

## Alt-tech outreach

**Post by “Elayne” of February 18, 2021 at 8:17 AM**

[Cassius](#) , I have started thinking my most useful online activity (in terms of pleasure) is a combination of this site and just conversing with friends and family on FB-- people I see in person when there's not a pandemic.

I have realized that it may be an unnecessary effort to get large numbers of people interested in Epicurus and the historical details. There are multiple characteristics that would be necessary, not all of which were necessary in his time. People who want to participate in something like this are interested in history, science (at least to a degree), critical thinking, languages... interests which aren't necessarily relevant to their daily pleasures.

Most people who have adopted Platonist or Stoic ideas are unaware of the source. They've absorbed it unconsciously through the culture. Most people who accept elements of modern physics know very little about the science involved. Non-religious people are statistically likely to be better educated... but there's a pretty high degree of doubt and metaphorical takes on religion even in those who don't know much about physics.

I have many friends who are aware that their religious texts can't be literally true-- they like writers like Bishop Spong, who metaphorizes the whole thing. They know the mind is material if you ask, even if they also hold parallel incompatible religious beliefs. What they've retained is primarily the idealism... and that aspect, although sticky, can be argued against by appealing to real life experiences.

I am not lacking in local friends, and I hope others on here are not either. I think I can bring the most pleasure to my friends (and thus to myself) by just spending time with them... because when we talk about life, when crises and decisions come up, I give my perspective, and I can help them see pleasurable choices and alternatives to Platonic or Stoic thinking even when they don't know where they got those ideas. To borrow a Christian framing, if they see me enjoying my life and here and there I mention what works for me, the example can attract them-- even if they never get interested in Epicurus or physics at all.

I've thought about this in regards to the blog I started, which is way too nerdy and detailed for most people. I'm not yet sure how to revise it to have broader appeal, but I think most people might be attracted to something with far less detail. They don't care about whether the universe is infinite or had a beginning-- and it causes unnecessary confusion if that conflicts with popular articles on modern physics. Just saying "everything is material and there's no supernatural" is enough of a description of the physics aspect. If they are religious and need to be talked out of it, they can read from a plethora of atheist sources with thorough arguments, and perhaps links could be provided. But as Elli has pointed out, what most atheist sources are

missing is the goal of pleasure. I don't even think it's necessary to explain that in a complicated way. But I'm still working on exactly how to state it... and it is devilishly hard for me to tame my own wordiness and tendency to get complicated. ☐☐

To get most people to start putting pleasure first would be a lot easier if we aren't expecting them to also be interested in Epicurus or to need to learn the correct understanding of ataraxia in order to combat modern academics, etc.