

# Catherine Wilson's January 2021 article: "Why Epicureanism, Not Stoicism, Is The Philosophy We Need Now"

Post by "Don" of January 13, 2021 at 11:43 PM

## [Quote from Cassius](#)

As to the bliss pill, I also see Elayne's point that the general principle that she's laying out is very wide from the mark. She's choosing to emphasize that the problem would be that "the causes of pain and pleasure would be obscured." Well, why is that a problem? If the bliss pill works, who cares WHY it works -- that's principle doctrine 10 in spades. The clear implication of this phrasing is that it is the KNOWLEDGE of the causes that is of concern to Wilson.

I don't want to go down the "bliss pill" rabbit hole again, but, in principle, I agree with Wilson about this. I continue to assert that PD 10 is about personal responsibility and it's specifically saying the "pleasures of the profligate" are not recommended, and that the most important word in that Doctrine is \*if\*. If they do these things, then we have no complaints... But those pleasures \*don't\* provide freedom from fear or teach us limits, etc. That's the point. Plus it has to be taken in context with the Letter to Menoikeus which appears to me to be commentary on PD 10:

## Quote

10If the things that produced the delights of those who are decadent washed away the mind's fears about astronomical phenomena and death and suffering, and furthermore if they taught us the limits of our pains and desires, then we would have no complaints against them, since they would be filled with every joy and would contain not a single pain or distress (and that's what is bad).

In the Letter to Menoikos: So when we say that pleasure is the goal, we do not mean the pleasures of decadent people or the enjoyment of sleep, as is believed by those who are ignorant or who don't understand us or who are ill-disposed to us, but to be free from bodily pain and mental disturbance. For a pleasant life is produced not by drinking and endless parties and enjoying boys and women and consuming fish and other delicacies of an extravagant table, but by sober reasoning, searching out the cause of everything we accept or reject, and driving out opinions that cause the greatest trouble in the soul.

If we're on the bliss pill or on the experience machine or constantly intoxicated or eating lotuses, we can't use "sober reasoning" or "search out the cause of everything we accept or reject." Taking the bliss pill could be a personal choice, but I think it would fall under the unrecommended pleasures of the profligate (literally, the lost) and I don't believe Epicurus would endorse that. Pleasure is pleasure, but not every pleasure should be chosen.

I realize I may be a minority opinion, but this is one I haven't been convinced to change yet.