

# I'm back.....:-)

**Post by "brett" of November 11, 2020 at 7:00 PM**

hi folks,

I hope this finds everyone happy and healthy.

I was quite active on this forum 2 years ago and then went dormant with no notice.

Essentially, I got sucked back into the Stoic mindset. I struggled with how to apply EP to my life (surely it can't be as simple as maximizing pleasure and minimizing pain) and fell back into the very readily available and easy to apply Stoic mental exercises.

I won't bore you with the details of my life, but Jules Evan's wrote a short biography of me in his book about Stoicism (and other life philosophies) and how it has helped people. So, falling back into Stoicism was easy to do.

What brought me back? Well, two things:

1. I got tired of working my ass off to minimize my desires and live as unemotional life as I could muster. I know this is a gross oversimplification of Stoicism, but it goes without saying that the Stoic's response to challenges in life is to retreat into the 'inner citadel' and fortify oneself from the external dangers. I can only deny my own emotions and desires for so long. Especially in this pandemic, it's easy to retreat into oneself and close off from the challenges around us.

2. I started a journey of physical fitness about a year and a half ago. Since then I've changed my eating, begun an exercise program, and have lost 60 lbs and feel the best I have in life. I've struggled with how a Stoic would justify physical fitness. All I could reasonably come up with is that one takes care of one's body out of a sense of duty. What I have been experiencing over the last year is an amazing boost in pleasure at the changes in my body. I've come to revel in the feeling of accomplishment and pleasure when I finish a workout and when I step on the scale and I'm a lb lighter.

I know none of this is a repudiation of Stoicism per se, but as I've been really thinking about this over the last few months I've realized that the perfect philosophy to explain how I want to live my life is Epicureanism. I hopped over a few days ago and read Elayne's essay and Garden Dweller's piece and it reminded me how much I really enjoyed EP. I think the separation and time to contemplate has allowed my mind to open to the truth that eP is not about living in a 'neutral state' between pain and pleasure: the goal truly is to maximize pleasure. That's a life worth living.

Anyway, I felt the urge to write about this. Not sure it all makes sense but here you go.....:-)

Brett

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## Post by “Cassius” of November 11, 2020 at 8:09 PM

### [Quote from bdws](#)

I was quite active on this forum 2 years ago and then went dormant with no notice.

THAT's what I remember! One day Brett was here with us, participating if I recall correctly even in some of our online chats (on Discord at the time), and then POOF one day he was gone! 😊

So first of all I am glad you are doing well and that you felt free to come back, cause certainly you're welcome!

### [Quote from bdws](#)

I was quite active on this forum 2 years ago and then went dormant with no notice.

Wow this sounds interesting -- I'll have to start googling to check the full significance of that but the full story sounds a lot like we've heard recently from @Susan Hill .....

What was it that attracted you back to Stoicism -- was it pretty much the call to meaningfulness, or "virtue," or what do you think. I continue to think one of our biggest challenges is communicating that "pleasure" is a lot more profound a choice than just the sex/drugs/rocknroll viewpoint, but it's a real challenge to come up with new and better ideas for explaining it so if you have any ideas....

Because in the end we really need to articulate that vision -- that it's not a matter of "Settling" for pleasure as the guide of life, as if it's a "guilty pleasure," but that the philosophy as a whole in the end just makes more sense, and in a way is in fact living "naturally" which ought to be synonymous with the best choice.

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## Post by “brett” of November 11, 2020 at 8:48 PM

Cassius

that's a very interesting question you pose:

"What was it that attracted you back to Stoicism -- was it pretty much the call to meaningfulness, or "virtue," or what do you think. I continue to think one of our biggest challenges is communicating that "pleasure" is a lot more profound a choice than just the sex/drugs/rocknroll viewpoint, but it's a real challenge to come up with new and better ideas for explaining it so if you have any ideas...."

I have given a lot of thought to this and I think a big part is this: Stoics have cornered the market on short, simple, effective slogans and practices that serve as a short term analgesic to pain.

for example: my boss gets upset at me and tells me he thinks I should find another job. A stoic would use the notion of the dichotomy of control to conclude: I have no control over my boss so I can't worry about it.

or another person might use the premeditatio malorum to fortify themselves against bad news.

the examples could be multiplied many times over. stoicism has myriad techniques and practices that are effective in this manner. Read massimo or holiday or Robertson and they lay them out simply and convincingly.

nevermind that the aim of these techniques is to reduce pain and maximize pleasure by their use, the stoics have convinced others that living by their principles is a holistic and 'correct' approach to the vicissitudes of life by striving for 'virtue' and living in accord with our fate.

in my opinion, if we could develop/articulate simple practices that folks could use in similar fashion when faced with challenges, EP would be seen as a competitor in the search for a life philosophy.

