

# □ as the symbol of the philosophy of Epicurus

Post by “Don” of May 19, 2025 at 10:50 PM

I'm going to go off on a bit of a tangent here, but it's adjacent to ...

[Quote from kochiekoch](#)

You'd have to promote your symbol!

From my perspective (\*broadly\* generalizing to the point of stereotyping - there: caveat stated), the majority of humans - or at least \*many\* humans - don't like ambiguity. It's easier to live a world with cut and dried rules. Rules also make it easier to enforce a structure, a hierarchy, and in-group and an out-group. This also relates to this current thread...

Thread

## [What Makes Someone "An Epicurean?"](#)

In a nearby thread the question was raised about who should be considered to be an Epicurean. No one has the authority to give such a list, and probably no one after Epicurus himself, or the last head of the Epicurean school in Athens in the ancient world, ever had that authority. But we ought to give thought to what the key components of the philosophy are, so we can consider how many of them fit the person we're considering labeling as an Epicurean.

My own first question is "Does the person..."



Cassius

March 30, 2019 at 7:49 PM

Epicurean philosophy, as it's advocated for on this forum (and I think the interpretation here is generally in the right direction), is big on ambiguity, personal responsibility, contextual application of practice, etc. One does not find a Ten Commandments, A Five Pillars, etc. There is no cosmic authority or priesthood asserting "my way or the highway." People who want to point to a [prooftext](#) for their position will find it a little more difficult in the extant writings. For these reasons, it will always be difficult to get a wide community. That said, I also think there are "levels" of understanding that could benefit people of many inclinations. The contextual nature of the philosophy also could lend itself to misunderstanding and shallower and deeper students. But then we get into the "no true Epicurean" would do ABC that we got into in the other thread linked above. Who gets to name the "true Epicureans"?

[Quote from kochiekoch](#)

<https://www.epicureanfriends.com/thread/1922-as-the-symbol-of-the-philosophy-of-epicurus/?postID=35360#post35360>

He gets us! 😊

If we did have "He Gets Us" Super Bowl ads, what would that mean? IF we marketed WWED bracelets (What Would Epicurus Do? - It should be SFOTSE in my opinion but I digress), what \*would\* Epicurus do in any given situation (other than seek the most pleasure)? But what would that mean? And he "gets us"... what does that mean?

Okay, I'm admittedly being a little provocative.

From what I understand, Epicurus calls us:

- to see the material universe for what it is: atoms and void (in the widest possible modern sense)
- to understand there are no gods doling out punishment or gifts; our behavior is up to us, chance, or necessity
- to judge every desire in light of pleasure and pain
- to understand death exists only after we no longer exist; death is no thing for us because we aren't there when it is
- to understand that justice is a man-made construct; "Natural justice is a symbol or expression of expediency, to prevent one man from harming or being harmed by another." There are no universal rights - only what agreements to neither willfully harm nor to be harmed that can be agreed to at any given time and place (This is the BIG difference between Epicureanism and Humanism. And, I admit, I still struggle with this one.)
- And so on...

Epicureanism has a lot of gray areas, not a lot of black and white answers. There is no "Thou shalt not" list. If someone is even interested if they would see a "He Gets Us" commercial or sees a WWED/SFOTSE bracelet, where do you start?? [AxA](#) 's meet-ups are a great real-world example of the benefits (and potential hazards) of opening up an Epicurean social gathering for discussion.

I'm not saying it can't be done. I look at the way the Stoics have cornered the market for ancient philosophy reborn... So... I guess... if they can do it... Why not the Epicureans?

LOL... I may have talked myself out of a pessimistic perspective... then again.... (insert more pondering here 🤔)