

On "Happiness" As An Abstraction / "Pleasure" As a Feeling

Post by "Cassius" of January 11, 2021 at 1:03 PM

[Quote from Matt](#)

I'll have to watch myself...yes they are one in the same.

Is it? 😊 I think that's actually one of the subtexts that we are discussing. Are they really "one and the same"? I would say that we likely have to view them differently -- pleasure is a feeling which we know without logical analysis; happiness may also be thought of as feeling, but seems to be a higher-level construction that contains mental operations beyond just feeling. Of course the word "pleasure" is not itself a feeling, but a word that denominates a feeling.

I guess this is why Epicurus was wise to refer more centrally to pleasure than to "happiness," but more than that, it's probably an important part of Epicurean philosophy to explain this point and prevent people from being confused in their own minds about this.

And that's where we get back to the issues of science and theories etc -- we can point to the feeling of pleasure and observe instances of it, but don't we also want to be able to explain in words to other people what we're talking about? So we have to move not only from observation of instances to a systematized explanation that people can understand, and that's not altogether easy to do.