

Daily life of ancient Epicureans / 21st Century Epicureans

Post by "Cassius" of May 22, 2025 at 12:43 PM

There's also another important - but a little less pleasant to discuss - side of things. Not everyone in this world is, or wants to be, or is going to be your friend. Nor are you going to succeed in making them so, no matter how you might try to do so. Epicurean philosophy teaches you to be aware that many contentious issues such as supernatural gods and life after death are not just neutral, take-it-or-leave-it, or compromisable issues.

One analogy I think I can make without offending anyone is as to cigarette manufacturers, who apparently at this point in history are acknowledged to have made their products more addictive even while knowing that they were deadly. Without harping on one example, I think there are plenty of instances where we have to recognize that not everyone is supportive of everyone else's best interests (to say the least). Epicurean philosophy teaches you to immunize yourself against many impositions by giving you a basic orientation toward the universe that helps defeat those negative forces in life.

That's a huge point, and arguably in the ancient Epicurean calculus of higher priority even than identifying happiness as your goal. The major doctrines all fit together logically, hand in glove, but the first and second most important doctrines on the list are telling you to first and foremost watch out for those who would manipulate you with bad motives.

That's an attitude toward the world that needs to be constantly a part of how we live our daily lives, and I consider it along with the swerve free will / personal responsibility) to be one of the most distinctly Epicurean characteristics.