

# Best Way to Introduce Teachings?

Post by “Daniel Van Orman” of March 7, 2019 at 3:04 PM

Greetings, everyone!

I was wondering, what materials or ways do we have for presenting our teachings to others who have never seen them before? How effective are they? How much do they draw interest? How much understanding do they provide? How well do they motivate others to learn more?

Would it be useful to compile a list of these materials? Are there any gaps we could fill or materials to be improved?

Among our materials, I find intermediate and rich depth for those already interested in Epicureanism, but not much for someone with only a little curiosity or just trying to make philosophy seem a little less foreign.

Here are a few materials and my opinions on them.

Memes and Graphics:

<http://societyofepicurus.com/shareable-epicurean-memes/>

These are very simple, great for social media, and summarize Epicureanism well. However, I am not sure how much interest they generate nor how much depth they carry. How well are these working and how are we using them?

## Elli's Memes / Graphics

- 



ΜΗΤΡΩΔΩΡΟΣ Ο ΛΑΜΨΑΚΗΝΟΣ


Ε.Π. XIV.(14) Γεγόναμεν ἅπασι, δις δὲ οὐκ ἔστι γενέσθαι• δεῖ δὲ τὸν αἰῶνα μηκέτι εἶναι• σὺ δὲ οὐκ ὦν τῆς αὔριον κύριος ἀναβάλλῃ τὸ χαῖρον• ὁ δὲ βίος μελλησιμῶ παραπόλλυται καὶ εἰς ἕκαστος ἡμῶν ἀσχολούμενος ἀποθνήσκει.

Γεννιόμαστε μια φορά, δεύτερη δεν είναι δυνατόν να γεννηθούμε και ούτε πρόκειται αυτό να συμβεί στον αιώνα των αιώνων. Εσύ δε δίχως να είσαι κύριος της αυριανής ημέρας, αναβάλλεις το να χαίρεσαι. Ο δε βίος περνάει και ο καθένας μας πεθαίνει απασχολούμενος.










Ε.Σ 14: We have been born once and cannot be born a second time; for all eternity we shall no longer exist. But you, although you are not in control of tomorrow, are postponing your happiness. Life is wasted by delaying, and each one of us dies occupied.

<https://www.epicureanfriends.com/thread/803-best-way-to-introduce-teachings/?postID=2383#post2383>

Vatican Saying 14 - "We have been born once..."




EPICURUS

		
SELF-SUFFICIENCY	PLEASURE	FRANKNESS OF SPEECH
		
NOBILITY	JUSTICE	PRUDENCE
		
COMMON BENEFIT	BRAVERY	TRUST/SECURITY


VS 78. The noble man is chiefly concerned with wisdom and friendship; of these, the former is a mortal good, the latter an immortal one.

Eth 6/6/15

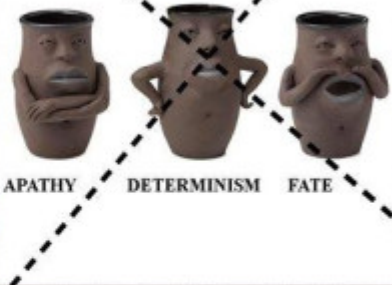
Vatican Saying 78



EPICURUS : THIS IS MY VASE made by bronze  
Full of water and flowers (pleasures)  
... and unbreakable !  
"For the discovery of truth (the EPICUREAN CANON), your one and only sure or well-founded hope is the possession of this power : you must be able to judge and sift truth from falsehood; you must have the assayer's sense for sound and true or forged coin; if you could have come to your examination of doctrines equipped with a technical skill like that, I should have nothing to say; but without it there is nothing to prevent their severally leading you by the nose; you will follow a dangled bunch of carrots like a donkey; or, better still, you will be water spill on a table, trained whichever way one chooses with a finger-tip; or again, a reed growing on a river's bank, bending to every breath, however gentle the breeze that shakes it in its passage".  
(LUCIAN - "HERMOTIMUS" or RIVAL PHILOSOPHIES")



