

# Personal mottos?

Post by "Cassius" of May 15, 2025 at 10:32 AM

## [Quote from Rolf](#)

This one has always been a bit prickly for me. If Epicureanism is a philosophy that is beneficial for everyone, and wisdom is so vital for prudently pursuing pleasure, then the idea that certain people are involuntarily unable to work towards this feels rather deflating. What is one to do if they lack the "physical constitution" or live in the "wrong nation"? Does Epicureanism still have something to offer such people, or are they better off looking elsewhere for pleasure and the reduction of pain?

The first thing to work to improve the "physical constitution" and get out of the "wrong nation" if at all possible. That in itself is a huge offering because it tells people not to wallow in their bad circumstances (not to "accept" them) if they can be changed.

If those circumstances cannot be changed, then what those people have is an extremely unfortunate situation that is thankfully very rare -- when you have absolutely no way to make things better. Then if there are truly no alternatives, one can exit the stage, but that is not going to be the case for almost anyone except in extreme conditions.

I have seen the argument that this is "deflating" but it is also reality, and it need not be deflating depending on one's attitude toward reality. It seems to me that the problem with thinking that "something has to be doable" when the situation really is beyond repair is a form of mysticism that often combines itself (in my view) with modern "humanism" of the kind that gets into regular debates about things like "all men are equal." Yes we would like them to be, and many of us take action to make things as equal as possible in many respects, but with our current technology there's nothing you can do to change a 100 year old person with terminal cancer into a 20 year old with perfect health. That's the kind of thing that in my view has to be "accepted" for now. If we want to change it, then we do whatever we can to advance medical science to the point where that might be possible. But where it isn't possible, that's the kind of thing we have to "accept."

And one more point: looking for answers to situations that are truly impossible to change seems to be what leads many people to supernatural religion. Would Epicurus suggest that people who refuse to accept reality take up supernatural religion?

I don't think so. That's a discussion worthy to pursue to, but I would say that Epicurus would not suggest that. I would say that Epicurus was so invested (properly) in living with Nature and with reality that he would find it intolerably painful to choose to abandon nature for something

fictional.