

Toronto Canada Meetup Group (Discussion on Implementation)

Post by "AxA" of February 23, 2025 at 3:49 PM

Report on yesterday's in-person Eikas gathering in Toronto

The group was formed and event announced on the meetup.com platform 2 weeks ago.

We had 20 people show up at an alternative new age cafe called Alternity, sitting on cushions around a table. (Picture attached.)

4 of them knew me personally, including one friend who was very supportive in joining the group first and sharing with her friends.

2 people said they were familiar with Epicurus. One had read Lucretius and The Swerve. The others almost entirely found the group through general interest in philosophy, although there was one who said she had no interest in philosophy and was interested in the simple living aspect.

We started by going around the circle and each person saying name and why they came or any other comment. Then I introduced some of the main points of the philosophy as shown in the brochure I printed. The rest of the 2 hours was open discussion. I was ready to bring up new points when the conversation stopped, but it continued all the way through.

The group generally responded favourably to these ideas. One guy even said afterwards that this was exactly the philosophy he's been looking for.

Some of the objections that came up:

- Pain as a source of meaning vs boring bland state of continuous pleasure (I did not even get into the whole "pleasure as absence of pain" definitional issue, and this came up at the end and was never really addressed)
- The necessity of dealing with violent external enemies raised on hate who will be "harder" than you chill garden people (I had to reassure this guy I'm not a pacifist, but it remains an issue how much to compromise in the name of defence)
- The value of spiritual beliefs and practices in comforting the afflicted (one participant gave an impassioned speech about the beauty of Aphrodite's grief over the death of Adonis and how oppressed women could find comfort in this. I had no response)
- A sense that this philosophy is "for individuals" (or friend groups) and is somehow disconnected from wider politics, something that only the privileged can do, and that does not

address world issues (my usual response to this is instead of trying to influence how people vote, which is "downstream" of their beliefs and values, I see more potential in going "upstream" to these beliefs and values themselves - imagine how a world of Epicureans would vote)

By the end, there was enthusiasm to have another meetup next month, which I will be holding as a pot luck feast, and I will start a second monthly event to be a cafe discussion like this one.

I encourage all Epicureans to arrange in-person gatherings anywhere in the world. As long as at least one other person shows up, it's worth it. No need to wait for other Epicureans to present themselves. The general philosophically curious public is ready for these ideas!