

# Pleasure, Desire and Limits

Post by “Godfrey” of July 20, 2022 at 3:22 PM

## [Quote from Cassius](#)

Godfrey from this formulation I infer you are eliminating all "unnatural" desires completely. How did you define or give examples for that category?

## [Quote from reneliza](#)

I wonder if the “unnatural” desires are meant to be things that don’t bring you pleasure even when they are satisfied, or those that can never be met, but instead expand further and further as you get closer (like desire for wealth or fame that only grows as you reach the previous goals you’d set)

Thanks [reneliza](#) ! You've said this better than I would have.

There are other things that I notice I'm beginning to find addictive in that they're becoming an obstacle to pursuing other pleasurable activities. It could be that I'm finding less pleasure in the addictive activity as well. A current example for me is reading: reading one book or article tends to lead to another, then three more, and before I know it way more hours have gone by than I originally planned on. Another example is dark chocolate. For years, I would eat a square after one or two meals a day. It wasn't until I returned from a vacation where I didn't eat any chocolate that I realized that I wasn't really enjoying it much any longer.

Neither of these things are things that I would eliminate entirely. But in both cases I had become oblivious of the natural limit, in that they were no longer producing an excess of pleasure or were to some degree producing pain. Since I had become oblivious to my natural limits in these cases, I had to self-limit in order to reestablish awareness of my natural limit. Now I'm enjoying the occasional piece of chocolate again, and I'm finding the time to do the things that I was neglecting due to reading.

I interpret the dividing line, in terms of limits, as those that require a person to self-limit. But there are those that I just self-limit out of hand and stop thinking about, such as hunger for glory, then the ones that I need to self-limit just enough to return to my normal pleasure/pain equilibrium. The second kind become natural and unnecessary desires once I've successfully returned to normal functioning. If nothing else, this should make clear why Epicurus never categorized specific desires. 🤔

The passage where Epicurus gives a young man advice about sex might be a good example to look at, but I can't remember the source at the moment.