

Dealing With Friends Who Are Convinced "Prophecy Is Being Fulfilled" and "Armageddon is Around the Corner"

Post by "Cassius" of October 11, 2023 at 11:03 AM

I can't think of much that would more clearly violate our "no partisan politics" rule than a discussion on how to deal with the current situation in the Middle East and / or take sides between the warring parties.

On the other hand, we have discussed before the issues that are involved in dealing with religious friends. What brings this to mind is that I just received a call from a close friend who was fed up and angry with the constant stream of "See, the world is about to come to an end, the Temple is going to be rebuilt, and Jesus is coming back!" variety.

In times like this I think it is most valuable to have Epicurean friends with whom you can discuss issues rationally, and if you don't have them then you don't have an outlet to vent at the supreme folly of the analysis that is on all sides.

If anyone has advice, examples, or anecdotes that would be helpful at a time like this, let's use this thread to talk about it. We'll continue to enforce the "no politics" rule as in the past, but it would be strange if we didn't acknowledge at all what is going on in the world, and have some outlet for discussion of how to deal with hot-button religious analysis of issues that are very likely to affect us all whether we wish it to or not.

We won't be having any threads on who is right or who is wrong or how we got here or any of that. Those issues are best left elsewhere. But a continuing discussion of how to keep some degree of peace of mind when many of your friends are engaged in frenzied religion-based decision-making is in order.

We'll moderate this thread closely and I will apologize in advance if we make quick moderating decisions to remove or suspend a particular post while the moderators review it. It's very possible that if a moderator thinks a post goes too far they will "suspend" the post pending further moderation review. But I think we can have a profitable discussion on dealing with relatives or friends who go off the deep end in their actions or views, and how an Epicurean might respond.

1. At what point do you cut such a person off from your communications?
2. How "honest" should you be about your views with such a person?
3. Issues like those should be very useful to discuss.

Post by “Joshua” of October 11, 2023 at 1:12 PM

I've finally managed to reach a truce with the Evangelical in my life. We just don't discuss it. I'd say there are now fewer than 14 days in a year where I have to hear about this stuff.

Moving back north helped a lot.

Post by “TauPhi” of October 11, 2023 at 5:52 PM

When I come across random people who think that the world is collapsing and everything is worse and worse with every breath they take I generally smile politely and remove myself from their presence.

When someone I care about adopts this mindset I try to pull them out of the darkness they got themselves into the best I can. Not limited to but I tend to use some variations of these arguments:

- You think nowadays is horrible? Get any history book and read it until you find the chapter on how people peacefully lived for millennia among unicorns and rainbows without worries, wars and diseases.
- Don't read, watch nor listen to the news for some time. You're not getting news anyway. You're getting stories filtered by corporate interests and governmental propaganda spiced with greed, violence and mind tricks to capitalise on your attention.
- Do not isolate yourself. Force yourself, if you have to, and spend as much time as possible with people you love.
- Move. Exercise. Play sports. Get yourself physically tired so you don't have energy to waste on imagining the worst possible version of the world you can think of.

As far as religion goes, in moments like these I try to avoid the subject altogether. It's a near impossibility to convince people to change their deep rooted beliefs even when they think straight. When their minds are clouded with dark thoughts and mixed with a hope that calling Jesus at 1-800-Jesus-Save-Us-All is a solution, I smile politely and keep my mouth shut even if I care deeply for that person. That discussion can only do more harm than good.

Post by “kochiekoch” of October 18, 2023 at 9:31 AM

I have an older brother who is VERY hard right. I actually call him once a week to stay in touch, and I just plain don't talk politics or religion with him. 😊 We've had some EPIC disagreements in the past, but we've never got along better since I've instituted this very Epicurean policy.

He tries to get me now and then, but I don't take the bait. 😊