The stoic vases



APATHY      DETERMINISM      FATE

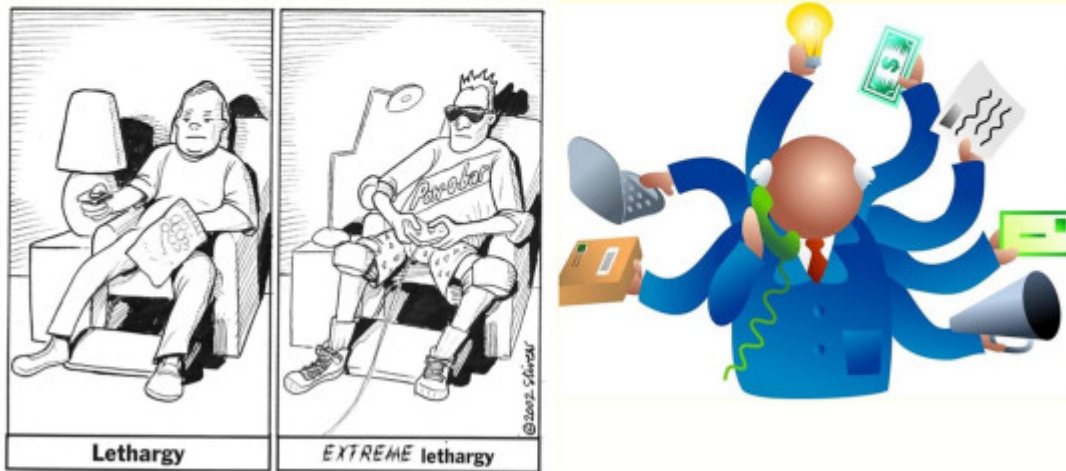
In everything that pleases your soul, or supplies a want, or that you are fond of, remember to add this to your thoughts: what is the nature of this thing? If you are fond of a vase, say that it is a vase that you like, and nothing more — for when it has been broken you will not be disturbed. If you are kissing your child or wife, say that it is a human being whom you are kissing and nothing more — for when the wife or child dies, you will not be disturbed.  
Epictetus, Enchiridion III

<https://www.epicureanfriends.com/thread/803-best-way-to-introduce-teachings/?postID=2383#post2383>

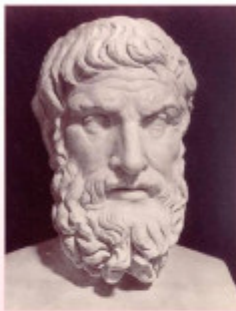
## Vases - Epicurean v Stoic

Epicurus VS11 : For most men rest is “lethargy” and activity is “mania”.

11. Τῶν πλείστων ἀνθρώπων τὸ μὲν ἡσυχάζον νάρκη, τὸ δὲ κινούμενον λῦττα.  
(Ἐπίκουρος)



## VS11 - Lethargy vs Mania



εἰμί, ἐὰν μὴ ὑμεῖς πρὸς με  
ἀφίκησθε, αὐτὸς  
τρικύλιτος, ὅπου ἂν  
ὑμεῖς καὶ Θεμίστα  
παρακαλῆτε, ὠθειέσθαι.

“If you don’t come to me,  
I am capable of being  
persuade to rush on my  
own to wherever you and  
Themista summon me”.

Wanna find out who your true friends  
are?

Move away  
and see who  
comes to visit.

You'll quickly see  
true colors.

someecards  
user card



True friendship isn't about being there  
when it's convenient; it's about being there  
when it's not.

## Friendship And Being There

Seikilos placed me here  
as an everlasting sign of immortal  
remembrance".

ΟΣΟΝ ΖΗΣ ΦΑΙΝΟΥ,  
ΜΗΔΕΝ ΟΛΩΣ ΣΥ ΛΥΠΟΥ.  
ΠΡΟΣ ΟΛΙΓΟΝ ΕΣΤΙ ΤΟ ΖΗΝ,  
ΤΟ ΤΕΛΟΣ Ο ΧΡΟΝΟΣ ΑΠΑΙΤΕΙ.

