

# **How would you respond to an existentialist who says "You Epicureans have chosen pleasure as your meaning but it's not universal" do Epicureans hold that pleasure is the universal Good?**

**Post by "Godfrey" of June 13, 2023 at 3:12 PM**

## [Quote from Little Rocker](#)

We just don't have the freedom to choose to act on something other than what we consider most pleasant.

That's an interesting statement and I've never thought about the Feelings in this way. My first take is that we, as humans, do have the freedom to choose to act on something other than what we consider most pleasant. But doing so will just make us miserable. As Epicureans, we have the good sense to reason correctly and will choose what is the most pleasant.

My second take is: hmmm, maybe we don't have that freedom.... Our reasoning is one of many inputs into the feelings, and faulty reasoning can lead to reactions from the feelings that guide us to misery. The feelings can only react to the input that they receive: garbage in, garbage out.

Third, this is a case in which I would answer that the original question of this thread is an abstraction. We Epicureans believe that the faculty of the Feelings is universal to all organisms and we pursue pleasure as it is Feeling which is the guide toward well-being. To tie this in with the quote above from Little Rocker, I would add that the more aware we are of our sensations and feelings, the more nuance is available to us in our choices and avoidances. The gray area, for me, remains whether we are able to "override" the guidance of our feelings or whether we give too much weight to reason and are simply unaware of our true feelings.