

# Who to believe?

**Post by "Godfrey" of May 27, 2023 at 12:32 PM**

A proper understanding of Epicurus doesn't just fall off the page: it takes time, and work, but ultimately is very rewarding.

As noted, there isn't much remaining from Epicurus himself, and many of the ancient sources are hostile. As is much of the modern and contemporary scholarship.

My process began with reading as much I could find, often haphazardly, and trying to make sense of it. Then I discovered this forum; at that time writing and developing personal outlines of the philosophy was being emphasized. I found writing and getting feedback on an outline was very helpful, a bit intimidating, and just a beginning.

A key part of my process has been to try to put to use what I've read and to see if it is useful in my daily life. This has been very helpful, as it has allowed me to shed some unhelpful ideas while continuing to pursue those which I find fruitful.

Continuing with reading: modern, non-Epicurean authors such as Victor Stenger, Lisa Feldman Barrett and many others have proven to be quite relevant for me. Plus some (but not much, I find it painful!) reading of Plato and Aristotle has been really good for providing context. Even a book or two on the pre-Socratics has been quite interesting, to show the early development of Greek thought.

In short, for me at least, Epicurus has proven to be a gateway to all sorts of study and understanding. So much of his thinking is being built upon even today, mostly without acknowledgement. He wrote that he got great pleasure from the study of natural philosophy, and I'm finding something similar. The interesting thing is that so much divergent reading can lead to a better understanding of what Epicurus was saying so long ago.

The Stoics are famous for their "spiritual exercises"; this continuing study is an important Epicurean exercise. As is always testing what you read through your direct experience.

Hopefully this rambling post is of some relevance to your question [ThinkingCat](#) !