

# Epicurean versus deceptive (“modern”) Stoic decision making

**Post by “Cassius” of August 13, 2024 at 1:53 PM**

I will repeat the caveat that i hope everyone constantly remembers:

I'm not representing that I have everything figured out, and I welcome challenges and disagreements (at least when stated constructively 😊 )

The benefit that the podcast is providing, as Joshua also states in Episode 241, is that it is very helpful to challenge oneself to articulate these issues precisely. Unless you do get pretty deep in the weeds (another term Joshua used today) then it can sometimes be hard to see how important some of these issues are.

And this thread is a good example too - starting out talking about a Stoic chart, but now wrestling with some extremely deep conceptual issues that need to be resolved before we can adequately construct an alternative presentation.

I perceive that where we are in the discussion is a question that has to be answered before we can delete the "does it concern virtue?" and replace it with a question relating to "Pleasure." This dual perspective on Pleasure, as both a category and a particular experience, has to be understood before one can see that "absence of pain" is being used by Epicurus as a term that is an EXACT equivalent of "pleasure," and not a separate and unique category that some set out as so unique and perceptive that even Buddhists and Stoics would envy. I would say more confidently here in August of 2024 than every before that the truth is nothing of the kind. "Absence of pain" is simply a way of extending the definition of pleasure to ALL non-painful experiences, just as "gods" are defined as living beings who are blessed and incorruptible, and just as "the highest good" is defined to be "the standard by which we are bound to test all things by, but the standard itself by nothing."

"Pleasure" can only be understood as deserving of its place in the first rank of any "choice and avoidance" chart by understanding it in this wider way of: "all experience which is not painful." The problem is that we are so conditioned to see "pleasure" as "sex drugs and rock and roll" and therefore "bad," that we are intimidated away from putting the word "Pleasure" in its rightful position as the keystone of the whole analysis.