In short, Stoics have convinced folks that it's a practical philosophy for everyday life. EP needs a similar reputation.

hope this makes some sense.

brett

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**Post by “Susan Hill” of November 12, 2020 at 8:35 AM**

Hi Brett. I fell in with the Stoic crowd myself for some time. For me, ultimately, I found that any philosophy that focused on combating pain ended up leaving no room for pleasure. It is like if you are in a dark room, and you want to see, you get nowhere by pushing at the darkness - you just have to turn on the light. I am so used to trying to “figure out” suffering, that it is a big change being led by nature/pleasure instead, but good things are happening due to that change of orientation.

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**Post by “brett” of November 12, 2020 at 8:52 AM**

[Quote from Susan Hill](#)

Hi Brett. I fell in with the Stoic crowd myself for some time. For me, ultimately, I found that any philosophy that focused on combating pain ended up leaving no room for pleasure. It is like if you are in a dark room, and you want to see, you get nowhere by pushing at the darkness - you just have to turn on the light. I am so used to trying to “figure out” suffering, that it is a big change being led by nature/pleasure instead, but good things are happening due to that change of orientation.

that’s a great way to put it. Ultimately I decided that I couldn’t embrace any philosophy that focused on deadening my senses and urging me to treat the death of my lovely wife the same as a broken cup (my wife did not pass thankfully. It’s a reference to a passage in Epictetus)

thanks for your response.

brett

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**Post by “Susan Hill” of November 12, 2020 at 9:11 AM**

Wow, yes.. And then on top of the suffering, you get to feel like a failed philosopher for grieving... I think there is a reason why there were next to no “sages” in Stoicism.

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### **Post by “brett” of November 12, 2020 at 9:25 AM**

#### [Quote from Susan Hill](#)

Wow, yes.. And then on top of the suffering, you get to feel like a failed philosopher for grieving... I think there is a reason why there were next to no “sages” in Stoicism.

OH, well put and insightful.

What I do appreciate in stoicism, and this is part of what drew me back here after I realized it recently, is that there is wisdom in knowing what you can control. But not for the stated stoic reason. For a stoic you don't focus on what you can't control because it's your fate and you shouldn't struggle against it. For an epicurean, you don't struggle against what you truly can't change because it brings you pain and takes your focus off the things that can bring you pleasure.

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### **Post by “Susan Hill” of November 12, 2020 at 9:36 AM**

Yes, I like that angle much better. And it has helped me, too. I still have a soft spot for Seneca, (as he did for Epicureanism), because I love his style of writing, but I always thought Epictetus was such an old sourpuss. 😊

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### **Post by “Cassius” of November 12, 2020 at 10:40 AM**

#### [Quote from bdws](#)

I have given a lot of thought to this and I think a big part is this: Stoics have cornered the market on short, simple, effective slogans and practices that serve as a short term analgesic to pain.

This is a very interesting thread for me and comes at a good time.

(1) So the way you phrase that indicates to me that it wasn't the positive attraction of "virtue" that was the prime motivating factor, but the "analgesic" aspect that was the driving force.

(2) For the greater part of my study of Epicurean philosophy and its relationship to Stoicism I have been mostly concerned that I wanted to "get it right" and make sure I understood the issues and the choices. Not that by any means I have it all figured out now, but I am much more comfortable now that the Epicurean approach not only "feels right" but also "makes sense" for the right reasons. I think I now have a better handle on the limits of how far any philosophy can go, and where the lines exist where you just have to "make a decision and go with it."

I think most of us here (at least the regular posters) are in pretty much the same position. Most of us have a pretty good grip on what the most important issues are, and while there are definitely details that need to be improved, we have enough grasp of the big picture to be confident that we aren't likely to conclude next month or next year that somehow we've been horribly mistaken and that everything needs to be reevaluated from the ground up.

I am convinced now too that the personal interaction aspect is far more important than just writing essays and the like. Consciously or not that is probably the reason I've devoted most all my Epicurean time in the last years to this forum and other interaction rather than just to writing essays.

We have a lot more work to do to in the direction Brett is saying -- we have the general structure in place to expand our interaction with each other, but I am sure all of us need more "local" friendship and connections that the online mechanisms can help with but not solve completely. And to make progress in expanding our local friendship networks, we need more attention to those "short, simple, effective slogans and practices."

