

# The word "eudaimonia" according to Epicurus

Post by "Cassius" of April 18, 2024 at 4:19 PM

I don't know that it is clear to me that there is a bright line between being aware of one's actions and being aware of one's condition, because I am not sure what "action" really means here. Our atoms are always in motion and the internals of our bodies are always in motion - is action the same as motion? Then as long as we are alive then we are in motion of one kind or another.

But what does seem clear is that there are only two feelings, pleasure and pain, and that whatever you are aware of, whether it is an action or a condition or any number of other terms, that awareness is either painful or pleasurable. That means that if you are alive, unless you are specifically perceiving a pain, what you are perceiving is pleasure.

By seeing things that way you can always count on, if you are wise, experiencing more pleasure than pain.

But what *\*specific\** pleasures you choose to experience, in all of the many ways they can be divided between parts of the body affected, intensity, and duration, as referenced in [PD09](#), are going to be matters that you have to decide according to your context and your own evaluations.

There's no trophy waiting at the end of the road for anyone, no matter which choices they make on which pleasures to pursue. You can live low to the ground and eke out a life of 100 years on bread and water, or you can live 50 years mountainclimbing. No trophy either way, and I don't think Epicurus is telling us that the 100 years living low is better than the 50 years living high. In fact, he specifically says **not** to look at life solely in terms of time:

Letter to Menoecus 126: "And just as with food he does not seek simply the larger share and nothing else, but rather the most pleasant, so he seeks to enjoy not the longest period of time, but the most pleasant."

In that context it seems to me that "most pleasant" is specifically intended to reinforce that we aren't gods who have unlimited time to do whatever we want, but human beings who have to make choices and go after what is most pleasant for us as best we can.