

The Difference Between Happiness and Pleasure

Post by "Cassius" of January 13, 2018 at 6:05 PM

I want to hear from others too but I think what you wrote jives very well with what I understand of Epicurus. We have this model on happiness from [Epicurus' final day / letter to Idomeneus](#):

"On this blissful day, [I think I see this translated happy regularly, but would have to find cites] which is also the last of my life, I write this to you. My continual sufferings from strangury and dysentery are so great that nothing could increase them; but I set above them all the gladness of mind at the memory of our past conversations. But I would have you, as becomes your lifelong attitude to me and to philosophy, watch over the children of Metrodorus."

So Epicurus could say even while in great bodily pain that he was blissful (happy), because his mental pleasure outweighed his bodily pleasure. That is exactly what you are saying, as I read it.

As to this sentence: "I generally take happiness to be a state of absence of mental disturbance and the presence of contentment or pleasure" I probably would not say that "absence of mental disturbance is required." As I see it every moment of life is a sliding scale of some combination of pleasurable things and painful things, and it's never really possible to totally eliminated the "painful" things, if you consider everything that requires exertion to be "painful." What you're describing as absence of pain and absence of disturbance while enjoying nothing but pleasure is the definition of the goal of living, but that's not the same as saying that that goal is reachable for everyone, or reachable at every moment. What you can say is that pleasure is alone what makes life worth living, and as long as you have some pleasure, especially combined with the prospect of more pleasure in the future, then life is worth living.

I want to hear others too.