

In Defense of Desire and How to Enjoy It

Post by “Kalosyni” of December 15, 2021 at 2:51 PM

In practice of PD3 and PD8...A blog post for how to dance with excessive sugar cravings...excerpt:

Quote

I have tried at times to completely eliminate sugar from my diet. This may work for some people, but doesn't work for me. (Maybe my brain chemistry is permanently wired to enjoy sugar - life is just not very fun without it). It is important to realize that there is a bodily limit to the enjoyment of sugar that can be found, but just as with alcohol each person must discover this limit for themselves. This limit is what I call the "sugar yuck factor", when sugar no longer feels pleasureable. This requires one to be especially sensitive to the feelings which arise within the body while eating more sugary treats than one "should". (This excessive feeling can be felt when eating too much homemade cookie icing). This is a great way to "reset" the sugar cravings, but it must also be combined with choosing to buy healthier foods and avoiding bringing home large quantities of sugary treats. One focuses the mind on learning to desire foods which are healthy and good for the body, and which increase feelings of vigor and vitality. I still choose to eat sweet treats on occasion, but I do so in moderation. Also keeping in mind, if one eats a treat every day it isn't as pleasureable as spacing out the treats over time. It's up to every individual to determine their own sugar limit, and to do so with respect for maintaining the pleasureable feeling of health of the body.

<https://epicureanphilosophyblog.blogspot.com/2021/12/in-def...joy-it.html?m=1>

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[In Defense of Desire and How to Enjoy It](#)

First I should say a bit about what I came out of before studying Epicureanism. For ten years I studied Buddhism and I attended a Zen Budd...

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Post by “smoothiekiwi” of January 7, 2022 at 4:11 AM

Good points, and thanks for sharing!

I think that I've two additions to make:

- In regards to your alcohol example, I think that alcohol could most certainly be qualified as "non-natural" (as far as I know, alcohol simply neutralizes certain parts of the brain for a while- and that's most certainly not natural!), and non-necessary (for obvious reasons). I think that Epicurus would thus recommend abstaining from it, especially in light of recent scientific discoveries.
- About the sugar part I partially agree; I'm also one of the people who struggle with sugar (and that's one of the reasons why I'm so skeptical towards alcohol- I know that I'm a very addictive person). For me personally, it has helped to realize that only very small amounts of chocolate are enough to satisfy my cravings. Basically, a bite is more than enough in order to raise my blood sugar. And if I purchase good chocolate, it's a pleasure to eat it! But it hasn't helped me to simply eat so much sugar that I'm basically numb to the craving, because I've discovered that if you want to eat lots of cheap sugar, milk is great for neutralizing the "sweetness" feeling in the mouth. Thus, it hasn't really helped to simply eat enough sugar, because then I eat way too much.
- Also, that's where the moderation part of Epicurus jumps in: sugar in moderation is a great thing, and if you try to escape from it, you'll have to reject many pleasurable meals- but too much sugar will produce pain in a much bigger amount. Principal doctrine 8, I guess 😊

Post by “Cassius” of January 7, 2022 at 5:23 AM

I agree but would add a minor general comment on terminology. You're put "moderation" in quotes and I think that is very warranted. The big picture is that people's body chemistry can be different, and even different at different periods of like. Someone who has overeaten sugar for years is likely going to have developed diabetes and their body will tolerate less and less sugar over time.

The point about "moderation" is that it's kind of like several other words that can be used too loosely. The point is not really to consider two extremes and divide them in half, but to use all the facts of a situation to analyze and choose "the right amount" that fits the situation. Sometimes that point is a "midpoint" between two extremes, but sometimes the situation calls for more or less or for a point that would not be some abstract "middle" but "correct under all the circumstances.

It's just a minor point but i believe greeks like Aristotle are associated with the impression that there is some kind of "golden mean" that exists in the abstract that everyone should follow. I think Epicurus stands for a different position - that there is not a one-size-fits-all "moderation" that should be the goal, but "the right amount under all the circumstances leading to the best pleasure/pain result."

I know this sounds nit-picky to some people but i think there's a point here worth making to zero in on Epicurus' exact position.

Post by “smoothiekiwi” of January 7, 2022 at 5:41 AM

I actually absolutely agree! Although as far as I understand, Aristotle didn't call for the „golden mean“ either.

At least I understand moderation as something between the extremes, because (in a truly dogmatic fashion) I think that extremes most often aren't the best choice in a given situation. So thanks for the comment, I removed the quotes 😊

Post by “Cassius” of January 7, 2022 at 6:27 AM

For some reason the name "SmmothieKiwi" sounds like you live in Australia or New Zealand. Either way, I see you are in time sync with [Don](#), for whom I have identified from about 5AM to 630AM as "the Don hour" for his most frequent posting. You can set your clock by it.

Post by “smoothiekiwi” of January 7, 2022 at 6:31 AM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

For some reason the name "SmmothieKiwi" sounds like you live in Australia or New Zealand. Either way, I see you are in time sync with [Don](#), for whom I have identified from about 5AM to 630AM as "the Don hour" for his most frequent posting. You can set your clock by it.

It's actually somehow funny to communicate with the people one listens to on a podcast, and it's great to recognize names 😄

And nah, I'm actually a co-citizen with [Martin](#), so on the other side of the world- I actually don't know why I chose that username, maybe because I like kiwi birds and smoothies?