

Pleasure, Desire and Limits

Post by "Cassius" of July 19, 2022 at 8:24 PM

I understand and agree how that applies to you yourself.

But in the interest of generalizing this to a philosophical level that gives a guideline to express to others generally, how does that work at a general level?

I would distill all of what you wrote down to "In my case, building a rocket to fly to the moon would not lead to a favorable pleasure/pain balance, so that's not something I would choose to do."

But if we are looking for general statements to discuss philosophically, the unstated next sentence would be: "But if that's something that appeals to you and you believe after strong consideration that it would be worth it to you, then a philosophy based on Nature tells you to go ahead."

Which of course harks back to the general rule is that everyone is given by nature pleasure and pain to use to judge what to choose and what to avoid.

Now what I am reading between the lines is that in addition to that, you are suggesting that choices / desires can be considered as to whether they are natural or necessary. As Torquatus explains in *On Ends*, the principle of the classification is that the natural and necessary are easy to get, the others are not so easy. That observation does not serve as a limit but as a caution based on experience that if you choose the "unnecessary and unnatural" you can expect the cost in pain to be higher. However we often choose pain in order to produce a greater pleasure, so that's just a caution to be aware of, not a general limit or a general bar to the activity at all unless you choose to make it so.

I think that's a fairly complete overview of Epicurus' analysis, which sweepingly includes all kinds of pleasures and all kinds of pains into the calculation.

How would you introduce a "limitation of desires" analysis into that? I do think it can be done, but I don't think we've been clear about "how" yet at the generalized level.