

# Epicurean philosophy skewing toward elements of Stoicism in the time of Lucretius??

Post by "Cassius" of April 25, 2025 at 2:34 PM

I was thinking Don might weigh in from another direction as well. Don is very strong on [PD10](#) being a reference to reprobate acts being *bad because they do in fact lead to pain in most cases*. I always insist that it is important to observe that there is no "necessity" that they lead to a bad result, and that that is part of the point of [PD10](#). But we both agree that Epicurus is saying that pursuing the life of a reprobate is a bad idea. And in that case someone who is against making lists of undesirable characteristics might say that both Don and I sound like prudish Stoics to dare to say anything that implies that being a reprobate is generally bad.

As I read Kalosyni, she is objecting to Lucretius listing these character traits as undesirable "in general" because she thinks that sounds too much like a Stoic.

I would apply Don's reasoning on [PD10](#) to this list by Lucretius, and I think most people would say, as Don would, that even though it might be theoretically possible that a particular human being might pursue these courses and yet still manage to experience a happy life, the weight of experience is strongly against anyone being successful in doing so except in the most unusual of circumstances.

(As a reminder, the list is : (1) **lusts** that tear a man in two and trouble his life! How many (2) **fears** will follow! What (3) **insolence**, (4) **filth**, and (5) **shamelessness**! How many Disasters they deal! What (6) **sloth** and (7) **debauchery**!)

Therefore I do not think it smacks of Stoicism to think that generally sloth and debauchery and filth and the rest are going to lead in the end to more pain than pleasure. Therefore I think it's fine for an Epicurean like Lucretius to create a list of such things to be generally avoided.

The red line I think needs to be respected is that you need to be clear, like Lucretius is being, that this list doesn't come from the gods, or from abstract logic divorced from experience. An Epicurean gets lists like this from practical experience, and that's all the difference in the world from a Stoic who says that these things are "bad in themselves" or "bad because Zeus / Home / Plato's ideal forms say so."

So I think an Epicurean can easily maintain a personal list of desirable character traits that is in many cases (not all) similar to a list written by a Stoic. Certainly a Stoic would embrace Lucretius' list (and that's probably why Kalosyni is suspicious of it.) Further, making such a list is explicitly what [PD05](#) is doing in saying that the happy life requires prudence, honor, and justice.

But the difference in how you get your list, and how you support it and explain it to other people, makes all the difference in the world.