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## **Post by "brett" of November 12, 2020 at 1:01 PM**

hi Cassius,

1. Correct. i was never really attracted to the 'virtue' thing nor their belief in fate. As a long-time atheist, I have no interest in the supernatural. What attracted me was the analgesic

aspect. You won't remember but I actually asked you when I first joined if there were any practices, etc. like the stoic mental practices.

2. The more I've thought about my departure from EP two years ago the more I'm convinced it was because of this point I'm making.

For better or for worse, I'm a person who by my disposition is easily stressed out by anxiety about the future. Not clinically so....but it's easy for me to worry about things. The Stoic practices are SO effective at fortifying one against those worries. What I've discovered, unfortunately, is that while they are effective, they are only truly effective if you buy into the metaphysics. And I just don't and I can't pretend any longer that I do.

So, that leaves me with what I truly believe is the aim of life: maximizing pleasure and thus achieving happiness. It's so clear and simple to me now that I've seen through the Stoic facade.

Thanks for the conversation. I'd welcome more discussion about coming up with or articulating these practices and methods specific to EP.

Thanks,

Brett

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### Post by “brett” of November 12, 2020 at 1:02 PM

#### [Quote from Susan Hill](#)

Yes, I like that angle much better. And it has helped me, too. I still have a soft spot for Seneca, (as he did for Epicureanism), because I love his style of writing, but I always thought Epictetus was such an old sourpuss. 😊

TOO FUNNY! I was just thinking this AM how I still love Seneca. I also still appreciate some of Marcus's meditations for the human aspect it reveals.

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### Post by “Godfrey” of November 12, 2020 at 6:58 PM

This topic of practices and slogans seems to come up fairly regularly.... For some time now I've been compiling a list of "Epicurean pleasure slogans" to delineate the philosophy and have 50+ at this point. I haven't posted them as they'd need a LOT of work to really be legit, but maybe I'll clean up what I've got and post them sometime soon if that would be of some value.

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**Post by "brett" of November 12, 2020 at 7:13 PM**

[Quote from Godfrey](#)

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I would love to see this! I've been pondering this intensely since I posted it.

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**Post by "Godfrey" of November 12, 2020 at 7:33 PM**

I guess I need to get to work then; it might take a couple of days....

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**Post by "brett" of November 12, 2020 at 8:43 PM**

[Quote from Godfrey](#)

I guess I need to get to work then; it might take a couple of days....

please do!!

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## **Post by “Cassius” of November 12, 2020 at 8:58 PM**

### [Quote from Godfrey](#)

or some time now I've been compiling a list of "Epicurean pleasure slogans" to delineate the philosophy and have 50+ at this point.

WHAT!? You've been holding back on us! Yes I am looking forward to this too!

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## **Post by “Godfrey” of November 12, 2020 at 9:18 PM**

I mentioned it in passing a while back. It has lots of possibilities but also is a can of worms; I'll post it in a day or two and we'll see where it goes!

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## **Post by “Martin” of November 13, 2020 at 9:51 AM**

The practices do not need to be necessarily traceable to Epicurus or be logically derived from EP. If they work and are compatible, that is good enough. Not each of them will work for every Epicurean.

Here are some suggestions:

For me, occasional meditation for up to one hour guided by a Buddhist monk works fine, whether on radio, from CD or live. For some Epicureans, it might be counterproductive.

Occasional daydreaming as the simplest form of meditation is fine, too.

Running several kilometers at least twice a week boosts motivation to take action toward pleasure.

Doing something together with friends increases pleasure compared to only doing my own things.

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## **Post by “brett” of November 13, 2020 at 10:42 AM**

### [Quote from Martin](#)

The practices do not need to be necessarily traceable to Epicurus or be logically derived from EP. If they work and are compatible, that is good enough. Not each of them will work for every Epicurean.

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Display More

I completely agree that they don't need to tie to Epicurus. I like some of the ones you mentioned.

A couple thoughts:

1. One approach could be to personalize the tricks and tips and have each person write up a 140 synopsis of their technique and create a compendium of these.
2. Some of the most popular stoic techniques are EASILY framed as epicurean. for example, the dichotomy of control is a very helpful mental technique to minimize pain and clear space for some one to then pivot to a pleasurable experience. For example: If I recognize that I can't control the fact that my boss is mad at me, I can relax myself and pivot to finding a pleasurable activity to maximize my pleasure and hence happiness.

I really think this topic could help in outreach and general 'effectiveness' of EP for the daily lives of normal people. End of the day, all the 'smart' people in the world can believe something but unless it's effective for others and seen as relevant, it won't be adopted.

