

Thoughts and Discussion on Organizing Epicurean Community

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Thoughts on Organization

The following are loosely adapted (and stripped down) from the “twelve traditions” perspective of AA and other 12-step groups:

1. The Epicurean Community (the “Garden”) exists for the common well-being and happiness of its members, as founded in Epicurean philosophy and based in friendship.
2. There is only one authority for the Community, and that is the Canon,* as it has evolved and is actively interpreted by the Community members themselves.
3. The only requirement for membership is the sincere desire to learn and apply Epicurean philosophy personally in one’s life, according to one’s own circumstances and understanding.

There are no “loyalty oaths” or “pledges of allegiance” required.

4. The Epicurean Community is a community, not an institution. Hierarchical structure should be minimized – while recognizing leadership roles such as “administrator” or “monitor” or “secretary” and the like (for in-person as well as online groups and meetings) as necessary for the functioning of the Community.
5. Although professionals in various disciplines (such as philosophy, sociology, physics, neuro-science and the like) may have much value to add to the understanding of Epicurean philosophy – especially its application in modern times – the Garden is not a professional association, but a community of like-minded people, all of whom have a voice.

With that said, individual members have varied areas of expertise (such as translation) and levels of knowledge pertaining to the philosophy itself, which ought to be acknowledged and respected.

6. No dues or membership fees should be required (as this might effectively deter from membership some who sincerely desire to learn and apply Epicurean philosophy). But

voluntary contributions may be openly welcomed as needed to support the practical functioning of the Community - so long as they are not used to create a "ranked hierarchy" of membership status on that basis.

This is not to preclude membership designations based on such things as participation in the Community.

7. Both the Community (as a group) and individual members may pursue outreach activities for the purpose of bringing Epicurean philosophy to as wide an audience as possible. But members who prefer to remain anonymous as such, outside the Community, should have that anonymity honored and protected by all in the Community.
8. No member of the Community should ever, in such a way as to implicate the Community (or pretend to speak on its behalf), express any opinion outside on such controversial issues as those of partisan politics or sectarian religion.

(Anyone may, of course, express their personal understanding of how Epicurean philosophy informs their opinions on such matters - while taking care not to implicate the Community or its other members.)

9. All discourse among members should be characterized by civility, respect and friendliness - even (and especially) where strong opinions differ.

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* "Canon" here could include all of the "classical" Epicurean corpus - such as Lucretius; or only the extant works attributed to Epicurus himself, with others included as "classical" interpreters.

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These are my thoughts - but I would not argue them, or make an issue out of any of them. I'm just, personally, not that strongly wedded to the question. 😊