

Epicurean philosophy vs. Stoicism in public popularity

Post by “Elayne” of March 21, 2021 at 7:58 AM

[Don](#) Adding "almost" anyone to your assertion is fine. Low empathy humans are a small percentage of the population.

I'm on the other end of atypical-- I can't even stand to watch fake violence in movies, lol. So my decisions regarding potential harm to strangers need to take my atypical responses into account. This is more useful than trying to make myself become typical. It's also helpful to my pleasure to remember that the majority of others are likely not being consciously cruel when they do things to each other that make me cringe. Most likely, their empathy settings are more in the center. If I failed to keep this in mind, I would think I was surrounded by psychopaths on all sides.

It's not a virtue of mine, relative to them, that I avoid doing things they do-- it's only a virtue in regards to my own pleasure. They wouldn't be happier changing to be like me, either, so far as I can tell.

As far as the limits of pleasure, maximum pleasure, I think we have discussed this before, and I have not changed my position from what I outlined in my article here [On Pain, Pleasure, and Happiness](#)

What I mean by pleasure occurring or not is that it depends on material causes, not on people's opinions about what ought to happen. Like that quote about facts not caring about someone's opinions. A person may think folks ought not get pleasure from someone else's suffering, but that has no bearing on whether or not such a thing happens in real life. For instance, my opinion does not affect the reality of schadenfreude, a "normal" phenomenon I don't experience.

Maximum pleasure is exactly what an ordinary person would say it is-- total filling of one's mind and body with wonderful bliss-- and it occurs when all pain is absent. When one has achieved maximum blissfulness, it's unmistakable. One will not want anything more at that time, as Epicurus noted. Contrary to rumor, regular humans can experience this.

The maximum possible pleasure over a lifetime is realistically not likely going to involve continuous total bliss, because we don't have the power to prevent every pain, including pains that can stand in the path to pleasures--- but we can obtain a lot more ongoing pleasure than most people realize. And to do so requires dropping Stoicism and usual virtue ethics completely! We must evaluate all decisions and virtues in light of pleasure as our sole guide and goal. Yes, of course, it's smart to take into account both our past experiences and the experiences of other humans in similar situations. That's basic physics.

<https://www.epicureanfriends.com/thread/1916-epicurean-philosophy-vs-stoicism-in-public-popularity/?postID=11408#post11408>