

Would You Rather Live For A Week As (1) Epicurus During the Last Week of His Life or (2) An Anonymous Shepherd Laying In The Grass In The Summertime With No Pain At All?

Post by "Pacatus" of September 12, 2023 at 4:00 PM

Once, when I was (legally) required to be in a meeting where I was going to be under (deceitful and unjust) attack, I sought the counsel of a wise friend (a social-worker clinical therapist with whom I did therapy for some time, who also became a valued friend). What he said was this: "Let me tell you what you are required to do: to put your body in that place for the prescribed time. That's it. Make yourself comfortable - and do not engage. You don't have to argue, you don't have to even respond to their questions. You can let your mind go wherever you want - you can plan a vacation, you can imagine or remember a pleasant scenario in your life. And when the time is up, you can just leave."

Which is what I did. I did not engage my mind in any of the negativity.

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With that said, [Don](#) has often stressed that *ataraxia* is not the be-all-end-all for an Epicurean: *aponia* is (on the negative side) the other blade of the scissors.* In the throes of severe pain, Epicurus may well have struggled to maintain *ataraxia* and enjoy the pleasures of the mind (and he may have drifted in and out of consciousness). But he had the tools make the best job of it.

My therapist friend would recommend the same kind of tools.

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* The Stoics seem to dismiss *pone* as something almost irrelevant to the *apatheia* of the sage. The Pyrrhonians simply stress *ataraxia*, without, as I recall, much attention to *pone*.