

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

Post by "Don" of January 11, 2021 at 9:44 PM

## [Quote from Elayne](#)

Awareness of sequential pleasure would be nothing if not for the fact that such awareness itself is pleasure, and I am quite certain I myself experience it as a feeling ☐☐ and not a cognition.

Okay, I'll give you that. But you're still just precognitively reacting to stimuli with the sensation of pleasure. I keep coming back to the fact that humans react to stimuli with either pleasure or pain (I'm trying to stay within the Epicurean canon). We describe how that sensation makes us "feel" with language, but we experience the sensation itself precognitively.

## Quote from Elayne

If a person felt guilty about pleasure, awareness of sequential pleasure wouldn't feel happy but painful.

Interesting premise although I don't think that's the case. One can't experience pleasure "as" pain. They would be experiencing pain. What you seem to be describing is how someone would be thinking about their feelings which sounds contrary to your next statement.

## Quote from Elayne

I do think Platonism has penetrated culture sufficiently that there are some people who define the word conceptually. But I stand by my assertion that most ordinary people, non academics, "feel happy" rather than "think happy."

I don't think Platonism is at play here. We're not defining an ideal happiness.

Are you then simply using the same word "happy" to stand in for "pleasure"? What about all the [synonyms for happy](#)?

I'm not saying you "think happy". What I'm saying is that:

- 1) A person experiences the sensation of what is called "pleasure" as opposed to a sensation of "pain" or they are experiencing more pleasure right now than pain.
- 2) That person interprets that sensation as "making" them happy. At the speed of thought, so it might appear simultaneous. But the sensation comes first. The description comes second.

People can try to convince themselves to say they're happy. You can't fool yourself as to sensing pleasure or pain.

<https://www.epicureanfriends.com/thread/1190-on-happiness-as-an-abstraction-pleasure-as-a-feeling/?postID=10471#post10471>