

Welcome Max Duboff

Post by "Max DuBoff" of July 5, 2026 at 3:27 PM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

Here are several specific questions which as I see it call for addressing in order to see the implications of what Max is advocating:

1. Where is the textual basis for "some goods don't contribute to blessedness"? Is there a passage where Epicurus says a specific pleasure fails to count toward the blessed life merely because it is gradable/additive?
2. As Don has asked, why does the Letter to Menoeceus 128 name "health of the body AND tranquility of the mind" jointly as the goal, if tranquility alone confers blessedness?
3. Does the "additive, therefore excluded from blessedness" rule apply to friendship? [PD27](#) says friendship is the greatest of "all the things which wisdom acquires to produce **the blessedness of the complete life.**" Friendship is not katastematic — more friends, deeper friendship, would seem "additive" by Max's own logic. So: does friendship confer blessedness (per [PD27](#)) or not (per Max's exclusion rule)? If friendship only confers blessedness instrumentally, by producing tranquility, why does [PD27](#) say "produces the blessedness," not "protects tranquility"?
4. Would a tranquil person with no friends, no joys, no positive pleasures — just an undisturbed, empty mind — count as having achieved the blessed life in full?
5. What would Max tell someone to do differently if someone were to accept Max's contention and prioritize tranquility over pleasure? In a concrete choice between two options, would "refer each of your actions to the goal of nature" (which Max alleges to be tranquility) ever recommend something different from "weigh total pleasure against total pain under a simple and straightforward ordinary calculation"?

Thanks, Cassius! Great questions:

1) KD 20, where the flesh's understanding of pleasure is deemed incorrect for a good life. Also Men. 128 is good evidence--after describing what must be katastematic pleasure, he says "the animal is not in a position to go after some need nor to seek something else to complete the good of the body and the soul." Plus I think this is clear from KD 3.

2) This was a misunderstanding which I addressed elsewhere--ataraxia and aponia go together, Epicurus thinks. But the evidence on this is conflicted, because DL 10.136 says mental pleasures are better than bodily ones, and KD 18 seems to indicate that bodily katastematic

pleasure is necessary but not sufficient for mental katastematic pleasure. (And Non Posse 1089d, which probably quotes Epicurus's On the Goal, seems similar to KD 18 but is pretty unclear.)

3) Friendship contributes to blessedness, but not simply through pleasant experiences (just addressed that in last reply).

4) As I understand Epicurus: Yes in theory, but this could never actually happen. (Purinton addresses this question interestingly in his 1993 paper, as you probably know. Not saying I agree with him, but he raises and answers the question most clearly in the literature.)

5) I don't understand how someone could "weigh total pleasure against total pain under a simple and straightforward ordinary calculation"--because what weight would we assign to katastematic pleasure in relation to kinetic pleasure? It has no numerical value. (Now, you might disagree if you go for a G&T/[Nikolsky](#) position; but even if you agree with them, it's not clear how to decide between pleasures that are both kinetic and katastematic and those that are just kinetic; so we still need to prioritize katastematic.)