

# PD19 And The Meaning Of No "Greater" Pleasure

Post by “reneliza” of August 24, 2022 at 2:12 PM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

[Quote from Kalosyni](#)

perhaps your circumstances are supportive of living untroubled -- once one is settled down in life and lives in a happy and safe community/city, is secure with one's living situation (owns one's own home), feels fully confident in financial security (with enough savings to last till the end of one's life) has a safety net of good family and friends, and has no doubts about future well-being. Anyone who doesn't have any of these will have to use the very painful attempt of a "mind over matter" approach and try to repress their worries if they want to feel at peace -- perhaps this is why we have religion (and stoicism) as one way to try to deal with a troubled mind.

To me I see no conflict between striving and being at peace. In fact it is ONLY if you have striven as hard as you can to attain your goals that you can really be at peace with yourself, especially as you near the end of your life.

I see nothing in the life histories of any historically known Epicurean that they had any approach other than to work as earnestly and as hard as they could to attain the kind of lives that they wanted to live.

So I see no necessary contradiction between "striving" and "pleasure." The issue always come back to whether you are making the right choices and avoidances to produce the result that you want. "The right choices" certainly can involve "striving" and working and even voluntarily enduring stress.

I think Jefferson had it right in the letter to William Short:

Quote

I take the liberty of observing that you are not a true disciple of our master Epicurus in indulging the indolence to which you say you are yielding. One of his canons, you know, was that “that indulgence which prevents a greater pleasure, or produces a greater pain, is to be avoided.” Your love of repose will lead, in its progress, to a suspension of healthy exercise, a relaxation of mind, an indifference to everything around you, and finally to a debility of body, and

hebetude of mind, the farthest of all things from the happiness which the well-regulated indulgences of Epicurus ensure; fortitude, you know is one of his four cardinal virtues. That teaches us to meet and surmount difficulties; not to fly from them, like cowards; and to fly, too, in vain, for they will meet and arrest us at every turn of our road.

Display More

Although anyone may of course use the words they want, I have to side with Don when it comes to the word striving. It has a relatively positive connotation these days (in a world where it is believed that anything worth having is difficult to obtain), but it is etymologically related to strife and I just FEEL that element of discord and contention in the word. It feels unnatural as though anything that would require me to strive would be something that is at odds with my nature and I'm trying to work through that to force it to fit anyway. (Noting of course that sometime people have to do exactly this in order to provide for themselves - I still don't see it as a positive but as unfortunately unavoidable in certain situations)

Having looked into the dictionary definitions a bit, I think I really like the verb "endeavor" which yes, also implies exertion, but in a way that feels less unpleasant from the start, and even adventurous and exciting. It's the exertion that allows me to feel pleasure and accomplishment even while it's hard work and sometimes painful.