

# Compatibility of Epicureanism and Existential Therapy

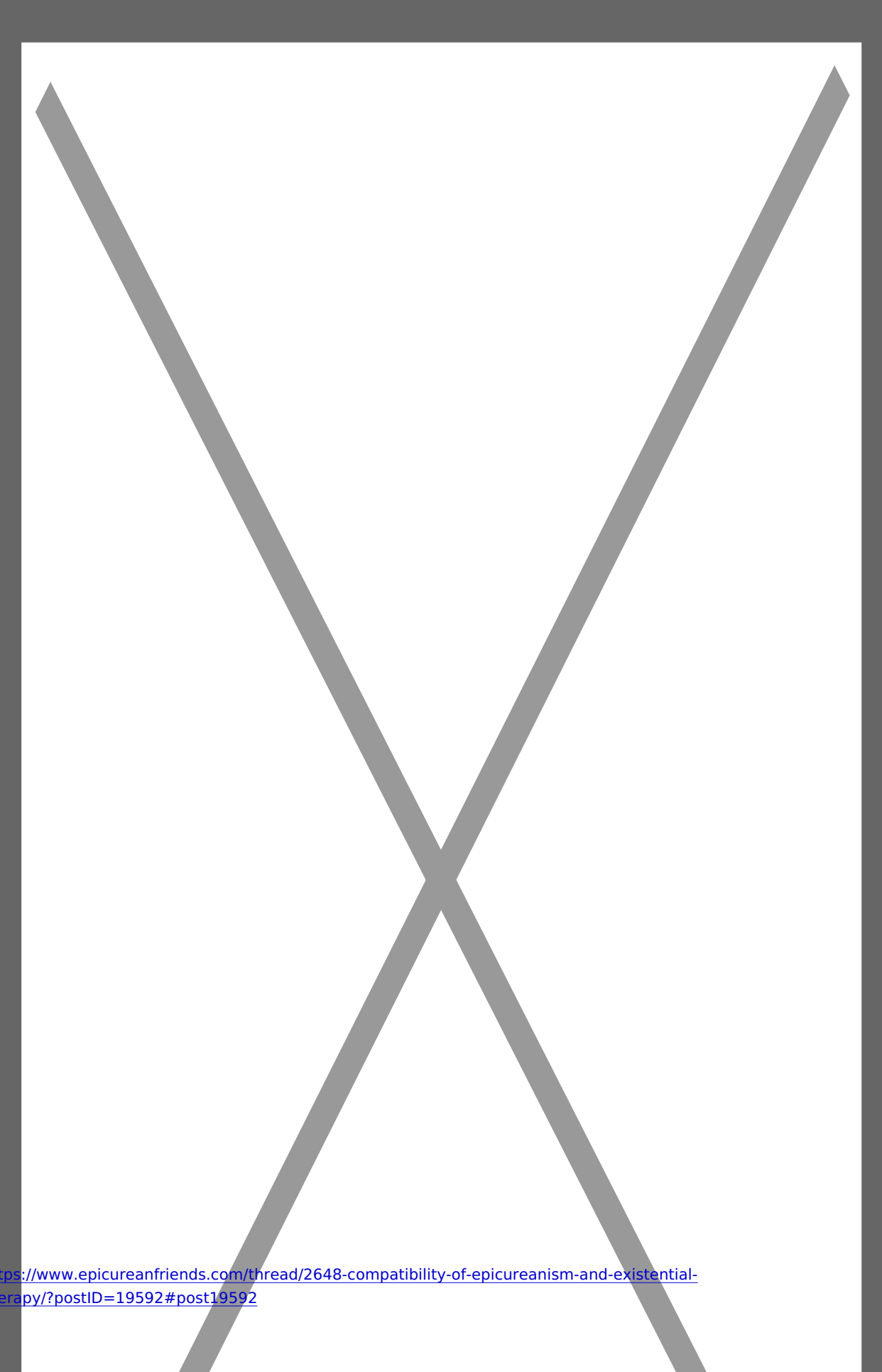
Post by "Don" of August 30, 2022 at 6:23 PM

Thanks for starting this thread and sharing your interest in this area, [Kalosyni](#) . Here's my take so far:

- From the information above, it looks like there are parallels as well as divergences between Epicureanism and Existential Therapy.
- The idea that Epicurean philosophy is a therapy of sorts is, to me, on target: philosopher's words are empty if they do not heal the suffering of mankind. *For just as medicine is useless if it does not remove sickness from the body, so philosophy is useless if it does not remove suffering from the soul.* Whether that's Existential Philosophy or not is, of course, open to discussion but one that could prove interesting.
- I do like this: "*Existential therapy posits that we are free to choose among alternatives, and thus we are responsible for our lives, actions and any failure to take action.*" I have always taken Epicurus to be concerned with personal responsibility. We are responsible for our own actions/choices whether it's for pleasure or for matters of justice.
- I found the section on Existential Anxiety interesting:
  - *Anxiety is seen by existential therapists as being a condition of living, naturally arising from a person's striving to survive. This is known as 'existential anxiety' and is a normal outcome of facing the four ultimate concerns in life: death, freedom, isolation and meaninglessness.*  
*Once existential anxiety is recognised, it can be dealt with constructively. Anxiety can be a stimulus for growth as we become aware of and accept our freedom. If we have the courage to face ourselves and the challenges of human life, we may be frightened but we can change.*
  - We've had a discussion on anxiety and stress elsewhere on the forum recently, but it appears to me that this aspect of Existential Anxiety has parallels with my position on anxiety. I fully concur that "'existential anxiety' and is a normal outcome of facing the four ultimate concerns in life: death, freedom, isolation and meaninglessness," and it seems that both Epicureanism and Existential Therapy strive to alleviate "existential anxiety." Epicurus simply calls this fear of the gods, fear of death, etc. From that brief excerpt, it doesn't appear that Existential Therapy works to eliminate existential anxiety, but it does appear to try and equip people to deal constructively with it. That does appear parallel to Epicureanism.
- *Finding meaning in life is a by-product of engagement, which is a commitment to creating, loving, working and building.* I'll admit I'm uneasy about "finding meaning in life." For me, the search from some transcendental meaning in life is a fool's errand. The



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<https://www.epicureanfriends.com/thread/2648-compatibility-of-epicureanism-and-existential-therapy/?postID=19592#post19592>

### [Philosophy as Therapy](#)

A lot of philosophers I know need therapy. I can't think of too many I know I would want to be my therapist, however. What do philosophers know about...

[www.philosophytalk.org](http://www.philosophytalk.org)

### [Philosophical counseling - Wikipedia](#)