

# Eat Drink and be Merry!

Post by "Godfrey" of September 28, 2023 at 7:39 PM

## [Quote from kochiekoch](#)

Sounds like pleasure is a feeling, pre-rational and universally desirable rather than concept with a specific definition.



## [Quote from Cassius](#)

Epicurus seems to be labeling every mental or physical living experience as "pleasure" so long that experience is not explicitly felt to be painful.

Well said. I may have been asleep, but I don't recall hearing it stated quite like that.

When you look at it like this, which is how it should be looked at, I suppose the first concern is to prove that there's no neutral state. This can be done in at least two ways:

- attending to one's experience, and noticing that what was originally thought to be neutral, upon more careful attention, always has an element of either pleasure or pain in it
- examining a circumplex, which shows that 0,0 is the only place where pleasure or pain don't occur. And realizing that 0,0 is so infinitesimally tiny as to be meaningless in practical terms.

Then you need to figure out how to get practical benefit from such a broad range of experience. Epicurus did this by defining the categories of desires. These can then be used to examine one's personal desires. Once one has examined their desires and becomes increasingly aware of their personal pleasures and pains, they can think about prudent ways to increase their pleasure. Epicurus' extant texts give these criteria in that regard, at least to my understanding:

- all pleasures are finite, because one's life is finite
- pleasures and pains can be broken down only into intensity, duration and location. Their magnitudes can be varied in each of these ways.

Only at this juncture and in this context does it make sense to discuss things like mental v physical pleasures or static v kinetic pleasures.