

# Mental pleasure/pain more intense and longer lasting than physical pleasure/pain

Post by “TauPhi” of December 12, 2023 at 11:04 PM

[Quote from frank1syl](#)

My main interest is practical. If mental pain is greater (impacts us more) than physical pain,

To make this statement true, we would need to discover a way to measure both types of pain. 'Greater' might not be fortunate adjective here. 'Different' would probably be better. Also, mental pains can lead to physical pains and vice versa.

[Quote from frank1syl](#)

then my focus ought to be on things entirely under my control (my free will), and secondarily, things I have some partial control over (chance?), and lastly, should not concern myself with things I can't control (destiny).

What you think you have in your control can easily stop being in your control. From practical point of view, Stoic dichotomy of control doesn't seem to be applicable to humans. It would be perfect for us if we were purely reasonable creatures. We're not. We're creatures that mostly feel and sometimes reason so having pleasure and pain as guidelines seems to be a better approach in life.

To illustrate my points, I'll give you a short story of Pious Peter that I created for this occasion. The story won't guarantee me next Nobel Prize in literature but I hope it can show you that one type of pain can lead to another and stuff in our heads is not so easily controllable if our reasoning is flawed (and it is way more often than we wish it was).

*Pious Peter worries greatly that a god will not accept him in heaven (mental pain). This makes Peter stressed so he can't sleep well anymore (physical pain). He's constantly tired (physical pain). His ability to perform at work decreases exponentially (mental). He gets fired (mental). He worries even more (mental). He can't eat properly now (physical). His body is weaker and weaker (physical). His mind takes him to darker and darker places (mental). Pious Peter can't control what's supposed to be in his control anymore (mental). He reaches for alcohol and pills (mental and physical) and his downward spiral continues.*

I'll stop here or the story gets too drastic but I hope you get my point.

Instead of thinking in fixed categories of greater/lesser; mental/physical; controllable/uncontrollable, in my opinion, it's much more beneficial to try to learn as much as possible about the nature of ourselves and our surroundings and figure out how to wisely pursue pleasures and avoid pains so we can feel that the overall balance is positive. This way we can enjoy our little game of life and, when times comes, leave the stage smiling.