**“While you live shine,  
have no grief at all.  
Life lasts only for a short while,  
time determines the end (goal)”.**



## Seikilos Poem

Ο ΣΟΦΟΣ ΞΕΡΕΙ ΠΩΣ Η ΜΕΓΑΛΗ ΔΥΝΑΜΗ  
ΤΗΣ ΑΠΟΦΑΣΗΣ ΕΙΝΑΙ ΣΤΗ ΔΙΚΑΙΟΔΟΣΙΑ  
ΤΟΥ ΙΔΙΟΥ.

«ΑΠΟ ΤΑ ΠΡΑΓΜΑΤΑ ΚΑΠΟΙΑ ΓΙΝΟΝΤΑΙ  
ΑΠΟ ΑΝΑΓΚΗ ΚΑΠΟΙΑ ΑΛΛΑ ΑΠΟ ΤΥΧΗ  
ΚΑΙ ΚΑΠΟΙΑ ΑΛΛΑ ΤΕΛΟΣ ΑΠΟ ΤΗΝ ΔΙΚΗ  
ΜΑΣ ΒΟΥΛΗΣΗ. ΚΑΙ Η ΜΕΝ ΑΝΑΓΚΗ ΔΕΝ  
ΥΠΟΚΕΙΤΑΙ ΣΕ ΕΥΘΥΝΗ, Η ΤΥΧΗ ΑΠΟ ΤΗΝ  
ΑΛΛΗ ΕΙΝΑΙ ΑΣΤΑΤΗ, ΑΛΛΑ Η ΕΛΕΥΘΕΡΙΑ  
ΜΑΣ ΔΕΝ ΕΞΟΥΣΙΑΖΕΤΑΙ ΑΠΟ ΚΑΝΕΝΑΝ  
ΑΛΛΟΝ ΚΑΙ ΦΥΣΙΚΑ ΕΠΙΔΕΧΕΤΑΙ ΤΟΝ  
ΨΟΓΟ ΟΣΟ ΚΑΙ ΤΟΝ ΕΠΑΙΝΟ».  
ΕΠΙΚΟΥΡΟΣ

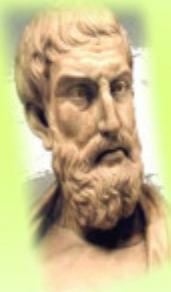
One who is wise knows that the great  
power of decision lies within oneself.

“While some things are caused by fate,  
other things happen by chance and other  
by our own will. He sees that fate is irre-  
proachable and chance unreliable, but  
choices deserve either praise or blame  
because what is decided by choice is not  
subject to any external power”.

EPICURUS

## Epicurus on Free Will (Letter to Menoecus)

- Epicurus VS 62. If parents are justly angry with their children, it is certainly useless to fight against it and not to ask for pardon; but if their anger is unjust and irrational, it is quite ridiculous to add fuel to their irrational passion by nursing one's own indignation, and not to attempt to turn aside their wrath in other ways by gentleness.



**ΕΠΙΚΟΥΡΟΥ ΠΡΟΣΦΩΝΗΣΙΣ 62.** Εάν οι γονείς οργίζονται δίκαιολογημένα με τα παιδιά τους, είναι ανόητο αυτά να τους εναντιώνονται και να μην τους παρακαλούν να τα συγχωρήσουν. Αν, όμως, οργίζονται αδικαιολόγητα και παράλογα, είναι εντελώς γελοίο να ερεθίζει κάποιος με το θυμό του αυτόν που είναι παράλογος, και να μην προσπαθεί να του αλλάξει την παράλογη συμπεριφορά και να τον ηρεμήσει με άλλους τρόπους.

