

Would It Be Fair To Say That Epicurus Taught "Lower Your Expectations And You'll Never Be Disappointed"?

Post by "Cassius" of January 26, 2026 at 1:38 PM

Please vote and then explain.

Post by "Kalosyni" of January 26, 2026 at 2:29 PM

The wording of this doesn't quite work for me. An internal feeling of disappointment happens because a mental expectation was not fulfilled. But if you understand the nature of the world well, you will know which situations come with a higher probability of fulfillment and which come with a lower probability, and you won't create unrealistic expectations.

Post by "Kalosyni" of January 26, 2026 at 2:49 PM

Cassius your statement "Lower your expectations and you will never be dissatisfied" could be compared to this PD:

[PD15](#). "The wealth demanded by nature is both limited and easily procured; that demanded by idle imaginings stretches on to infinity."

Post by "Kalosyni" of January 26, 2026 at 2:58 PM

The Japanese concept of "wabi-sabi" might be related to the Epicurean "wealth demanded by nature" (in [PD15](#)).

From Wikipedia:

Quote

In traditional [Japanese aesthetics](#), **wabi-sabi** (侘寂) centers on the acceptance of [transience](#) and imperfection.^[2] It is often described as the appreciation of beauty that is "imperfect, impermanent, and incomplete".^[3] It is prevalent in many forms of Japanese art.^{[4][5]}

Wabi-sabi combines two interrelated concepts: *wabi* (侘) and *sabi* (寂). According to the [Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy](#), *wabi* may be translated as "subdued, austere beauty", and *sabi* as "rustic [patina](#)"....

Characteristics of *wabi-sabi* aesthetics and principles include [asymmetry](#), roughness, [simplicity](#), economy, austerity, modesty, [intimacy](#), and the appreciation of natural objects and the forces of nature.

-->[Source article](#)

Post by “Joshua” of January 26, 2026 at 3:43 PM

Usener 135

Johannes Stobaeus, Anthology, 3.17.24:

Quote

Again from Epicurus: "If you wish to make Pythocles rich, do not give him more money, but diminish his desire."

The question in the thread title is far too broad to be meaningful, but this and other quotes seem relevant.

Post by “Cassius” of January 26, 2026 at 4:36 PM

Good comments and they illustrate why phrased it the way I did ☐☐

Post by “Bryan” of January 26, 2026 at 10:05 PM

My highest expectation, hope, and desire is for personal peace -- and a similar well-being of peace for my friends: what greater thing could be desired?

This is not a low expectation, but a very high one -- and one which our philosophy supports very well.

However, from another angle, this may well entail "lowering your expectations" if they are insupportably high!

Not one of us can significantly change the mass flow -- of the ocean, of the air... etc.

Post by “wbernys” of January 27, 2026 at 3:45 PM

Quote

He (sc. Metrodorus) [writes] that, although he likes the idea that the [best] life is the one that is [accompanied by tranquillity], peace, and cares that cause minimal trouble, it does not seem that this goal is achieved at least in this way, namely, if we avoid all those things over which, if they were present, we would sometimes experience difficulties and distress.

I originally answered yes but I think I would change my answer to the third option. I think Philodemus's quote of Metrodorus best exemplifies the Epicurean viewpoint on this quote. Essentially An Epicurean would wish that that statement was true, and should try to apply it as best we can for a fuller life of pleasure, but sadly in fact it isn't entirely true, as there are just some things which we will be pained by no matter how much we lower our expectations or how much wisdom we have (namely bodily pain).

Post by “Kalosyni” of January 27, 2026 at 6:02 PM

From Torquatus:

"More, any pains that the Wise Man may encounter are never so severe but that he has more cause for gladness than for sorrow. Again, it is a fine saying of Epicurus that 'the Wise Man is but little interfered with by fortune: the great concerns of life, the things that matter, are controlled by his own wisdom and reason'; and that 'no greater pleasure could be derived from a life of infinite duration than is actually afforded by this existence which we know to be finite.'"

Post by “Onenski” of January 28, 2026 at 8:03 PM

In my opinion, the phrase makes much more sense within the framework of Stoicism, where, in the effort to secure peace of mind, one seeks to adjust desires to the actual state of the world. The Stoic aims to wish that the world be exactly as it is (and usually struggles to achieve that desire). If I may suggest, the phrase sounds more like a kind of dissatisfied conformism, similar to the fox in Aesop’s fable.

The Epicurean does not want to conform, but to feel satisfied. Epicurus observed that our constitution allows us to feel satisfied quite simply with what nature provides. It is not that we flee from what is difficult for us (for example, some luxury or great objective) out of fear of frustration, but rather that we actively seek what brings us pleasure, and that is usually easy to obtain.

Post by “kochiekoch” of February 1, 2026 at 8:33 PM

Nope, I don't think Epicurus would say to lower your expectations and you'll never be disappointed. In point of fact, he says there is a limit to simple living, and the person that goes to extremes of simple living is a bad off as the person that goes to extremes of extravagance.

[Vatican Saying 63 - Epicurus Wiki](#)

The people who thought you should have the lowest expectations of all were the Cynic philosophers. These guys only possessed a cloak, staff, and a bag for whatever they could beg. Cheap living for sure but sleeping outside in the cold weather, with only a cloak. isn't the most pleasant lifestyle. 😊