

Getting Oriented - Where To Start For NewComers

Post by "Cassius" of May 16, 2019 at 9:01 AM

Here is a continuing issue which we need to address: Orientation for people who are new to Epicurus and don't know where to start.

Here's an analogy: Someone new finds out about Epicurus and wants to learn more. They come to Epicureanfriends.com, or to Epicurean sections on Facebook, or on Reddit, or on some other online location, and they find lots of detailed information about fine points of the philosophy. They quickly get lost in all the detail and get turned off by the amount of effort needed to get a big picture perspective.

There's no way to prevent this problem from happening. If we are doing our job, new people will constantly hear about Epicurus and want to know more. Just like the atoms, at no fixed time and no fixed place, new people are going to swerve into one of our public activities, and they are not going to know where to start. And Wikipedia is not only not going to get them where they need to be, it will probably discourage them from going further. Epicurean philosophy is not just another "ism" to read some ice-cold commentary and then put back on the shelf.

I can't imagine a more basic point than for us to repeat over and over: "If you have a question, ASK!" No sincere question, no matter how basic, will be turned away. If you're a troll, or wasting our time and yours, we will let you know pretty quickly. So I think that is the logical first line of response to new people.

The second line of response is where we really need more work. There is a FAQ set up at Epicureanfriends, and most of our Epicurean web pages have well-labelled directions on places to start. But there is a constant need for more and better material that summarizes the important points of Epicurean philosophy and bulldozes past the superficialities and misconceptions. This can be done through graphic memes, through videos, through audio presentations, and other avenues. Some of us are even talented enough to commit the core ideas to music, or to poetry.

So I write this to encourage our Epicurean activists to keep working on new and better material. And if you're reading this for the first time, don't hesitate to post a question in this thread, or wherever else you think appropriate.