ΕΠΙ 06/05/15

## VS62 - Anger and Children

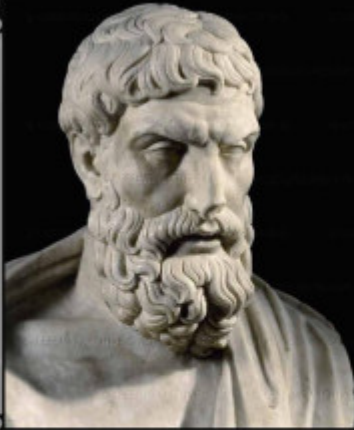
- IN GREEK, THE WORD "ATARAXIA" CAN MEAN "REST"  
IN MUSIC "REST" MEANS "REST"  
BUT THAT DOES NOT MEAN THAT  
THERE IS NOT A MELODY

Name	Note	Rest
Whole Note		
Half Note		
Quarter Note		
Eighth Note		
Sixteenth Note		

The notes I handle no better than many pianists. But the pauses between the notes - ah, that is where the art resides.

*Artur Schnabel*

## Ataraxia and Rest



**EPICURUS**

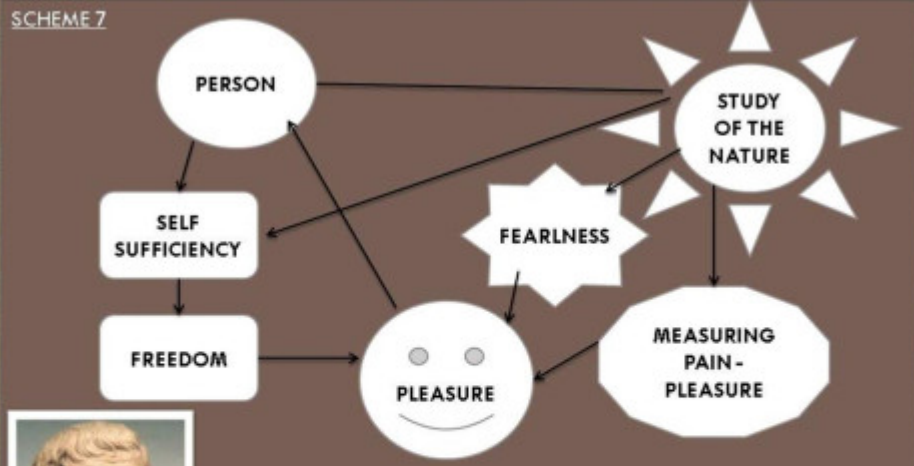
In the time when people felt the weight of religion,  
wallowing upon the ground and—a ghastly spectacle—  
heaven scowled down upon them and showed no mercy,  
a Greek man was the first to raise his eyes,  
daring to make a stand against it.  
He took no notice at all of the thunder and lightning,  
religious recitations merely incited him;  
He said he would expose the secrets of Nature  
and so, by force of intelligence, and no other,  
he pierced beyond the flaming walls of the world,  
paraded up and down the whole immensity  
and returned victoriously with explanations for everything  
—what could happen, what not, and what were the limits,  
all fixed and measured, of every nature and thing.  
And so he had religion under his feet.  
He won, and as a result we have no superiors.

On the Nature of Things (De Rerum Natura)  
by Titus Lucretius Carus

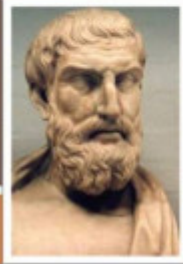
## Lucretius - At A Time When Human Life...

THE MULTIVALENT LOGIC OF EPICURUS

SCHEME 7



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graph TD; PERSON((PERSON)) --> SELF_SUFFICIENCY[SELF SUFFICIENCY]; PERSON --> PLEASURE((PLEASURE)); PERSON --> STUDY_OF_NATURE((STUDY OF THE NATURE)); SELF_SUFFICIENCY --> FREEDOM[FREEDOM]; SELF_SUFFICIENCY --> PLEASURE; FREEDOM --> PLEASURE; FEARLNESS{{FEARLNESS}} --> PLEASURE; MEASURING_PAIN_PLEASURE{{MEASURING PAIN - PLEASURE}} --> PLEASURE; STUDY_OF_NATURE --> PLEASURE; STUDY_OF_NATURE --> MEASURING_PAIN_PLEASURE;
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**EPICURUS**

<https://www.epicureanfriends.com/thread/803-best-way-to-introduce-teachings/?postID=2383#post2383>

## Epicurus - Multivalent Logic



EPICURUS

Ε.Π. 64. Ακολουθεῖν δεῖ τὸν παρὰ τῶν ἄλλων ἔπαινον αὐτόματον, ἡμᾶς δὲ γενέσθαι περὶ τὴν ἡμῶν ἰατρείαν.