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**Post by “Cassius” of November 13, 2020 at 10:53 AM**

Brett and @Susan Hill

What do you think is the current state of the art in the Stoic world that is most effective in keeping people motivated?

I gather that they have live conferences, which we're just not ready for, but are there other pathways that you guys think is particularly effective?

I'm thinking in terms of what keeps people "plugged in"? I am thinking that regular contact with each other using a forum such as this is probably one of the most important things to do, but I wonder what other offerings you guys might think were particularly helpful to you.

Are they having regular Zoom/Skype meetings? Or just relying on Facebook/Telegram/Twitter or something else? Writing articles and books and the like is one thing but seems to me regular personal participation is something for which there is no substitute.

Any comments on what you found effective in Stoic World?

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### **Post by “Susan Hill” of November 13, 2020 at 12:44 PM**

#### [Quote from Cassius](#)

Any comments on what you found effective in Stoic World?

I'm afraid I'm not much help there, Cassius. The thing that kept me most motivated in Stoicism was its excellent literature: Seneca, Marcus Aurelius, Epictetus, and then some good modern writers. In comparison, Lucretius is a slow slog for me... I'm in a bind with my pleasure being found mainly in the theology side of things. I've found some excellent essays, but am running out of reading material, and seem to be the sole would-be "practitioner". Maybe Brett has some ideas.

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### **Post by “Cassius” of November 13, 2020 at 12:57 PM**

Susan so you were not in regular contact with other Stoics? Or were you using facebook or other online forums or following stoics on twitter, or podcasts, or some combination of the above?

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**Post by “Susan Hill” of November 13, 2020 at 1:06 PM**

I did the course I told you about, went to the convention and attended a MeetUp. Some interaction on Facebook. Toronto is too far for me to get there after work. I listened to podcasts and lectures, and bought a lot of books.

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**Post by “brett” of November 13, 2020 at 1:07 PM**

hi Cassius and Susan,

I'm very much like Susan. My interaction was through reading.

Many years ago I was heavily involved in newstoa.com but the leader there was not pleasant to deal with and I left. I've kept in touch over the last 10 years or so with a few stoic friends but my communication with them is very infrequent and surface level.

I do think that the key for EP is to have a lively and POSITIVE social presence that allows for friendships to form and practices and 'slogans' to help folks simply and effectively implement EP in their lives on a daily basis.

Thanks,

Brett

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**Post by “Cassius” of November 13, 2020 at 1:56 PM**

[Quote from Susan Hill](#)

Lucretius is a slow slog for me

There is no doubt about this Susan. It took me years and many separate tries to make it through the full poem. Had I not listened to the Charlton Griffin version on audible (the Rolfe Humphries translation) I would never have made it. There are parts that are outstanding and well suited for motivational work, but those parts are surrounded by loads of relatively dry

material from which they must be pulled and highlighted. Presumably that is why Lucretius himself started each of the six books with what might be considered to be an inspirational passage, before diving in to the details.

it's going to be up to us to devise ways to make best use of the good parts while reserving the majority for people who are really interested in the details.

#### [Quote from bdws](#)

I do think that the key for EP is to have a lively and POSITIVE social presence that allows for friendships to form and practices and 'slogans' to help folks simply and effectively implement EP in their lives on a daily basis.

I think this is definitely true. One of my favorite quotes from all aspects of the work of Thomas Jefferson, which I have combed over for Epicurean material, is his letter to Madison where he has the phrase "the earth belongs to the living." Word on a page or on a computer screen are worthless unless they are being used by living breathing people. The best book in the world is useless if it isn't read and discussed.

I don't think Epicurean philosophy can or should ever be organized too much on a "hierarchical" approach, but at the same time unless there is teamwork and cooperation it can never get anywhere against the hyper-organized opposition.

So networking is essential, and in a positive way as you say, but at the same time there have to be fairly clear boundaries so we know who "we" are.

We've had some recent back and forth on the subject of a "spiritual aspect" (to which you, Brett, will want to weigh in, hopefully after you've glanced at the "Reverence and Awe" thread 😊 ) and I think that gives us a good recent experience with figuring out where lines need to be drawn.

Personally, I have to draw my own line at a patient but firm understanding that the "absence of pain" material does not lead to asceticism and stoicism. I recognize that that is always going to be a subject that needs discussion, and I think that discussion is very valuable, but we have to recognize that there are those who for various reasons are simply not convertible over to a non-ascetic viewpoint, and at some point we have to limit that public debate so as to prevent demoralization of the whole project.

