

"Self Help Is Like a Vaccine" by Bryan Caplan

Post by "Cleveland Okie" of October 3, 2024 at 12:23 PM

I went through the forum trying to find the right place to post this, I hope I am correct.

"Self Help Is Like a Vaccine" is not an Epicurean book per se, so let me explain what the book is and why I have posted about it.

Bryan Caplan is an economist, a university professor and a blogger, and he has lately been publishing a series of books that reprint his blog posts, collected together by subject area. This is a collection of some of his advice pieces. I mention Caplan here because as I have mentioned before, I became interested in Epicureanism because Dr. Caplan recommends that everyone read the "Letter to Menoeceus."

In the new book, Caplan recommends that people "repeatedly read" the "Letter to Menoeceus" (in the "Make Your Own Bubble in 10 Easy Steps" essay). He also mentions Epicurus in a couple of other places, including referring to Epicurus as "the great Epicurus."

I like the book, but let me also say something about the main reason I am bringing it up. I discovered Buddhism when I was a teenager, and for decades I read about it, tried meditating on and off, etc. (My favorite Buddhism book is "What the Buddha Taught" by Walpola Rahula).

Although obviously I have heard about Epicureanism for decades, I did not really discover the philosophy until I ran across one of Caplan's recommendations to read the "Letter to Menoeceus" (he has repeatedly recommended it!), I sat down to read it, and I realized it made a lot of sense. Since then, I have been reading one book after another about Epicureanism (I am currently reading "A Few Days in Athens" by Frances Wright.)

My point is this: I didn't read the "Letter to Menoeceus" until I was in my 60s! If only I had read it earlier!

So I think a lot lately about what we can do to bring Epicureanism to the attention of more people, turning over ideas in my mind. And as I am grateful to Caplan, I feel obliged to let y'all know about his new book.