Ο ἔπαινος τῶν ἄλλων πρέπει νὰ ἔρχεται χωρὶς νὰ τον ἐπιδιώκουμε. Το μόνο που πρέπει νὰ κάνουμε εμεῖς εἶναι νὰ προσπαθοῦμε νὰ θεραπεύσουμε τα δικά μας ελαττώματα.

E.S. 64. Praise from others must come unasked, and the only thing that we have concern ourselves is the healing of our character's defects.

**Bravo!**



## Vatican Saving 64



EPICURUS

### ΕΠΙΚΟΥΡΟΥ ΠΡΟΣΦΩΝΗΣΙΣ XXIX (29)

Παρρησία γὰρ ἔγωγε χρώμενος φυσιολογῶν χρησιμωδεῖν τὰ συμφέροντα πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις μᾶλλον ἂν βουλοίμην, κἂν μηδεὶς μέλλη συνήσειν, ἢ συγκατατιθέμενος τοῖς δόξαις καρποῦσθαι τὸν πυκνὸν παραπίπτοντα παρὰ τὸν πολλῶν ἔπαινον. [Ancient Greek]

Διότι ἐγὼ βεβαίως θα προτιμούσα μελετώντας τὴ Φύση νὰ ανακοινώσω με παρρησία αὐτὰ που εἶναι ωφέλιμα σε ὅλους τοὺς ἀνθρώπους, ἀκόμη καὶ ἂν δὲν συμφωνήσῃ κανεὶς μαζί μου, παρὰ νὰ συμβιβάζομαι με τὶς κοινότητες δοξασίης καὶ νὰ καρπώνομαι τὸν συχνὸ ἔπαινο τῶν πολλῶν. [New Greek]

For I would certainly prefer as I study Nature to announce frankly what is beneficial to all people, even if none agrees with me, rather than to compromise with common opinions and thus reap the frequent praise of the many. [English]

Rendition/translation from ancient greek to new greek and english, by Christos Yapijakis, founder member of the Epicurean Garden of Athens.

**Vatican Saving 29**

WHAT IS THE MAIN & WELL PROFOUND POINT THAT IS WRITTEN ON THE MONOLITHS ?

*"And for this cause we call pleasure the beginning and end of the blessed life. For 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"*

THREE (3) MONOLITHS APPEAR IN THE MOVIE "2001 A SPACE ODYSSEY" AND THESE ARE :

1 EPICURUS LETTER TO PYTHOCLES

2001: a space odyssey Monolith

2 EPICURUS LETTER TO MENOCEUS

3 EPICURUS LETTER TO HERODOTUS

Graphics by EB 26/7/2017

**Letter to Menoecus - "Pleasure the beginning and end of the blessed life"**

Do you know what I'm feeling now ? That the SWERVE IS IN THE NATURE OF ALL THINGS. One day it will work, through my child, for me too... And Epicurus will be confirmed once again.

— Humanity, at any rate, does have free will, and in a most ingenious way Epicurus derived free will from the doctrine of the swerve of the atom, saying in effect that the power to make a deliberate choice of action was inherent in the atom itself, which demonstrated that power by unaccountably swerving from its "normal" path.

