

# An Epicurean Understanding of Valentine's Day: Love, Romance, and Free-will

Post by "Kalosyni" of February 8, 2022 at 1:38 PM

## [Quote from Cassius](#)

As in some other current threads where we are discussing pain and pleasure, I don't think that Epicurus was unrealistic about pain: pain is required in order to live to any degree, and more pain is often required for more pleasure. So while "Absence of disturbance" and "absence of pain" are goals in the Epicurean system, they are not in themselves the ultimate goal or the highest goal. PLEASURE trumps both of those, and we can and do accept some degree of both disturbance and pain in order to achieve the pleasures we want in life.

Posing the question in this way really exhibits - in my view - how terrible a mistake it is to postulate ataraxia and aponia as the highest goods rather than pleasure. (And I will add that it makes it worse to leave them untranslated, because that makes it harder for newer people to understand what really is being discussed.) When you make it clear what is involved, it seems to me that it's easy to see that OF COURSE the avoidance of disturbance and the avoidance of pain do not trump all other considerations. Over and over Epicurus makes that clear, and in those situations where it can be argued that he seems to be saying something else, you override that interpretation by looking to the foundations and the full context of the philosophy, and adopt a construction that is consistent with both

The pain that is taken on should be in service to long-term pleasure...so if marriage over-all turns out to be 50/50, then it is a tough call. Having been married I would say that the pleasure was high in the early years, and much lower in the later years. The reason that I divorced was because it at times became unbearable with no hope for reconciling the irreconcilable differences.

I begin to think that marriage is going to be difficult unless both people possess certain characteristics. Here is my "recipe" for a happy marriage, both people must have:

- 1) superb negotiation skills
- 2) high emotional intelligence
- 3) very grounded in reasoned thinking and general intelligence

- 4) highly co-operative and generous dispositions
- 5) a people-centered approach to life (hold people as more important than ideas or objects)
- 6) a shared worldview and goals in life