

Retirement (Financial Independence, Early Retirement, etc.)

Post by "Don" of September 5, 2020 at 7:50 PM

Oh, I have to disagree with [Cassius](#) on this one. A desire is not the same as a feeling. I'm coming to think that "reaction" is a better English word to use in the context of Epicurean philosophy than feeling. How do we react to something: With pleasure or pain, positively or negatively?

I keep coming back to the original Greek word *pathē* "what is done or what happens to a person" when considering the Canon.

The Greek word used by Epicurus for desire is [επιθυμία](#) *epithumia* "a desire, yearning, longing." This is obviously related to the [θυμός](#) *thumos*, the part of the soul, "heart," mind that is the seat of emotions and desires. To have an *epithumia* is to literally "set your heart/mind (*thumos*) upon something." Homer talks about the [thumos as their emotions, desires, internal strength](#). Your desire - your *epithumia* - is based in your emotions; your reaction - your *pathē* - is more your response to something. Your desire elicits a reaction.

That being said, one's reaction *pathē* is a pre-rational response to a stimulus.

What worries me is reacting only upon one's "gut feeling" which is what I sometimes feel we're talking about. What does it mean to act upon a reaction of pleasure or pain? To me, Epicurus seems to allow for rational understanding of and processing of our canonical faculties. Being prudent is using our rational faculties. What is the proper use of reason and what is over-using or misusing our reason?

To bring this back to the thread at hand: If we desire to retire early - if we have an *epithumia* geared toward early retirement - this obviously elicits a pleasurable response in us. Acting upon that pleasurable response would lead us to prudently plan - i.e., use our reason, our rational faculty - to bring that *epithumia* to fruition.