— Titus Lucretius Carus, On the Nature of Things

## • Epicurus on living wisely and honorably and justly

**"It is impossible to live a pleasant life without living wisely and honorably and justly, and it is impossible to live wisely and honorably and justly without living pleasantly. Whenever any one of these is lacking, when, for instance, the man is not able to live wisely, though he lives honorably and justly, it is impossible for him to live a pleasant life."**

- Epicurus (Principal Doctrines, 5)

## • Epicurus On Living Wisely, Honestly, and Justly

*LUCIAN - "HERMOTIMUS, or RIVAL PHILOSOPHIES"*

"For the discovery of truth (the EPICUREAN CANON), your one and only sure or well-founded hope is the possession of this power : you must be able to judge and sift truth from falsehood; you must have the assayer's sense for sound and true or forged coin; if you could have come to your examination of doctrines equipped with a technical skill like that, I should have nothing to say; but without it there is nothing to prevent their severally leading you by the nose; you will follow a dangled bunch of carrots like a donkey; or, better still, you will be water spilt on a table, trained whichever way one chooses with a finger-tip; or again, a reed growing on a river's bank, bending to every breath, however gentle the breeze that shakes it in its passage".

## Lucian - Hermotimus Quote

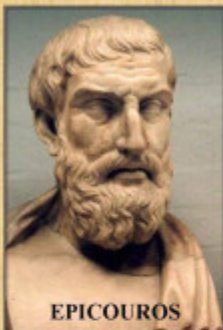
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*Stoics and Epicureans.* – The Epicurean seeks out the situation, the persons, and even the events that suit his extremely sensitive intellectual constitution; he forgoes the rest – that is, almost everything – because it would be too strong and heavy a diet. The Stoic, by contrast, trains himself to swallow stones and worms, glass shards and scorpions without nausea; he wants his stomach to be ultimately insensible to everything the chance of existence pours into him – he brings to mind the Arabian sect of the Assua that one encounters in Algiers.<sup>14</sup> like these insensitive people, he likes to act out his insensitivity before an invited audience, which is precisely what the Epicurean gladly eschews – for he has his ‘garden’!<sup>15</sup> Stoicism may well be advisable for those with whom fate improvises and who live in violent times and depend on impulsive and changeable people. But someone who more or less *expects* fate to allow him to spin *a long thread* does well to take an Epicurean orientation; people engaged in work of the spirit have always done so! For it would be the loss of all losses, for them, to forfeit their subtle sensitivity in exchange for a hard Stoic skin with porcupine spines.



FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE

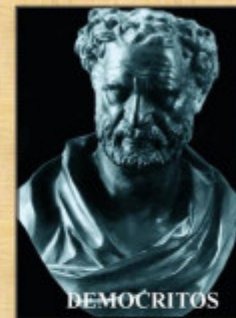
## Nietzsche - On Stoicism And Porcupine Skins



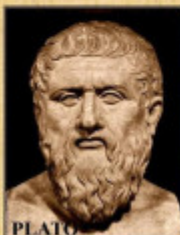
EPICOUROS



Black-figure pottery, Attic amphora by Exekias, detail, Achilles and Ajax play dice.



