

# Atlantic article about enjoyment vs. pleasure

Post by "Don" of May 3, 2022 at 7:31 PM

I was at work today so only got to briefly add to this conversation.

## [Quote from reneliza](#)

It's less about "every pleasure is good yet not every pleasure would be chosen" and is more about whether a pleasurable sensation in the body is even a pleasure at all if it's not appreciated by the mind.

My reaction to that is somewhat of a tautology: Every pleasurable feeling is pleasurable. Epicurus equates "the good" with pleasure, therefore, "the good is good" and "pleasure is pleasure." Any pleasurable feeling is good... BUT - the BIG Epicurean BUT - not every pleasurable feeling should be chosen because some pleasurable feelings will lead to pain.

For example, drinking alcohol can provide a pleasurable feeling. Endless all-night drinking parties will lead to pain and are therefore not choiceworthy. Eating a succulent [insert favorite fruit] is pleasurable. Eating a bushel of your favorite fruit is going to lead to a gastrointestinal distress. BUT the pleasurable feeling doesn't change, it is the assessment and consequences. We can't control whether we \*feel\* pleasure or not.

Epicurus maintained we have two feelings - two guides - for making choices and rejections: pleasure and pain. MANY actions and thoughts provide pleasure and pain. But Epicurus (per Diogenes Laertius) said, "The feelings are two, pleasure and pain."

## [Quote from reneliza](#)

is that original sensation still "good"? Is masochistic fulfillment "evil"? If the sheer sensations would be painful or pleasurable out of context then how do we classify them (especially as in my example where the context is initially unknown)?

Excellent questions, and all ones we've dealt with and continue to deal with! "Good" and "evil" seem to only be equated with "pleasure" and "pain" according to Epicurus. BUT - there's that BUT again - we can't classify things that provide pleasure or pain in any kind of absolute, eternal hierarchy. (See my alcohol and fruit analogy above). However, Epicurus says "it is not an endless string of drinking parties and festivals, and not taking advantage of slaves and women, nor does an extravagant table of fish and other things bring forth a sweet life but self-controlled reasoning and examining the cause of every choice and rejection and driving out the greatest number of opinions that take hold of the mind and bring confusion and trouble." This also brings in the measure of Epicurean justice in "to neither harm nor be harmed."

You bring up some very good questions, so keep them coming... and I hope you're willing to investigate the answers along with the other members of this little online Garden. 😊