

EPICURUS ON PLEASURE, A COMPLETE LIFE, AND DEATH: A DEFENCE - ALEX VOORHOEVE

Post by “reneliza” of August 1, 2022 at 10:42 AM

I think there's a difference between a list of things you'd like to do if you can get around to it (which would be prioritized in some way) and a list of things a human must do before they die to live a full/complete life (either a personalized, individual list, or a generic list for all people - I don't think either would work)

Copying all of [PD20](#) here as Don linked above

"Bailey: 20. The flesh perceives the limits of pleasure as unlimited, and unlimited time is required to supply it. But the mind, having attained a reasoned understanding of the ultimate good of the flesh and its limits, and having dissipated the fears concerning the time to come, supplies us with the complete life, and we have no further need of infinite time; but neither does the mind shun pleasure, nor, when circumstances begin to bring about the departure from life, does it approach its end as though it fell short, in any way, of the best life."

The complete life is supplied by the mind, which means it's available to anyone, anytime, and there's no need for more time to search for completeness or to check off more boxes.

I find this one really interesting to think about especially because of this part: "But neither does the mind shun pleasure"

I didn't read the entirety of the OP articles yet, but based on the excerpts Don posted, it seems like the author skirted around a really important idea here. Yes, a tranquil mind is great, yes tranquility is all you need for the *foundation* of a complete life, but there's a risk of guarding your tranquility so carefully that you not only miss out on many pleasures around you, but you actually lose your tranquil mental state to the fear that you will lose your tranquil mental state. Or losing the understanding that pleasure *is* the ultimate good on which that state depends. In other words, to have the complete life offered by a tranquil mind, you can't be afraid of losing your tranquility so much that you never accept any other forms of pleasure.

To me, that is the most compelling reason not to shun pleasure or accept a life of asceticism - because fear of corruption, desire, or dependence is still a vain fear that will interrupt my inner tranquility.

But an Epicurean *could* live a minimal life out of necessity and nothing would be lost or fall short. It would still be a complete life without detraction as long as they still had their reasoned understanding of the good (pleasure) and no fear of death.

(feel free to sub "tranquility" here for ataraxia - or "an untroubled mind")