

Welcome Morgan!

Post by "Cassius" of April 17, 2026 at 10:55 AM

Welcome [Morgan](#)

There is one last step to complete your registration:

All new registrants must post a response to this message here in this welcome thread (we do this in order to minimize spam registrations).

You must post your response within 24 hours, or your account will be subject to deletion.

Please say "Hello" by introducing yourself, tell us what prompted your interest in Epicureanism and which particular aspects of Epicureanism most interest you, and/or post a question.

This forum is the place for students of Epicurus to coordinate their studies and work together to promote the philosophy of Epicurus. Please remember that all posting here is subject to our [Community Standards and associated Terms of Use](#). Please be sure to read that document to understand our ground rules.

Please understand that the leaders of this forum are well aware that many fans of Epicurus may have sincerely-held views of what Epicurus taught that are incompatible with the purposes and standards of this forum. This forum is dedicated exclusively to the study and support of people who are committed to classical Epicurean views. As a result, this forum is not for people who seek to mix and match Epicurean views with positions that are inherently inconsistent with the core teachings of Epicurus.

All of us who are here have arrived at our respect for Epicurus after long journeys through other philosophies, and we do not demand of others what we were not able to do ourselves. Epicurean philosophy is very different from most other philosophies, and it takes time to understand how deep those differences really are. That's why we have membership levels here at the forum which allow for new participants to discuss and develop their own learning, but it's also why we have standards that will lead in some cases to arguments being limited, and even participants being removed, when the purposes of the community require it. Epicurean philosophy is not inherently democratic, or committed to unlimited free speech, or devoted to any other form of organization other than the pursuit of truth and happy living through pleasure as explained in the principles of Epicurean philosophy.

One way you can be assured of your time here will be productive is to tell us a little about yourself and your background in reading Epicurean texts. It would also be helpful if you could

tell us how you found this forum, and any particular areas of interest that you already have.

You can also check out our [Getting Started](#) page for ideas on how to use this website.

We have found over the years that there are a number of key texts and references which most all serious students of Epicurus will want to read and evaluate for themselves. Those include the following.

["Epicurus and His Philosophy"](#) by Norman DeWitt

[The Biography of Epicurus by Diogenes Laertius](#). This includes the surviving letters of Epicurus, including those to [Herodotus](#), [Pythocles](#), and [Menoceus](#).

["On The Nature of Things"](#) - by Lucretius (a poetic abridgement of Epicurus' "On Nature"

["Epicurus on Pleasure"](#) - By Boris [Nikolsky](#)

The chapters on Epicurus in [Gosling and Taylor's "The Greeks On Pleasure."](#)

[Cicero's "On Ends" - Torquatus Section](#)

[Cicero's "On The Nature of the Gods" - Velleius Section](#)

The Inscription of Diogenes of Oinoanda - [Martin Ferguson Smith translation](#)

[A Few Days In Athens" - Frances Wright](#)

Lucian Core Texts on Epicurus: (1) [Alexander the Oracle-Monger](#), (2) [Hermotimus](#)

[Philodemus "On Methods of Inference"](#) (De Lacy version, including his appendix on relationship of Epicurean canon to Aristotle and other Greeks)

"The Greeks on Pleasure" -Gosling & Taylor Sections on Epicurus, especially the [section on katastematic and kinetic pleasure](#) which explains why ultimately this distinction was not of great significance to Epicurus.

It is by no means essential or required that you have read these texts before participating in the forum, but your understanding of Epicurus will be much enhanced the more of these you have read. Feel free to join in on one or more of our conversation threads under various topics found throughout the forum, where you can to ask questions or to add in any of your insights as you study the Epicurean philosophy.

And time has also indicated to us that if you can find the time to read one book which will best explain [classical Epicurean philosophy](#), as opposed to most modern "eclectic" interpretations of Epicurus, that book is Norman DeWitt's Epicurus And His Philosophy.

(If you have any questions regarding the usage of the forum or finding info, please post any questions in this thread).

Welcome to the forum!

