

What Makes Someone "An Epicurean?"

Post by "Don" of May 17, 2025 at 10:12 AM

[Quote from Kalosyni](#)

I'm pondering this question today (again)...of which there are two sides...1) "what would make me Epicurean" and 2) "what would make someone else Epicurean" or to "appear to be Epicurean" (such as people we know or characters in a movie).

Revisiting [Kalosyni](#)'s post that revitalized this thread.

My perspective is that both 1 and 2 hinge on motivation. We can't know someone else's (2) motivation. They can tell us, but we can't know what's *really* in their minds. That's why, I feel, we can assess *behavior* in others but not their *motivation*. Someone can say "I party because I'm an *Epicurean*, man!" We can ask "How did you feel the next day?" But we can't police (simply for lack of a better word) who calls themselves an Epicurean... Any more than Christians can't police who calls themselves a Christian.

Now, for (1), that's another thing. If I call myself an epicurean simply because I like to eat fancy food, and drink fine wine, that's one thing and a very surface stereotype understanding of what that word means (hence my not capitalizing the word). But we can't forbid that usage. If, on the other hand, we decide - are motivated - to learn about this philosophy and to apply it to living our lives, we think of ourselves as Epicureans. Someone who lives a minimalist lifestyle may also honestly call themselves an Epicurean from another popular understanding of the actual philosophy. We here would tend to disagree with them, but can we - should we - try to make them stop? I'd say no. None of us have that authority. There is no "apostolic succession" from Epicurus to our time. And there could be denominations if there even were! The most we can do is try to get a deeper understanding of the philosophy out there and encourage sincere students of Epicurus.