

Tips On Offsetting Pleasures Against Pains

Post by “Eikadistes” of November 28, 2023 at 4:05 PM

[Quote from Don](#)

[Quote from Cassius](#)

If a Christian of any stripe is ****convinced**** in their bones that they'll be livin' with Jesus after they die (albeit erroneously, may I add), maybe we could describe them as being free from the anxiety of death.

The placebo effect is a measurably powerful phenomena that can be exploited as an emotional tool. I often reflect on a study from Cornell University (2019) that compared a group of mentally healthy participants with a group of people suffering from depressive disorders. They all played a card game that was completely fixed, and then their responses to "How much control they personally reported" were measured. In general, the healthy, optimistic crowd assessed their *victories* as being the consequence of good decision making, and their *failures* to be the inevitable result of occasional misfortune. On the other hand, the depressed group, who were genuinely sick, saw right through the ruse: the game was fixed. They knew that they had absolutely no control over the outcome, and were therefore able to see through the conditions of the experiment. [<https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2019/07/190717230341.htm>]

Since we're not being controlled by extra-dimensional scientists, this isn't a great analogy (just something I think about from time to time). Ultimately, I think optimism is equal parts healthy, effective, and delusional. I think this is why Epicurus recommends a form of prayer, but only on the condition that the practitioner understands that god is not listening, and that wishes cannot be reliably fulfilled with choosing to further one's personal accomplishments.