"Spirituality" has some of the same issues, but I see that as different because the term is nebulous, the texts are unclear, and there are many implications of the texts that do exist that require discussion to even see where the lines might be drawn. There is very little that is more central to Epicurean philosophy more so than the position that Nature has no Supernatural God over her, and that's a line that in my view can't even really be approached without losing "the essence" of what Epicurus was all about. But within that line there is wide opportunity for

further development that I also think is key to a vigorous Epicurean movement. I see that as part of the big mix of issues involved in clarifying what is really being meant by "pleasure" and also proper application of the precise meaning of the elimination of the supernatural. Eliminating the supernatural is sort of like "absence of pain" - what matters is what DOES exist, and simply stating that nothing supernatural exists doesn't tell us anything more about what does exist than "absence of pain" tells us about the pleasure that a particular person is experiencing when pain is eliminated.

So those are brief comments on balancing being clear about who "we" are against the desire to "keep things positive."

But back to the main thread, I think each of us has to think about the likelihood that "finding others who think like we do" is only the start of the answer, and the larger part of the answer comes in generating the day to day activity of life in which we work together with those who are like us to achieve projects that we find pleasurable and which expand our circles of like-minded friends.

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### **Post by "Susan Hill" of November 13, 2020 at 4:32 PM**

>>Had I not listened to the Charlton Griffin version on audible (the Rolfe Humphries translation)

I can see how it can help. I have his Plutarch's "Lives" but he is not quite the right voice for me. Your podcast is actually the best help. I am on episode 20. Maybe I will let myself skip ahead a little to take a break from the physics.

>>I do think that the key for EP is to have a lively and POSITIVE social presence that allows for friendships to form

I agree with this, Brett. I didn't find the Stoic groups very friendly, and I think this platform is much better for that, for some reason, aside from Epicureanism just being a friendly philosophy. 😊

>>The best book in the world is useless if it isn't read and discussed.

Yes, it definitely gets lonely.

As you can see, I haven't figured out how to use the "quote" feature properly... I can only get it to quote a whole posting. I can't put two quotes with my own writing in between. Could someone give me a hint?? ☐

## Post by “Cassius” of November 13, 2020 at 4:59 PM

Maybe you are on your telephone? When you copy any selection on the computer, you get a popup that let's you "quote" it, then you can "paste" the quote by clicking the quote icon at the bottom right.

Alternately you can do a regular copy paste and then in a new post hit the "quote" icon, and that inputs a quote bubble into which you can paste the text.

it's definitely harder on a phone than on the computer, however it ought to be workable.

### [Quote from Susan Hill](#)

Maybe I will let myself skip ahead a little to take a break from the physics.

I knew that would be an issue so in most cases I tried to steer the conversation more broadly, but only sometimes was I successful. However it's really hit and miss as to which ones had the best conversation because the topic itself isn't a good indication.

My goal is to go back and take these and reformat them and post on youtube, with a graphic of the text we are discussing, and hopefully when I do that I will do a much better job of indexing the content.\

But like so many other projects that's just a goal and I don't have a definite timeline.

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## Post by “Don” of November 13, 2020 at 5:59 PM

### [Quote from Susan Hill](#)

#### [Quote from Cassius](#)

Any comments on what you found effective in Stoic World?

I'm afraid I'm not much help there, Cassius. The thing that kept me most motivated in Stoicism was its excellent literature: Seneca, Marcus Aurelius, Epictetus, and then some good modern writers. In comparison, Lucretius is a slow slog for me... I'm in a bind with my pleasure being found mainly in the theology side of things. I've found some

excellent essays, but am running out of reading material, and seem to be the sole would-be “practitioner”. Maybe Brett has some ideas.

Oh, I would include myself in the class of "looking for an Epicurean practice." I find myself reciting the Tetracharmakos to myself to time hand washing, waiting in an elevator, etc. I also think mindfulness has a place in Epicureanism. What better way to practice paying attention to the present moment. I've been trying to compile an Epicurean Book of Days with 366 (to take into account leap years) sayings or excerpts with commentary. Not there yet... Or even close 😊 but a goal. Still working on the Menoikeus letter too!

As for the Stoics: marketing! They beat us to they punch!

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### **Post by “Don” of November 13, 2020 at 6:02 PM**

FYI here's my new background on my work computer 😊

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### **Post by “Joshua” of November 13, 2020 at 6:28 PM**

Just to show a bit of my 'absent-minded philosopher' side in a slightly relevant anecdote:

Once when I lived in Iowa I found a bat hanging from the crown-moulding in my apartment bedroom, in a ninety-year-old building. I grabbed a chair and a towel, and some leather gloves, and deftly wrapped the bat in the towel. When I conducted him outside wearing shorts and a t-shirt, I neglected to leave the door open, and it locked. With neither phone nor keys, I was faced with the prospect of walking 17 blocks on a cold night to my sister's house.

