

# The Atlantic: How to Build a Happy Life, episode 1

Post by "Cassius" of September 24, 2021 at 8:56 AM

I agree that is a good location to find some people who are on the same wavelength, and that comment looks great you drafted. Here's my preliminary diagnosis for your comment "Part of me thinks it could go off the rails....."

This line of reasoning below is what we are seeing over and over. The vast majority of people want to be "happy" but at the same time they don't want to give up their view of "meaningfulness" (which they see as being living consistent with their personal view of "virtue).

And so not only are they not really following Epicurus' lead, but they implicitly denounce him directly, by alleging that setting happiness as the goal of life is a "recipe for disaster." No matter we look at the texts about "pleasure" or about "happiness" one or the other is clearly the goal that Epicurus sets out as the correct one.

It seems pretty clear to me that this is the old central question of "politics." People do in fact (and should have!) have their own ideas of what a meaningful life should be, because their views of the "should" question do in fact bring them happiness.

But what they can't easily accept is that other people may (and do! and should!) have different views of what makes them happy. So these people who are examining the issue decide that they can't admit that happiness itself is the goal, but that **their own view of happiness** must be the goal. They aren't identifying happiness as a feeling which everyone has in somewhat different ways



And part of the reason for that is that they insist on focusing on the higher-level concept of "happiness" rather than PLEASURE which is a feeling, and they deny that the core of happiness is feeling:



I haven't watch most of the video so I am sure there are other aspects to it that are relevant to this, but I suspect a lot of the way these videos focused on "how to be happy" depart from Epicurean principles is along these lines.

They are in fact falling for the old old issue of looking for "virtue" and they are denying the essential nature of happiness as being based on the feeling of pleasure. That leads them down the road to stoicism, but they can't embrace the core of stoicism either, so that look for some kind of hybrid that really strips the core meaning out of both. The end up much closer to stoicism than to Epicurus, because in the end Stoicism is just an elaborate manipulation game that seeks to persuade people that there's a god-based universe in which there's a single best way of life for everyone - and of course that single way just happens to be the one they approve of.

I wouldn't be surprised if there's not a lot more important material in this video so f people watch the whole thing please comment.