

# Retirement (Financial Independence, Early Retirement, etc.)

Post by “Mathitis Kipouros” of September 4, 2020 at 10:15 PM

I came upon this text, titled as "philosophy", that describes the thinking behind a brand of the Early Retirement segment of the internet; it is called Extreme Early Retirement (ERE):

"ERE uses a web approach to lifestyle design in order to integrate [personal finance](#) and [lifestyle](#) in an efficient manner for [individuals](#). If a lifestyle is seen as a collection of choices (where to live, how to work, how to get to work, what to eat, ...), the focus of ERE is on the connection between the choices rather than on the choices themselves. ERE is therefore not a collection of specific tips, tricks, or choices but a way of viewing the structure of the choices and how they fit together in the most optimal way. The purpose of ERE is to design a structure (a set of connections) that minimizes waste and maximizes the synergy between specific choices to increase [efficiency](#) and opportunity.

The unifying principle of ERE is a [systems thinking](#) approach to lifestyle design referred to as a **Web of Goals**, where negative side-effects are eliminated as far as possible and goals are chosen to have mutually reinforcing positive side effects. If a goal is seen as a primary objective, side-effects may be seen as secondary objectives. However, when secondary objectives are mutually reinforced they may be more easily achieved and even turn into primary objectives (a change of strategy) should the original primary objective fail or simply fail to inspire.

The Web of Goals can be seen as an evolving life-story that automatically minimizes waste (any kind of negative side-effect) and allows for the maximum possible number of opportunities in a rich world, or maximum resilience in a poor world. Over time this can lead to a complex arrangement of highly efficient choices that produce a given standard-of-living for much less than the normal cost or a higher standard-of-living at the same cost.

Compared to [consumerism](#), where choices are ordered one-dimensionally on a price scale and prioritized according to affordability sacrificing one good for another, ERE is a brain-intensive replacement for consumerism with an [S-shaped learning curve](#). ERE adds additional means of acquiring or building goods without having to purchase them, which increases [flexibility](#) and [resilience](#).

One analogy is comparing [monocropping](#) agriculture with [permaculture](#). Monocropping aims to increase the yield of a single crop by increasing the inputs of fertilizer and pesticides. In permaculture, higher yields are achieved through the synergy of many different kinds of inputs. Comparing standard-of-living between ERE and consumerism based on cost-of-living would be similar to comparing the yields of monocropping and permaculture based on the amount of

fertilizer and pesticide used.

High yields in ERE are achieved by integrating additional inputs from many different fields resulting in greater personal [competence](#). To increase efficiency ERE frequently borrows techniques from simple living, minimalism, frugality, [DIY](#) ethics, [survivalism](#), [car-free living](#), and others."

It seems to me there is an element of Epicurean Philosophy subtly woven in this "philosophy", although I'm still not able to pin-point it. I thought it could be illustrative to talk about it, and hear what your points of view are towards this topic of "early retirement". From what I gather so far, it is sort of what Epicurus did, finding a way to fund his self-sufficiency in order to be more independent to develop his philosophy and "work" on something he evidently enjoyed. It all just seems rather far-fetched nowadays, but I guess for some people it is possible.

([https://wiki.earlyretirementextreme.com/wiki/What\\_is\\_ERE%3F#Philosophy](https://wiki.earlyretirementextreme.com/wiki/What_is_ERE%3F#Philosophy))