I grumbled a bit at the way of the world—until I decided to distract myself by reciting under my breath the Principle Doctrines. By the time my walk was over, I found that I had been charmed by philosophy into an altogether different frame of mind!

I ought to be more diligent in my reading—there aren't many that I could recite now. I do carry a page or two of Lucretius' Latin in my mind, and would love to memorize more. There is an inexpressible value in having these things 'to hand'.

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## Post by "Susan Hill" of November 14, 2020 at 6:10 AM

[Quote from Don](#)

[Quote from Susan Hill](#)

[Quote from Don](#)

Oh, I would include myself in the class of "looking for an Epicurean practice." I find myself reciting the Tetrapharmakos to myself to time hand washing, waiting in an elevator, etc. I also think mindfulness has a place in Epicureanism.

I apologize, Don. I didn't mean to suggest that I was the only one with a desire to have Epicurean practices. I was thinking of things like practicing piety, worship, meditating on the gods, receiving "images" of them, and trying to emulate them.

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## Post by "Susan Hill" of November 14, 2020 at 6:20 AM

>>Maybe you are on your telephone? When you copy any selection on the computer, you get a popup that let's you "quote" it, then you can "paste" the quote by clicking the quote icon at the bottom right.

Yes, I am almost always only able to work on my phone or iPad. It keeps changing my font size too. Is there a manual for the software somewhere? I might just be more limited on my phone.

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## Post by "Susan Hill" of November 14, 2020 at 6:29 AM

[Quote from Don](#)

FYI here's my new background on my work computer 😊

Formerly a framed picture of Chrysippus:



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**Post by “Cassius” of November 14, 2020 at 8:44 AM**

[Quote from Susan Hill](#)

. Is there a manual for the software somewhere? I might just be more limited on my phone.

Hmm that is a good question. The software company has a user forum at this location, but I will have to go looking for whether there is a basic "help" page: <https://community.wolflab.com/>

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### **Post by “Susan Hill” of November 14, 2020 at 8:49 AM**

That’s ok, [Cassius](#), I’ll do the digging. Thank you!

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### **Post by “Cassius” of November 14, 2020 at 12:25 PM**

Susan I will see what I can find myself, but over the years I've worked with this software I've been very impressed with the people behind the program, but not so impressed with the documentation. I think their theory is that everything should be made as self-explanatory as possible for users, so they don't seem to have ready-made answers to frequently asked questions. So I am sad to say we may not find much and we probably need to just help each other as we can.

Also I don't think the software is actually more limited than on the phone. I think what's going on especially with pasting is that the operating systems copy different attributes, and that varies from system to system. It's frequently a problem on any platform that if you copy text from another program it tries to paste in the HTML attributes, so you're left to try to strip that yourself. That's probably why each of the major font controls in the toolbar has a "Remove" feature at the bottom.

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### **Post by “Don” of November 14, 2020 at 12:33 PM**

[Quote from Susan Hill](#)

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I apologize, Don. I didn't mean to suggest that I was the only one with a desire to have Epicurean practices. I was thinking of things like practicing piety, worship, meditating on the gods, receiving "images" of them, and trying to emulate them.

Oh! No apologies necessary! I didn't want you to feel alone 😊 I continue to find your topics you mentioned there very interesting especially "meditating on the gods" and "trying to emulate them" and to tease out exactly what Epicurus, Philodemus, Lucretius, et al had to say in this area.

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### **Post by "Susan Hill" of November 14, 2020 at 5:20 PM**

[Quote from Cassius](#)

That's probably why each of the major font controls in the toolbar has a "Remove" feature at the bottom.

Yes, that menu option does not work on my new iPhone. And changing the text size will only work for a couple of sentences at a time. I can see it works a lot better on a laptop.

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### **Post by "Susan Hill" of November 14, 2020 at 5:27 PM**

[Quote from Don](#)

I continue to find your topics you mentioned there very interesting especially "meditating on the gods" and "trying to emulate them" and to tease out exactly what Epicurus, Philodemus, Lucretius, et al had to say in this area.

Well, alrighty then... I recently finished reading "The Significance of Worship and Prayer among the Epicureans" by

George Depue Hadzsits. (Was it you who recommended that to me?? If not, have you read it?) It definitely takes things a little farther in suggesting that the pious can achieve a certain familiarity with the divine... I will go through it again and select some edifying excerpts for the Divinity forum.

