

**Mike Anyayahan's
Epicureanmindset.blogspot.com**

Blog:

Post by “Cassius” of February 14, 2020 at 9:23 AM

Whenever we can it is good for us to promote the work for forum participants in spreading the word about Epicurus. I have neglected to link to Mike's blog, but I see he has a new post, and we ought to keep track of and comment on his posts as part of this forum too.

Here's his latest: <https://epicureanmindset.blogspot.com/2020/02/here-i...get-rid-of.html>

Post by “Mike Anyayahan” of February 15, 2020 at 3:27 PM

Thanks for sharing my blog here Cassius. Feel free to comment guys. 😊

Post by “Cassius” of February 15, 2020 at 3:42 PM

I just read the article I linked and I completely agree with it -- but spurred by recent other conversations here (discussing consumerism), I would add more:

Major Point One is -- You have focused on several of the major causes of anxiety - improper priorities for fame, money, and power.

Depending on the audience, those are indeed common issues that need to be dealt with.

But in addition to those, Epicurus placed fear of false religion, and fear of death, even higher on the scale of things needing to be dealt with, so it's good not to forget those, and to keep those in context.

Also, you have said -

"Anxiety destroys you and the people around you. It destroys your present thereby destroying your future as well. It does this by forcing you to sacrifice what exists to pursue something that does not exist."

Yes that is absolutely true true -- misplaced priorities result in wasted time.

I would add that the real problem with anxiety is that it is PAINFUL, and that time spent on being anxious rarely ends up reducing future pain, or leading to future pleasure. It is as you say DESTRUCTIVE because it results in more pain and reduced pleasure.

Ultimately that result -- more pain, less pleasure, is "why you need to get rid of anxiety"

Major point two is - You have focused on things that we have some fairly direct control over, and can fairly easily deal with, just by a change in attitude. But there are many things in life that JUSTIFIABLY create anxiety - fear of getting mugged or murdered on the street, fear of disease or accident or simply fear of wasting your life.

Those things require affirmative work on your part (if they are preventable or reducible at all) to rearrange potentially many aspects of your life that go far beyond your attitude. They may require changing the location where you live, your occupation, the things you eat, the people you associate with -- all sorts of things that are not so easy as a simple change in attitude.

There's nothing at all wrong with your article but recent discussions reinforce in my mind that what we're talking about here is a hierarchical process where it is very easy to get focuses on one particular rung on a "ladder," (or use whatever "path" analogy sounds good) while at the same time forgetting that we are on a ladder and that the ladder leads somewhere.

Not only is it easy to forget that we're on a ladder and that the ladder needs to lead somewhere, the real problem is that tremendous numbers of people have never even been introduced, much less understand, what the true goal of life is, and that this life is our only chance to do whatever it is we want to do.

Post by "Cassius" of February 15, 2020 at 3:49 PM

I was going to put this in a separate thread but I think I will put it here. Some of you have probably seen this exchange on facebook. I really like the guy asking the question so I will just put the exchange here without names because I don't want this to seem to be a hit on him personally. LOTS of people do this -- even people writing here on this forum with the best of intentions, because they just refuse or can't grasp the issue of how contextual Epicurean philosophy is. So we have a huge task of getting this issue front and center and dealing with it. Here's the exchange:

Q. Epicurus argues that egoism will align with virtue, but isnt there possible scenarios where choosing pleasure will go against virtue?

Cassius:

Of course there will be conflict to anyone who holds that 'virtue' is objective or absolute, but to Epicurus, virtue has no meaning or use other than being productive of pleasure, so in Epicurean terms such a conflict will not occur. This is discussed at length in Cicero's On Ends by Torquatus. As to "egoism" that has no relation to Epicurean philosophy either because the goal is pleasure, not "egoism."

Q. what if my pleasure goes against doing the right thing?

Cassius: What is "the right thing"? There IS no "right thing"! You'll conclude that Epicurus is wrong in the end because you're accepting the premises of those who are against him and suggest that god or Plato can tell you "the right thing." Which is fine - everyone can accept or reject what they like, but at least be sure you understand the issue, and the questions you are asking indicate that you do not understand Epicurus on a very basic level -- which is true of a *lot* of people - because they refuse to give up the idea that their own perception of "virtue" is "the correct one."

The reason I post this is that - among the people likely to read our Epicurean posts on the internet - we can probably count the number of people for whom this lesson has sunk in on the thumbs of one foot. This is a VERY difficult point for people to understand - they have been indoctrinated all their lives to believe that there is a "right" and a "wrong" and that their own views of "virtue" align with those abstractions.

