

What Makes Someone "An Epicurean?"

Post by "Don" of May 17, 2025 at 2:34 AM

[Onenski](#) has articulated much more eloquently than I could the thoughts that have been rolling around in my mind on this topic. Thank you!

The question comes down to "Who gets to be the gatekeeper?" and "Who defines the in-group and who gets to exclude the out-group?" That's what I like about [Onenski](#) 's five categories. They show the spectrum of potential inclusivity and exclusivity. Granted, *I* can say who *I* think should be "allowed" to carry the label of "Epicurean," but I cannot assert any authoritative mandate on the "proper" use of that "title."

We could maybe/probably assess someone's (or some character's) behavior as more or less prudent, more or less likely to lead to a pleasurable outcome. Even Epicurus, I would argue, did that! But do we get to assess whether someone gets to call themselves an "Epicurean"? Of that, I'm a little more skeptical. Honestly, I have a hard time "accepting" that Thomas Jefferson was a "real" Epicurean even though he was a self-professed one. But then I would appear to be falling into that fallacy I brought up, wouldn't I?