Not Neo-Epicurean, But Epicurean

1. Not "flourishing," "human potential," "self-actualization," or "meaningfulness," but happiness grounded in the feeling of pleasure.
2. Not "absence of pain" as a full statement of the goal of life, but "the Feelings are two, pleasure and pain" and "Pleasure is the beginning and the end of a happy life."
3. Not virtue for the sake of virtue, but virtue as instrumental for the attainment of pleasure.
4. Not "the greatest good for the greatest number," but "Every desire must be confronted with this question: What will happen to me if the object of my desire is accomplished and what if it is not?"
5. Not "humanism," "transhumanism," "individualism," "collectivism," "egoism," "altruism," "social progress," "Marxism," "democracy," "tyranny," or any "one size fits all" political ideal of any kind, but social structure based on friendship which "is formed and maintained by means of a community of life among those who have reached the fullness of pleasure."
6. Not "hard determinism," but "some things happen from necessity, some from chance, and others through our own choice."
7. Not "supernaturalism," but "materialism."
8. Not "supernatural gods," or "life after death," but confidence in a fully material universe and "for those men for whom wisdom is possible, and who do seek it, such men may truly live as gods."
9. Not only "short term hedonism," but "it is to continuous pleasures that I invite you."
10. Not "rationalism," but "all reason is dependent upon sensations."
11. Not fearful of death nor careless of losing life, but valuing life for the opportunity of pleasure it brings.

Our Posting Policy At EpicureanFriends.com:

"No Partisan Politics," "No Supernatural Religion," and "No Absolute Virtue"

This forum is dedicated to promoting the philosophy of Epicurus, and not to any partisan political positions whether "left," "right," or "center." The task of rediscovering Epicurean philosophy requires that such discussions be held elsewhere. Posts violating this rule are subject to removal.



Epicurean philosophy firmly rejects the viewpoint that there are any supernatural forces or absolute virtues or Platonic ideals of any kind. Argument which is based on supernatural claims, or "absolute" virtues or ideals of any kind, are in violation of this rule and subject to removal.

**Nothing can be created
from nothing.**

**Nature has no gods over
her.**

**Do not assign to the
gods anything that is
inconsistent with
incorruption and
blessedness.**

Death is nothing to us.

**There is no necessity to
live under the control of
necessity.**



**He who says “Nothing
can be known” knows
nothing.**

All sensations are “true.”

**Virtue is not absolute or
an end in itself - all good
and evil consists in
sensation.**

**Pleasure is the guide of
life.**

**By “Pleasure” we mean
all experience that is not
painful.**

**Life is desirable, but unlimited time contains no greater
pleasure than limited time.**

Post by “Cassius” of April 17, 2026 at 10:56 AM

Morgan writes us:

Hello, I'm delighted to become a new member, and as far as I can see, I should respond to my welcome message, and whilst I'm pretty sure this may not be the way to do so, I can't identify a 'reply' button, so forgive the rough and ready attempt to do so.

All advice welcome. Meanwhile, I have a burning question...

My understanding is that Epicurus as a young boy was precocious to the point of questioning an early teacher to explain Hesiod's conception of chaos. I would love to flesh out the description given in De Witt...albeit apocryphal!

with many thanks,

While Epicurus may have begun his schooling under his father's instruction, there is evidence that he was placed in charge of another teacher before he was of an age for the higher branches. The following anecdote has been preserved for us by Sextus Empiricus: "For while still quite a young lad he demanded to know of his teacher, who was dictating to him the line 'Verily first of all chaos was created,'²⁴ out of what chaos was created if it really was first created." When the teacher with some irritation denied that it was any of his business to teach such things but rather of the men called philosophers, "Then," said Epicurus, "to the philosophers I must hie if they alone really know the truth about realities."²⁵

The interest of the story is threefold: it exhibits Epicurus in the process of receiving the orthodox schooling in Greek poetry. If at the time mentioned he was learning his Hesiod, it is certain he had already acquired a due familiarity with Homer. It will be shown later that

An extract from the chapter, SAMOS AND ATHENS, in De Witt's *Epicurus and his Philosophy*

"The third item of interest attaches to the mention of chaos. In Democritean physics there was no place for chaos. According to this system, the world had always been a cosmos, because the atoms and void were believed to exist from everlasting unto everlasting. Only in creational systems was there need for an initial state of chaos. Thus the question naturally arises, Was Epicurus already at the time of the incident reading Democritus? An affirmative answer is not absurd. By a scholar named Ariston, whose reputation is good, it was recorded in a *Life of Epicurus* that he began to study philosophy at the age of twelve.²⁷ He was undoubtedly precocious; this is the point that Ariston was making and he adds "that he headed his own school at thirty-two," which contrasted with forty for Plato and thirty-nine for Aristotle when he began to teach in Mytilene. If to the above item be added a second to the effect that

Epicurus, "chancing upon the books of Democritus, took eagerly to philosophy," It becomes quite probable that he already knew something of Democritus when he cornered his teacher on the topic of chaos."