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### **Post by “Don” of November 14, 2020 at 10:33 PM**

#### [Quote from Susan Hill](#)

I recently finished reading "The Significance of Worship and Prayer among the Epicureans" by George Depue Hadzsits. (Was it you who recommended that to me?? If not, have you read it?) It definitely takes things a little farther in suggesting that the pious can achieve a certain familiarity with the divine... I will go through it again and select some edifying excerpts for the Divinity forum.

It wasn't me. I just finished reading the Hadzsits article. Very intriguing. He does seem to provide more concrete motivations for the ancient Epicureans to take part in the standard rituals and prayers of the time. I think I'll have to read it again to get all the information from it. I get the impression that the gods - Venus, Athena, etc - could literally embody individual qualities of the [Epicurean gods](#) and so be an object of prayer and worship. That would lead one to emulate and embody those qualities oneself on a deeper personal level. No benefit flowed from the gods, but that didn't preclude gaining benefit from the practice. Is that part of what you got? Or am I misunderstanding?

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### **Post by “Godfrey” of November 15, 2020 at 12:34 AM**

That was probably me... I posted on it here: [Thoughts on Reverence, Awe, and Epicurean Piety](#). I don't remember the details of the article although I do remember that it really got me thinking about the subject.

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### **Post by “Susan Hill” of November 15, 2020 at 7:17 AM**

### [Quote from Don](#)

I just finished reading the Hadzsits article. Very intriguing. He does seem to provide more concrete motivations for the ancient Epicureans to take part in the standard rituals and prayers of the time. I think I'll have to read it again to get all the information from it. I get the impression that the gods - Venus, Athena, etc - could literally embody individual qualities of the [Epicurean gods](#) and so be an object of prayer and worship. That would lead one to emulate and embody those qualities oneself on a deeper personal level. No benefit flowed from the gods, but that didn't preclude gaining benefit from the practice. Is that part of what you got? Or am I misunderstanding?

Ah ha! Now we're talking! 👍 Lemme gather my thoughts and I will get back to you! 😊

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### **Post by “Cassius” of November 15, 2020 at 7:27 AM**

Also Susan et al we need to find a good online source for material from Philodemus' "On Piety." I think the major reference is a work by Obbirk from 1996 which I have looked at but not studied closely. This brings us back to the continuing frustration that there ought to be free online access to at least some aspects of the Herculaneum material, even if individual researchers want/need to copyright and profit from their commentaries on it. I think in fact there are pages which do contain some of the raw material, and we've even discussed some of them here on the forum, but we haven't used them regularly enough to really get familiar with the material.

And IMHO that's particularly important with On Piety, since the material is challenging and I think I remember that what is left from Herculaneum is much more fragmentary than some of the other Philodemus material. This is one of the most delicate areas where we need to verify for ourselves exactly what the translator is working with and how much they are reconstructing, so we can more confidently assess how much stock to put into what they come up with.

As we go down this road in pursuing the divinity aspect of the philosophy I think we can really contribute to the state of understanding if we rigorously check the sources to make sure the commentator is being faithful to the rest of the texts in their word choices.

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### **Post by “Susan Hill” of November 15, 2020 at 8:12 AM**

### [Quote from Godfrey](#)

That was probably me... I posted on it here: Thoughts on Reverence, Awe, and Epicurean Piety. I don't remember the details of the article although I do remember that it really got me thinking about the subject.

Yes! Thank you, Godfrey. A really interesting article.

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### **Post by “brett” of November 15, 2020 at 8:35 AM**

Hi all

so I've been pondering this whole idea of slogans and techniques.

I was reading through the VS and PD last night before bed and it hit me: there are soooo many techniques hidden in these pithy statements.

a small example:

VS 68 “Nothing is sufficient for the man to whom the sufficient is too little”

a technique from this could be to take 5 minutes and list all the ways your life, as it is right now, is sufficient for your pleasure and happiness. Not for the sake of never desiring more pleasures but for the sake of recognizing and appreciating what you have now as sufficient. (If what you have or present state isn't sufficient then that's a whole different matter. We aren't into the stoic acceptance of whatever is...and all that entails. If what you have isn't sufficient Then you should be seeking out the things or experiences that result in sufficiency)

Your list might be:

- the blanket Covering me is warm and soft and the feel is lovely.
- my best friends are amazing and I love our zoom Calls
- this coffee I'm sipping is delicious and energizing

I'm short, it's a simple exercise to bring to life and implement the principle.

as I read through the PD and VS there are literally dozens and dozens of these that pop Out.

we could have a section on these and everyone could contribute.

thanks for listening. Regardless, I'm going to get started with a list of these for my own use.

brett

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### **Post by "Cassius" of November 15, 2020 at 8:57 AM**

Brett that's a great idea to devote a section to it - There are several options on how to implement that, including the "Lexicon" page. I haven't really figured out how to use it but I think it works like a shared wiki.

