

# Five Doses That Trump Four Every Time - The "Five-Part Cure"

Post by "Cassius" of February 9, 2023 at 9:04 AM

[Edit: Originally posted as "Six-Part" Cure, consolidated to five for reasons stated in [post 16 below](#).]

My issues with the tetrapharmakon have been frequently stated. What would I suggest is a much better summary that is better documented in the texts? Instead of the "four-part cure" I think we can look to a much better-stated "Six-part cure" as stated by Torquatus in "On Ends" (which means it was taken from the best handbooks available in about 50 BC by Cicero, who also had access to the best Epicurean teachers of his time, and who was subject to the sanction of some of his best friends if he got it wrong).

I need to look further at the Latin and variations of the translations, but let's take this from Rackham as a starting point:

## Quote

The truth of the position that pleasure is the ultimate good will most readily appear from the following illustration. Let us imagine a man living in the continuous enjoyment of numerous and vivid pleasures alike of body and of mind, undisturbed either by the presence or by the prospect of pain: what possible state of existence could we describe as being more excellent or more desirable? One so situated must possess in the first place a strength of mind that is proof against all fear of death or of pain; he will know that death means complete unconsciousness, and that pain is generally light if long and short if strong, so that its intensity is compensated by brief duration and its continuance by diminishing severity. Let such a man moreover have no dread of any supernatural power; let him never suffer the pleasures of the past to fade away, but constantly renew their enjoyment in recollection, and his lot will be one which will not admit of further improvement.

I can see it dividing this way:

1. Set as your goal that of living in the continuous enjoyment of numerous and vivid pleasures alike of body and of mind, undisturbed either by the presence or by the prospect of pain
2. Work to possess a strength of mind that is proof against all fear of death or of pain;
3. Work to understand that death means complete unconsciousness,

4. Work to understand that pain is generally light if long and short if strong, so that its intensity is compensated by brief duration and its continuance by diminishing severity.
5. Work to possess no dread of any supernatural power;
6. Work to never suffer the pleasures of the past to fade away, but constantly renew their enjoyment in recollection.

Some may divide it differently, and suggestions are welcome.

This post is just my first thought on the subject, but it covers the same points as the first two of the "T" while stating the other key fundamental points of the philosophy in much more clear fashion. Someone might want to say that point one is not a "dose" but the definition of health, but I think it's probably essential to keep it in the list given that the absence of such a statement is a major contributor to the ambiguities of the "T"

And this is a list that comes with some of the best possible documentation from the ancient world, not from a fragment of Greek of which we have next to no context with which to judge its subtleties, and about which we really do not even know for sure that Philodemus endorsed.

(Thanks to Don for inspiring this post.)