

# What Are The Possible Reasons (And Of These, The Most Likely) Why The List of 40 Principal Doctrines Does Not Feature A Statement Explicitly Stating Pleasure To Be The Goal of Life?

Post by "Cassius" of February 13, 2023 at 6:02 PM

## [Quote from Don](#)

My reservation on that would be the latter part of [PDO1](#) where neither anger nor favor/gratitude affects the one who is blessed and incorruptible. Epicurus is clear that gratitude is important for humans to live a pleasurable life.

That's a very good point, Don. That would mean that the subtlety would have to extend to the observation that because men are not gods, they are subject to anger and favor, both of which are necessary to sustain their lives at times given that we do not live in the intermundia.

Perhaps related to this is that I have always found it interesting that Diskin Clay, in his article on Epicurus' last will and testament, suggested that this PDO1 was really one of the Twelve Fundamentals (in which he agreed with many of DeWitt's suggestions but not all). I can definitely see an analogy to atoms in that an atom has no possibility of being "weak" and breaking apart, and there therefore self-sufficient, but on the other hand atoms are not gods - there's just that analogy that they are not weak.

So in pointing out correctly that gratitude (and I would say anger/ability to use force against at least some types of enemies too as per [PDO6](#)) is in fact a necessary part of human life, this is perhaps the offsetting balance against the first assertion that a perfect being knows no trouble and give no trouble (why "trouble" and not "pain"?), like many of the other doctrines seem to start with an assertion and then finish with a second "offsetting" assertion.

[PD08](#). No pleasure is a bad thing in itself; but the means which produce some pleasures bring with them disturbances many times greater than the pleasures.

[PD09](#). If every pleasure could be intensified so that it lasted, and influenced the whole organism or the most essential parts of our nature, pleasures would never differ from one another.

And as Kalosyni mentioned in terms of "getting back to the original question" there is something odd about the way the list is written. Epicurus obviously could string together a narrative such as in his letters. How did this document end up being so disjointed? And as per

the original question too, it would have been so easy to lift from the letter the Meneouceus or presumably many other places as statement like: "We recognize pleasure as the first good innate in us, and from pleasure we begin every act of choice and avoidance, and to pleasure we return again, using the feeling as the standard by which we judge every good."

Even if [PD01](#) is dual purpose as per this recent exchange, why is that ethical point not stated more explicitly? Would Epicurus himself likely have left it out?

It's almost like Kalosyni said that the document has been lifted from some other context without an introduction (such as Torquatus gave when he started talking about the best life) .