DEMOCRITOS



PLATO

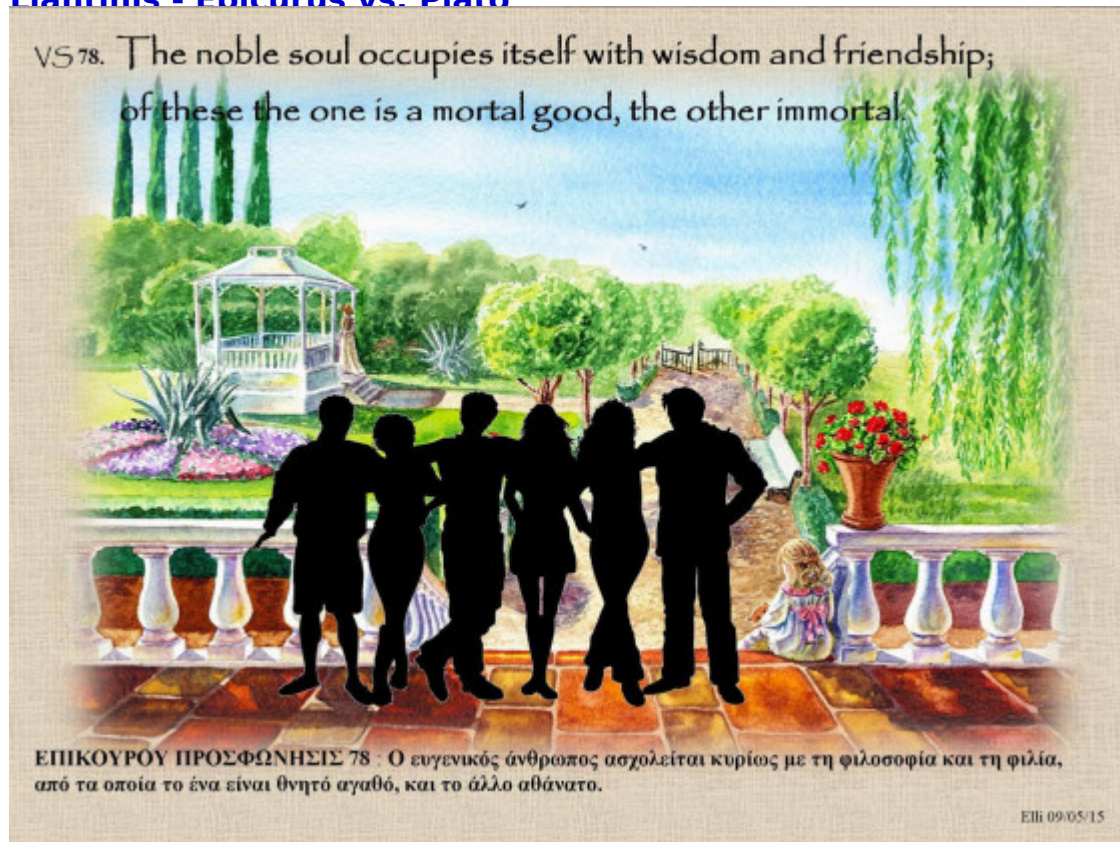
Epicouros, may somebody will declare at a proclamation in advance, in terms of size is next to Democritus. And he stands by his fenced opponent Plato which the war between them was livelong and undeclared. We see the two thinkers to debate like on the famous vase of Exekias we look Ajax and Achilles as they play dice. (Dimitris Liantinis –Stoa & Rome)



DIMITRIS LIANTINIS

## **Liantinis - Epicurus vs. Plato**

- VS 78. The noble soul occupies itself with wisdom and friendship; of these the one is a mortal good, the other immortal.



ΕΠΙΚΟΥΡΟΥ ΠΡΟΣΦΩΝΗΣΙΣ 78 : Ο ευγενικός άνθρωπος ασχολείται κυρίως με τη φιλοσοφία και τη φιλία, από τα οποία το ένα είναι θνητό αγαθό, και το άλλο αθάνατο.

ΕΠi 09/05/15

## **VS 78 - The Noble Soul And Immortal Goods**

Other memes more directly connected to sources seem to be too in-depth or too strong for introductions.

Catius' Cat: <https://epicureanfriends.com/houseofcatius/>

These are fun and correlate strongly with sources. They seem great for Epicureans to teach their children (a very useful niche!), but I am not sure how effective they would be for other purposes.

Forums: [FAQ Answers And Discussion](#)

There are some excellent links and discussions here, but they are either not very compiled/organized/accessible or seem to be at an intermediate level. One would need a decent amount of interest already to dive through threads to learn.

NewEpicurean.com: <https://newepicurean.com/>

This is a fantastic resource for those serious about learning about Epicureanism. Not so great for first introductions, other than the motivation and knowledge reading the original sources can give.

Dense Writings: <http://societyofepicurus.com/writings/>

Education:

Self-Guided Study: <http://societyofepicurus.com/self-guided-study-curriculum/>

Courses: <https://epicuruscollege.com/>

In my personal efforts, I wrote a few fun stories which carefully present neat lessons. They are meant for to be enjoyed (so people will want to read them) as well as focus heavily on one topic or lesson. These stories could be shared with friends without them feeling you are forcing anything onto them and could help others feel more comfortable with philosophy in general.

I am a utilitarian (I believe utilitarianism is directly based on Epicureanism), so these stories have both Epicurean and utilitarian elements.