There is no way that people will truly understand epicurean philosophy as long as they struggle with that point.

The relationship of this point to the article is that it is VERY easy for people to skip over this essential fundamental and presume that all they need to do is "take a pill" for anxiety and they need make no further adjustments. In that respect "giving up the pursuit of power, fame, and money" is just another PILL -- adopting that strategy without understanding the wider framework of WHY and HOW you should adjust your life ends up being almost worthless, because you'll just careen like a bumper car into another error.

Post by “Mike Anyayahan” of February 15, 2020 at 7:59 PM

Thanks Cassius for the input. I'll create a separate article on fears or worries being the result of religious beliefs, notion of death, and other uncertainties of life.

About the right and wrong thing, It's clear among us that virtues are not the end but only useful to achieve pleasure. I am ready to answer such questions depending on the context.

Your observations will help me make my succeeding blog posts more compelling especially on the above issues you mentioned. 😊

Post by “Cassius” of February 16, 2020 at 3:26 AM

Mike you're presumably reading my exchanges with Hiram in regard to Metrodorus and Philodemus on economics, which is covering some of these same issues. I do hope you will continue to write more and think "outside the box" of the kind of "make the best of a bad situation" approach that seems to be characteristic of Epicurean writers for at least the last fifty years.

Yes, "make the best of a bad situation" makes good sense in a way, but if it turns into a British-sounding "keep a stiff up lip" where you end up working to TOLERATE pain rather than to change the circumstances and rid yourself of it, then it becomes just another brick in the wall, and part of the problem rather than part of the solution.

Post by “Mike Anyayahan” of February 16, 2020 at 10:22 AM

Yes Cassius. I was reading your exchanges with Hiram on Epicurean economics.

With regards to the "Make the best out of a bad situation," I still hold on to the elimination of pain instead of the endurance of pain because to endure pain is useless if there is nothing pleasant to look forward to.

Post by “Cassius” of February 22, 2020 at 10:44 AM

New post from Mike here: **"How To Remove Your Fears And Worries"** - <https://epicureanmindset.blogspot.com/2020/02/how-to...DvNHRgrRuXLEKZY>

My comments:

Quote

We can't get rid of risk. What we need is to manage it in order to reduce the eventual pain and to increase the greatest possible pleasure. This reality of infinite uncertainty should not trouble us because it is what nature really is.

Very well stated and a foundational point - relates also to recent discussions with [Godfrey](#) about the Stenger book and alternate viewpoints on "origin" of the universe.

Quote

Instead, we must prepare our mind for future surprises so we can better construct an alternative response that can immediately address every potential problem. In other words, expect the worst and execute your best response.

Ha - that reminds me of "expect the worst and you'll never be disappointed" which is probably a little off because both "pessimism" and "optimism" are probably inferior to being as "realistic" as possible.

Quote

This means that doing what is good is synonymous to living in fear either in the fear of god or in the fear of invented justice.

I wonder if some people might lose track of the chain of thought and misunderstand that sentence, since the peer-pressure to "do what is good" is so strong and taken for granted. I think you are saying something like: "That means that if you follow conventional thinking "doing what is good" would be synonymous with living in fear, either in fear of god or in fear of unfounded views of "justice."

Quote

The root of all such fears is the fear of death. We humans have been taught to become afraid of death so that our avoidance of it will lead us to the obedience to an abstract codes of conduct.

This is another good point that might benefit from clarification. Something like: "The root of many such false fears is fear of death, and of what will happen to us when we die. We as humans have been taught to fear death, and so our avoidance of death leads us to accept and

obey unfounded and false codes of conduct that are ultimately harmful to our ability to live happily."

Quote

Our natural courage has been removed from us and is objectified into an abstract concept such as virtue.

So much good stuff here, I just have to restate for emphasis: "Our natural vigor and motivation to embrace the deepest and most pleasurable feelings of life have been purged, and removed from us, to be replaced with sterile and lifeless obedience to abstractions such as "virtue," which are meaningless when detached from a proper understanding of the goals of life provided by nature."

Quote

The problem is when we fear something that we can hardly sense. This is why it is more difficult to measure the risk of an abstract threat than of a real threat. Dying is real, but death is abstract. Death is nothing to fear. In it, there is no feeling of pain since our sense organs will disintegrate into atoms along with our sensation when we die.

