

Is Epicurean life achievable only for well off?

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A few years back I watched a happy-life advice (probably on YouTube) from Bill Gates and Warren Buffett (not my regular passtime, but still...). The essence of it was quite Epicurean: "Try to enjoy life, don't work every hour, spend time with your friends and family". Needless to say, a "don't work too hard" suggestion coming from two gentlemen who jointly have more wealth than GDPs of poorest X countries in the world sounded a bit disingenuous or tone deaf.

Of course, the Epicurean take on this would be: what you really need is not that hard to attain. But Epicurus also places emphasis on being a good friend (and family?) Even if one's own needs are minimal, people surrounding one (children, spouses, relations, friends) do not necessarily subscribe to the idea of not needing iPads and designer clothing. One "spin" would be to say: making people surrounding you happy is the pleasure in life. But if the cost of that is absolute absence of leisure and continuous stress?

How did Epicurus address this issue? Self sufficiency is the recipe of course, which at the time (2300 years ago?) was possible. But even then many did not possess land or means of farming, or freedom! Going back to Epicurus himself, as it transpires, he was certainly a wealthy man (possessed lands and slaves - not a judgement, quite normal for the world before 1800s)!

How do we reconcile this?