to think about and plan for. Clearly as you say thinking about things that will happen in the future can bring us pleasure or pain, and therefore steps should be taken to manage the future to the extent that we can. That's just common sense.

What you're citing here is probably a reason I have found in the past that Warren is not at all my favorite writer on Epicurus. He certainly can bring together good citations and I don't mean to be overly critical. But I've found that there are writers I almost always find to be insightful, such as David Sedley, and then here are others who aren't. And the full spectrum from good to bad (in my view) can be found in the British writers on Epicurus.

So this analysis by Warren I would just reject. Of course Epicurus says we can derive pleasure now from thinking about the future, and of course it's reasonable to realize that something bad may happen in the future and therefore plan to avert it if possible.

[Quote from wbernys](#)

In particular Warren objects to the notion that we can derive pleasure from thinking that our loved ones will be okay after we die since this would arguably also admit that we can anticipate pain about things after we die which Epicurus seems to call groundless saying in letter to Menoeceus saying "For something that causes no trouble when present causes only a groundless pain when merely expected."

The idea that you would knowingly fail to take an action, and as a result you would know that things you know to be undesirable will happen to someone close to you, *just because you yourself will not be there to see it*, strikes me as the height of irresponsibility and the mark of a truly small person. I see nothing in Epicurus that would endorse such thinking, and I have to wonder what is going on with Warren that he would even entertain such an idea.