

Epicurean philosophy vs. Stoicism in public popularity

Post by “Elayne” of March 20, 2021 at 3:29 PM

[Don](#) which means morality itself depends on the pleasure of the specific perceiver, since it isn't ideal. Yet you argued above that there are behaviors that will consistently and verifiably lead to a pleasurable life for "any organism." That isn't true.

The strongest true statement is that there are behaviors which are highly likely to lead to a pleasurable life for most typical members of a species. Those things are useful to know as a starting place, but for maximum life pleasure, an individual must learn if and how they are atypical-- and 100% typical humans are, in my experience, nonexistent. In medicine, every person I've met has at least one feature that is not within 2 std deviations on a Bell curve. It would be surprising if that weren't the case considering the huge number of features we have. It's why docs should be very careful about ordering unnecessary tests, because every extra lab we get increases the chance of finding a meaningless out of range result.

Why wouldn't we expect the same to be true of pleasure, and thus of virtue?

When you said honesty wasn't the most important virtue in my hypothetical but protecting the friend was, that is exactly the kind of thing virtue ethicists say-- while failing to acknowledge that the actual deciding factor is pleasure, not protection of another.