

Atlantic article about enjoyment vs. pleasure

Post by “Kalosyni” of April 7, 2022 at 10:21 AM

I found this article maybe a week ago and finally posting as it presents some interesting ideas, though I myself do not necessarily agree with everything in it. It might illuminate a need to work with our Epicurean definition of pleasure, and also the ways in which non-Epicureans might get "hung-up" on the subtlety of our philosophy.

<https://www.theatlantic.com/family/archive/2022/03/enjoyment-not-pleasure-creates-happiness/627583/>

Here is an interesting excerpt:

Quote

Pleasure can be a boon or a burden, depending on our relationship to it. It can leaven laborious days, or lead us to waste them. The pleasures of a mild stimulant such as caffeine can be harmless or even beneficial, but the pleasures of amphetamines can be deadly.

This creates a puzzle for the happiness seeker, who must navigate between the twin perils of puritanism and indulgence, leading to the much-dreaded rule of moderation, which is more or less the philosophy of leaving any party as soon as it gets really good. Fortunately, there is a better way to solve the puzzle: To stay at the party without letting it get out of control, choose enjoyment instead.

Enjoyment and *pleasure* are terms often used interchangeably, but they are not the same thing. Pleasure happens to you; enjoyment is something that you create through your own effort. Pleasure is the lightheadedness you get from a bit of grain alcohol; enjoyment is the satisfaction of a good wine, properly understood. Pleasure is addictive and animal; enjoyment is elective and human.

I personally think that one can actively create both pleasure and enjoyment. And also both pleasure and enjoyment can simply "happen" when the circumstances line up in their favor. Pleasure is felt in the body and enjoyment is felt in the mind, and so enjoyment is a mental process of appreciating pleasure. Also, as Epicureans, we use reason to discern what leads to a good long-term result of our "pleasure choices", and short-term pleasures are good as well, when they are life enhancing.

There are other good points which may make sense or not. So if anyone reads this and has ideas or comments, please share. 😊

<https://www.epicureanfriends.com/thread/2452-atlantic-article-about-enjoyment-vs-pleasure/?postID=17453#post17453>