I set this page up here: [Epicurean Techniques for Better Living](#)

And gave write access to those of us participating in this thread - if I missed anyone please let me know.

I think at that location we can basically develop a numbered list perhaps? I would appreciate anyone's input on this - this is an example of where I can help provide the infrastructure but I am sorely lacking in creativity and imagination to get things going sometimes!

This is the "home page" of the Lexicon: <http://www.epicureanfriends.com/wcf/lexicon/>

This is the page announcing the setup and probably a good place to discuss how to use it:

[Addition of the "Lexicon" Feature of the Forum](#)

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### **Post by "brett" of November 15, 2020 at 9:03 AM**

Excellent!!!!

For my personal use I was considering organizing them by PD or VS number. It seemed a logical way to keep track.

but I'm open to other ideas.

to get started I'll continue the route I was planning and will post as I have them started. I'll be posting rough drafts and will absolutely welcome critique etc.

brett

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## Post by "Susan Hill" of November 15, 2020 at 9:06 AM

### [Quote from Cassius](#)

Also Susan et al we need to find a good online source for material from Philodemus' "On Piety." I think the major reference is a work by Obbirk from 1996 which I have looked at but not studied closely

Crikey, it's \$300! Maybe I need to start a GoFundMe campaign! 700 pages too... Gosh, I'd love to see it.

I stopped entering source texts into the forum because I didn't know how to proceed with translations being so contested. Also, we now have the "Lexicon" section which makes replicating the same material in "Divinity" redundant. The Lexicon structure is probably better.

I guess what would be ideal is to have each original Latin or Greek passage submitted along with a few translations, and then a breakdown like Don does, and then a big discussion, but that essentially means redoing all Epicurean scholarship from scratch, doesn't it...?. That's a pretty tall order.

I'm afraid at my age, to some degree, it is more efficient to try something out and see if it works. I think if I had told myself that I needed to translate the whole Bible for myself before I could try Christianity, I would never have moved on from Christianity, you see? The proof is in the pudding! Is there a point at which we can say "Okay, I think get the gist of this, let's give it

a whirl!" 😊 I don't think I have seen any posts here saying "So, I tried such and such, and this is what happened!" I'm not sure what to make of that.

As for the Hadzsits article, I don't think you will have a problem with his translations, because he doesn't translate anything. All sources are given in Latin and Greek.

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## Post by “Cassius” of November 15, 2020 at 2:07 PM

### [Quote from Susan Hill](#)

As for the Hadzsits article, I don't think you will have a problem with his translations, because he doesn't translate anything. All sources are given in Latin and Greek.

Oh I HATE articles like that! 😊 I suppose academics have a right to write for other academics 😊

### [Quote from Susan Hill](#)

The Lexicon structure is probably better.

I am happy to give full access to any regular participant here who is interested in trying to work with the lexicon or other features. If someone tries to do something and doesn't seem to have access rights just let me know. I think it best that people go ahead on the "easier to get forgiveness than permission" theory. If someone posts something that we need to reorganize then we can do that afterwards - once material is typed in the hard part is done.

### [Quote from Susan Hill](#)

Is there a point at which we can say "Okay, I think get the gist of this, let's give it a whirl!"

Yes I think we are definitely at that point and we need to talk about what "giving it a whirl" means. I keep thinking in terms of online interaction via zoom or skype or whatever, leading eventually to a polished presentation that we can maybe commit to video and then distribute for the use of others. That's something we can talk further about here in these threads and also on the 20th.

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## Post by “Susan Hill” of November 15, 2020 at 3:59 PM

### [Quote from Cassius](#)

Oh I HATE articles like that! 😊 I suppose academics have a right to write for other academics 😊

It's an old article. I guess at one time all university students would have studied Latin and Greek. (Lucky buggers). 😊

### [Quote from Cassius](#)

Yes I think we are definitely at that point and we need to talk about what "giving it a whirl" means. I keep thinking in terms of online interaction via zoom or skype or whatever, leading eventually to a polished presentation that we can maybe commit to video

Oh look at me doing multiple quotes on my laptop... Lol, So much easier...

I was really just talking about daily personal application. E.g. Am I going to start praying to Zeus for wisdom and tranquility...? Or should I study Philodemus for a few more weeks first? Naw, I'll give it a whirl and see what happens! 😊

(But, I'll read Philodemus too, 'cause it's fun...)