

# Episode 316 - TD43 - "Happiness Is The Goal Of Life - A Life of Happiness Is A Life Of Pleasure" (Sixth Year Podcast Anniversary)

Post by "Cassius" of January 10, 2026 at 7:44 AM

Welcome to Episode 316 of Lucretius Today. This is a podcast dedicated to the poet Lucretius, who wrote "On The Nature of Things," the most complete presentation of Epicurean philosophy left to us from the ancient world. Each week we walk you through the Epicurean texts, and we discuss how Epicurean philosophy can apply to you today. If you find the Epicurean worldview attractive, we invite you to join us in the study of Epicurus at [EpicureanFriends.com](http://EpicureanFriends.com), where we discuss this and all of our podcast episodes.

We are closing in on the end of those portions of Tusculan Disputations that are most relevant to Epicurean philosophy today, so we'll pick up this week after [Section 30 of Part 5](#).

Thanks to Joshua for reminding us that this episode will mark our sixth year anniversary of podcasting about Epicurus!

**XXX.**

These then are the opinions, as I think, that are held and defended: the first four are simple ones; "that nothing is good but what is honest," according to the Stoics: "nothing good but pleasure," as Epicurus maintains: "nothing good but a freedom from pain," as Hieronymus asserts: "nothing good but an enjoyment of the principal, or all, or the greatest goods of nature," as Carneades maintained against the Stoics:—these are simple, the others are mixed propositions. Then there are three kinds of goods; the greatest being those of the mind, the next best those of the body, the third are external goods, as the Peripatetics call them, and the old Academics differ very little from them. Dinomachus and Callipho have coupled pleasure with honesty: but Diodorus, the Peripatetic, has joined indolence to honesty. These are the opinions that have some footing; for those of Aristo, Pyrrho, Herillus, and of some others, are quite out of date. Now let us see what weight these men have in them, excepting the Stoics, whose opinion I think I have sufficiently defended; and indeed I have explained what the Peripatetics have to say; excepting that Theophrastus, and those who followed him, dread and abhor pain in too weak a manner. The others may go on to exaggerate the gravity and dignity of virtue, as usual; and then, after they have extolled it to the skies, with the usual extravagance of good orators, it is easy to reduce the other topics to nothing by comparison, and to hold them up to contempt. They who think that praise deserves to be sought after, even

at the expense of pain, are not at liberty to deny those men to be happy, who have obtained it. Though they may be under some evils, yet this name of happy has a very wide application.

[media]https://www.spreaker.com/episode/69489098/media

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## Post by "Cassius" of January 10, 2026 at 7:59 AM

This paragraph is important for many reasons, not the least of which is that (1) Epicurus held that there is "nothing good but pleasure," (2) that it was not Epicurus but Hieronymous who held the good to be "absence of pain," and (3) that the Stoics held nothing to be good but virtue / "moral worth." For that reason I've spliced together the English and the Latin from the King / Loeb edition as a supplement to the Yonge version from which we generally read.

It's interesting to see how the translations are all over the board over words like "finibus" (here "limits") and "honestum" (here "moral worth") but maybe the most important of all for us is that the single word chosen for Epicurus' goal is "voluptatem" which is clearly understandable as "pleasure" rather than anything indicating "tranquility" or "calmness."

And of course all through the list we have "bonum" for "good," and it seems to me that the way Cicero is speaking he is clearly tightly relating, or even equating, "good" and "finibus."

It's very interesting also to see what alternatives are suggested by Carneades, presumably representing the Academic Skeptics, and the Peripatetics/Aristotelians.



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## Post by "Cassius" of January 10, 2026 at 8:20 AM

<http://www.epicureanfriends.com/thread/4897-episode-316-td43-happiness-is-the-goal-of-life-a-life-of-happiness-is-a-life-of/>

Reading ahead, there is a lot of useful information about Epicurus, and by no means is all of it criticism. We'll take as much time as we need to go through it, because this is some of the most authoritative summary material that survives from the ancient world. It is simply ridiculous to summarize the ultimate goal of life as "tranquility" or "absence of pain" when over and over it is clear that Epicurus said that the calculation is that of comparing pleasure to pain, and that we will absolutely choose pains that lead to pleasure that is greater than that pain.

#### Quote

So that a wise man will always adopt such a system of counterbalancing as to do himself the justice to avoid pleasure, should pain ensue from it in too great a proportion ; and will submit to pain, provided the effects of it are to produce a greater pleasure: so that all pleasurable things, though the corporeal senses are the judges of them, are still to be referred to the mind, on which account the body rejoices, whilst it perceives a present pleasure; but that the mind not only perceives the present as well as the body, but foresees it, while it is coming, and even when it is past will not let it quite slip away. So that a wise man enjoys a continual series of pleasures, uniting the expectation of future pleasure to the recollection of what he has already tasted.

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### Post by "Cassius" of January 17, 2026 at 1:36 PM

Episode 316 of the Lucretius Today Podcast is now available. This week our episode is entitled: "The Goal of Life Is Happiness - A Life of Happiness Is A Life Of Pleasure"

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