

Luck

Post by "Don" of September 16, 2024 at 5:05 PM

Mathematical probabilities. There are a number of quotes from the Epicurean texts that address this idea, especially:

Quote from Epicurus, Letter to Menoikeus

[133] "Who, then, is superior in thy judgement to such a man ? He holds a holy belief concerning the gods, and is altogether free from the fear of death. He has diligently considered the end fixed by nature, and understands how easily the limit of good things can be reached and attained, and how either the duration or the intensity of evils is but slight. Destiny, which some introduce as sovereign over all things, he laughs to scorn, affirming rather that *some things happen of necessity, others by chance, others through our own agency*. For he sees that necessity destroys responsibility and that *chance or fortune is inconstant* ; whereas our own actions are free, and it is to them that praise and blame naturally attach. [134] It were better, indeed, to accept the legends of the gods than to bow beneath that yoke of destiny which the natural philosophers have imposed. The one holds out some faint hope that we may escape if we honour the gods, while the necessity of the naturalists is deaf to all entreaties. *Nor does he hold chance to be a god, as the world in general does, for in the acts of a god there is no disorder ; nor to be a cause, though an uncertain one, for he believes that no good or evil is dispensed by chance to men so as to make life blessed, though it supplies the starting-point of great good and great evil*. He believes that the misfortune of the wise is better than the prosperity of the fool. [135] *It is better, in short, that what is well judged in action **should not owe its successful issue to the aid of chance***.

Replace "chance" with "luck" and that's a pretty good summary of Epicurus's views.