Post by "Cassius" of April 17, 2026 at 10:57 AM

Morgan thanks for your email. You should have received "Registration" email saying essentially this:

Thank you for your interest in the EpicureanFriends forum.

Please respond to this email with basic information about your background and interest in Epicurus. We'll then set up a Welcome thread for you and approve your account.

You can review how this process works here: [Welcome to Our New Members!](#)

- Cassius

Thanks for your initial message and your question.

Could you also tell us a little something about your background in study of Epicurus?

Post by "Cassius" of April 17, 2026 at 10:59 AM

I don't know that we know much more about the story of Epicurus questioning his teachers, but if anyone has an anecdote from Usener it's probably [Bryan](#)

Post by "Cassius" of April 18, 2026 at 7:59 PM

Morgan has sent some additional information:

Hello Cassius,

Apologies for missing this email, I will now give a few details about me...

I'm retired, officially, but a writer and interested in pursuing an interest in Epicurus and Epicureanism that has been long held.

I came to the subject via conversations with Professor Martin Ferguson Smith, a name you will recognise I'm sure in relation to Oenoenda and his rather marvellous prose translation of Lucretius.

I was previously in television and radio as a producer and had a notion to make something around the inscription. That has not yet happened and I'm now out of the TV game so I'm unlikely to be able to make it a reality with my contacts. But my interest goes on. I'm planning a trip in September that will take me from the site in Oenoenda to Samos, perhaps via Rhodes, to Telos, Lesbos, and Lampsacus amongst other sites of interest...you'll recognise also the trajectory. I guess you could say that it's the life of Epicurus that interests me, but that would only be half the story. I'm also interested in the afterlife of Epicureanism, via Rome and the various commentators right up to Philodemus and the scrolls.

Two stories in one, and as a former journalist with only a self-taught education in classical literature and ancient Greek philosophy, you can no doubt imagine the learning curve. What will I do with what I learn? I've yet to decide if I can add anything of value to the public record, though a book is attractive, but personal satisfaction is top of my list.

I'm the recipient of a now ancient Emmy award, I've published a memoir which my name will throw up in a Google search - Shaun Deeney - and I've written, voiced and produced podcasts - I don't like the term, I think of these recordings more as stories told - and my last project, not published as a book is called 'Me and Michel', a bicycle journey with Michel de Montaigne as my 'companion'. I've recently taken down my personal website as it was getting tired, but I think these works might still be floating about Spotify/Apple etc.

Is that enough? An amateur abroad with a fascinating subject to explore sums it up. Why Epicurus? You know the answer to that, but if I were to put it into words it would be his courage and lucidity and simplicity, a quiet revolutionary in his own times, a voice not sufficiently heard in our own rather trying times with madmen and religious wars and fake news encouraging us to believe in anything but the power of our own minds to find a route to ataraxia.

Post by "Cassius" of April 18, 2026 at 8:00 PM

Wow this is great Morgan - thanks for the information! You've got quite a stellar background, and having had dealings with Martin Ferguson Smith is enough to make many of us "envious."

We look forward to your being on the forum and I hope you will let us know about your travels!

Post by "wbernys" of April 19, 2026 at 12:04 AM

Welcome Morgan. You're definitely right to like Epicurus as a fundamental revolutionary of his time. The main revolution i would put with him is his fundamental **optimism** about everything! I think it's his best quality.

Take a look at Plato and the Skeptics, they thinks philosophy shows we can't trust anything around us and need to trust in either a higher power or nothign at all.

Many Cyrenaics teach that a wise man is fundamentally unhappy and that pain and death destroy happiness, Hegesias says happiness is impossible and the woes of life destroy it, making death as good as life, and Theodrous that friendship is proven to be foolish and the wise man can't have friends nor believe in conventional morality.

Aristotle, he says chance can destroy our happiness by bad luck and that we need glory and political power to be truly "flourishing".

Democritus, that we are not in control of our choices and are subject to the iron grip of fate.

Epicurus by contrast is a complete optimist, and i think it's the reason i like him so much, he says that philosophy is fundamentally liberating from our false assumptions and how easily happiness is acquired and pain endured, how we can trust what's around us, that we are not subject to fate or to the gods, and we have no need of great glory for flourishing.