

# What In Your Opinion Are the Most Essential Characteristics Of "Being An Epicurean" (According to Epicurus)?

Post by "Bryan" of February 15, 2021 at 9:25 PM

As we know, Epicurus stood in disagreement with Plato who argued for the existence of mixed pleasures (μικτά ἡδοναί), which Plato imagined as pleasures which contained an aspect of pain. In reality, as Epicurus understood, pain and pleasure are mutually exclusive at any particular point in the body. Epicurus also stood in disagreement against the Κυρηναϊκοί/Cyrenaics who viewed the removal of pain as a state of calm to which pleasure could then be added.

"It is not possible for the Good to be placed anywhere, when neither What is painful nor What is distressing is any longer making way for it" Metrodorus (Non Posse 1091 B) ἔνθα γὰρ τεθήσεται Τάγαθόν οὐκ ἔστιν ὅταν μηθὲν ἔτι ὑπεξίη μήτε Ἀλγεινὸν μήτε Λυπηρόν.

It is common for people to consider the removal of pain/discomfort/desire to be the beginning of pleasure. In fact, the removal of pain/discomfort/desire and resulting painless state that exists, is exactly what pleasure is. Full physical contentment is naturally and frequently achieved when we have the natural and necessary accommodations of food and shelter.

"Τοῦτο αὐτὸ τὸ ἀγαθόν ἐστι: τὸ φυγεῖν τὸ κακόν- This very thing is the good: Escaping from the bad" Metrodorus (Non Posse 1091 A)

In failing to appreciate this fact, the common man, when he in a painless state, typically tries to add to his complete pleasure by engaging in further activities. Yet any attempt to add more pleasure to the complete pleasure of painlessness must always lead to failure, and never allows the mind to settle. The common man chases variation of bodily pleasures because he is not mentally content.

**Yet full mental contentment can be achieved just as naturally and frequently as full bodily contentment -- by the very realization of the simple ease of obtaining bodily contentment and then fostering gratitude and a full appreciation for your success in doing so.**

"**For the end of all our actions** is to be free from pain and fear, and, when once we have attained all this, the tempest of the soul is laid ; seeing that the living creature has no need to go in search of something that is lacking, nor to look for anything else by which the good of the soul and of the body will be fulfilled. When we are pained because of the absence of pleasure, then, and then only, do we feel the need of pleasure. Wherefore we call pleasure the alpha and omega of a blessed life (DL X 128)." An Epicurean's **goal** is bodily comfort and a calm mind.