

# Updated FAQ Entry: Why Should I Care About Epicurean Physics When So Much Science Has Changed In The Last 2000 Years?

Post by “Peter Konstans” of June 18, 2026 at 5:54 AM

[Quote from Don](#)

[Quote from Peter Konstans](#)

No philosophy, no advice, no magic formula made up of a string of words can bring down the iron walls of the environment and the brain. *Someone's environment is what it is and someone's brain is what it is. This fixes human behavior in full.*

*Now, the absence of moral agency doesn't mean humans can't influence other humans.* This is trivially easy to do by means of manipulating the circuits of human neurobiology that govern pleasure and pain. This technique is morally neutral and people use it as they please both to benefit others and to do harm.

I'm honestly trying to understand how both these can be true.

How can our behavior be determined fully by brain physics and environment BUT we can still influence other humans. If all is determined by physics, doesn't that mean even the influencers are not responsible for their "influence" but merely acting out their predetermined behaviors which those influenced are just the next step in the chain of determinism?

These ideas have also been expounded by Sipolsky and others, but I'm not entirely convinced by their arguments. I'll try to dig up some alternative perspectives at some point.

The sense that this is a contradiction is an illusion. To resolve the contradiction we have to do two things.

First, we have to explore what motivates people to try to influence other people in general. The answer is: to extract a desired reaction from them. In the case of influencers the desired reaction is likes, views, subscriptions etc. Why are those reactions desired? Because those reactions bring them money. And why do people want money? For the same reason they want energy. Money is effectively a form of energy as it can be converted to actual material goods and services. And why do people seek energy? Well, they have evolved to aggressively seek it.

Why did they evolve to seek it? Because natural selection in humans favored strongly acquisitive behavior. Why is natural selection the way life works? Eventually the answers will lead us to see reality for what it is: arrangements of quantum fields, everything else being an illusion that reflects our cognitive limitations as human beings.

Next, we have to explore what makes influencing the behavior of people possible. Obviously, this is possible. If it wasn't possible people wouldn't be motivated to try it so often, so intensely and so instinctively. Criticism is an extremely stubborn human behavior aimed at influencing the behavior of others through inducing feelings of shame. Although criticism doesn't actually work in changing behavior (except in children because their brains haven't fully developed yet) most people can't help themselves from constantly engaging in criticism over and over again over the same issues. Natural selection has selected for the constant drive to influence others and we stubbornly apply that instinct even when the evidence shows it doesn't work. Hell, we even apply it to our gadgets and machines when we curse and hit them for not cooperating with us.

Influencing people only works reliably when we convince them we have access to something useful for biological fitness that they lack. The more useful and delectable that something is thought to be, the greater the influence. Influencers sell magic recipes for prosperity and likeability (what used to be called charms). And since most people have unrealistic notions of prosperity and life satisfaction they will always come back for more magic formulas. That's essentially the business plan of influencers. It works because people have evolved to share information that enhances fitness . In the modern environment most of that information is bullshit.

Since a significant chunk of society's economic output comes from selling frivolous, useless or harmful products there's less money for the serious things, like science and the production of non-frivolous products, skills and services. Although many people know something about this state of affairs, magical thinking in the form of the sacred word 'freedom' prevents them from doing anything to stop it. Talk has been tried and it doesn't work.