My Cat's Terrible Roommate

A month ago, my cat, Magni, vented about some roommate of his yet again to another feline - which is strange since I do not know of anyone who shares his room with him (excluding myself, of course).

Magni complains his roommate does not respect his privacy.

This creep periodically checks his food and water for no apparent reason - and sometimes even goes so far as to mess with it!

Magni does not even want to know why his roommate keeps peeking at his personal litterbox....

He also grumbles about how this roommate does not respect his property.

So many times, the roommate has borrowed a dead mouse of his. Even after months, Magni has yet to get a single mouse back. When confronting him about it, his roommate always changes the subject: "Aww, that's such a cute meow you have!", he says, or "Did you want a treat, Little Prettypaws?".

Not to mention, his roommate occasionally rearranges Magni's cat toys. He tries to excuse this behavior by saying my cat will enjoy them more if they are switched out or moved. Pff, as if Magni wanted his favorite ball taken from the closet floor, where Magni rolled it under and stored it so neatly, and thrown randomly into the hall.

Perhaps worst of all, this lousy roommate has no concept of personal space.

Magni does not know how many countless times his roommate has randomly - and viciously - hugged him without warning.

However, things got better.

Magni is proud to report the roommate left about a month ago. Strangely, around the time the new college semester started, the creepy roommate whom I oddly seem to have never met left for another state.

Reflecting over why my cat was upset, it is clear he was not angry with this roommate, he was angry with the assumptions he made about what the roommate was doing.

My cat doesn't know why the roommate repeatedly checked his food and water, but whatever reason he had, it was strong enough in his mind to warrant doing it. Perhaps the decision was based on poor reasoning. Perhaps it was supported by great good reasons my cat is unaware of.

Instead of becoming irritated with roommates or anyone around us, stop to consider: why might they have done that action?

There may be something you do not understand about the situation or the offense may have been unintentional. If so, then anger over the action is unhelpful and perhaps even harmful.

If someone does make a poor decision, remember, no one wants to choose poorly.

Often, one makes a bad choice when they feel an overwhelming urge it will make things better (even if only temporarily) or experiences weakness or a lapse in judgment.

Whatever the cause, they chose poorly since, at the time, something made them feel it was a good decision.

Sources:

He who knows only his own side of the case, knows little of that. His reasons may be good, and no one may have been able to refute them. But if he is equally unable to refute the reasons on the opposite side; if he does not so much as know what they are, he has no ground for preferring either opinion. . . . He must be able to hear them from persons who actually believe them; who defend them in earnest, and do their very utmost for them. He must know them in their most plausible and persuasive form

John Stuart Mill, On Liberty, Chapter 2

Those who desire virtue for its own sake, desire it either because the consciousness of it is a pleasure, or because the consciousness of being without it is a pain, or for both reasons united;

as in truth the pleasure and pain seldom exist separately, but almost always together, the same person feeling pleasure in the degree of virtue attained, and pain in not having attained more. If one of these gave him no pleasure, and the other no pain, he would not love or desire virtue, or would desire it only for the other benefits which it might produce to himself or to persons whom he cared for

Utilitarianism, Chapter 4

John Stuart Mill

The man who best knows how to meet external threats makes into one family all the creatures he can; and those he can not, he at any rate does not treat as aliens; and where he finds even this impossible, he avoids all dealings, and, so far as is advantageous, excludes them from his life.

Epicurus, [Principal Doctrines](#), 39

No one chooses a thing seeing that it is evil; but being lured by it when it appears good in comparison to a greater evil, he is caught.

Epicurus, Vatican Sayings, 16

many who are capable of the higher pleasures, occasionally, under the influence of temptation, postpone them to the lower. But this is quite compatible with a full appreciation of the intrinsic superiority of the higher. Men often, from infirmity of character, make their election for the nearer good, though they know it to be the less valuable; and this no less when the choice is between two bodily pleasures, than when it is between bodily and mental. They pursue sensual indulgences to the injury of health, though perfectly aware that health is the greater good.

John Stuart Mill, Utilitarianism, Chapter 2