I think there is a subtle point here that we here at Epicureanfriends need to discuss further to put a finer point on the contrast we are making between "real" and "abstract." There is "real" in the sense of something that can be felt with the five senses, but it is probably a little off to say that everything that is abstract is "unreal." Abstractions can bring us great pain or pleasure. Is that pain or pleasure "unreal" because it comes from an abstraction rather than from the smell of a rose or the taste of an ice cream cone? This is something that [Elayne](#) has posted about too and I think we can improve on this distinction.

As for "death is nothing to fear" my view is that the most important meaning of this is "the *state of being dead*' is nothing to fear because you don't exist anymore." The process of dying, which a lot of people are going to lump into "death" can be extremely painful and is certainly something to "fear" or at least to work very hard to avoid 😊

Quote

Instead of living in fear, spend your life in pursuing pleasure. This is possible if you remove the troubles in your mind with the help of philosophy and the study of nature. By knowing the truth of reality, you will get rid of superstition or false knowledge that generates unnecessary fears.

Nothing wrong with that one but to emphasize: *Instead of learning to cope with the pain of unnecessary fears, spend your life eliminating those fears that are unnecessary and pursuing the pleasures of life. No one is given any guarantees of good health and long life, but you can maximize your chances of success by organizing your life using a sound philosophy based on the study of nature. Once you learn for yourself that the true reality is that this life is your one chance at happiness, and that nature has given you through the feeling of pleasure and pain your ultimate guide for how to pursue happiness, you can banish from your concerns the false claims of supernatural religion and nihilist philosophies that generate many of the most troublesome fears in modern life.*

Post by “Mike Anyayahan” of February 23, 2020 at 4:21 AM

Thanks Cassius for the commentaries. They are really helpful for me in refining the mentioned topics.

However on the part where you said that "expect the worst and you won't get disappointed," I don't think that's what I am trying to express. If you get back to the paragraph, I wrote: "In other words, expect the worst and execute your best response." This doesn't seem to express passive acceptance such as not getting disappointed by merely expecting the worst. My last sentence "execute your best response" is not a stoic response but a concrete response in addressing a problem which I also stated in the same paragraph "...so we can better construct an alternative response that can immediately address every potential problem..."

I also made it clear that the response is not a mental manipulation in the succeeding paragraph: "This implies that we don't have to manipulate our mind just for the purpose of not becoming troubled. We can't fake the reality. Fears and worries are real, "

Is addressing a potential problem possible without expecting it?

Post by “Cassius” of February 23, 2020 at 5:57 AM

OK I certainly agree with that point - clearly we must be aware of all reasonable possibilities that could occur and arrange our actions accordingly. So considering "expect the worst" to mean "consider all reasonable possibilities, including the worst," and "plan so as to minimize the worst possibilities" and similar, yes I definitely agree. Is that more in line with what you are thinking?

Post by “Mike Anyayahan” of February 23, 2020 at 7:11 AM

Yes Cassius. That's exactly what I am thinking. Your excellent articulation is really quite helpful for me. Maybe, I fell short in my choice of words. This is my problem whenever I try to reach the "not-so-stupid" lay readers as compared with the learned ones. 😞

Post by “Cassius” of February 23, 2020 at 8:32 AM

Mike your wording is really very good already. Also - I presume English may not be your first language? If not, that makes your command of the language particularly noteworthy.

Post by “Cassius” of February 23, 2020 at 8:55 AM

I added Epicurean Mindset blog to the list of links here and will see if I can also update my other lists of links: <http://www.epicureanfriends.com/wcf/index.php?links/>

Mike is there a link for an RSS feed? I don't immediately see one but will add it to Epicurustoday.com as well if you have one.

Post by “Mike Anyayahan” of February 23, 2020 at 10:03 AM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

Mike your wording is really very good already. Also - I presume English may not be your first language? If not, that makes your command of the language particularly noteworthy.

Thanks Cassius. Yes, English is not my first language.

[Quote from Cassius](#)

Mike is there a link for an RSS feed? I don't immediately see one but will add it to Epicurustoday.com as well if you have one.

Here is the link: <http://epicureanmindset.blogspot.com/feeds/posts/default?alt=rss>

Post by “Cassius” of February 23, 2020 at 10:36 AM

Done - added to Epicurustoday.com.

Post by “Mike Anyayahan” of February 23, 2020 at 11:16 AM

Thanks again Cassius!

Post by “Mike Anyayahan” of February 23, 2020 at 7:37 PM

By the way, the reason why I created this blog is to counter every self-help content that fools ordinary people with lies and empty advice. One of which is this Youtube video that tells people lies about Epicureans: <https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=1h-BNi9UNcM&feature=share>

Post by “Cassius” of February 24, 2020 at 5:39 AM

Good grief how ridiculous! Thank you for posting that!