

# Sunday May 25th, Zoom Discussion: "What Would Epicurus Say About the Search For 'Meaning' In Life?"

Post by "Kalosyni" of May 26, 2025 at 9:23 AM

## [Quote from Rolf](#)

First we must ask ourselves: What do we mean by "meaning"?

Do we mean being a part of something bigger than ourselves? Then it is in friendship and community.

Do we mean a telos, objective, or aim? Then it is in pleasure.

Do we mean a sense of fulfillment? Then it is in the things that give us secure and consistent pleasure, varying by person. Some common sources are friendship, family, and hobbies.

These are very good questions, and I think that having a sense of meaning in one's life would encompass all three.

I would also add what is a human being's place in the universe.

## [Quote from Rolf](#)

People who buy into the need for meaning rarely (if ever) talk about other animals having or requiring meaning. Why is that? In a strictly materialist universe, why would only humans have/require meaning?

Is "meaning" just another platonic ideal, incompatible with a strictly materialist worldview?

I think the "idea" of "meaning" comes from religion - and religion comes about because it is difficult to fathom mortality (so all religions create a framework for the afterlife).

Also, the sense of consciousness that humans have creates a "gestalt" feeling of having a "spirit/soul" essence.

As far as I understand, Epicurean philosophy would say that this feeling of having a "spirit/soul" is legitimate, but it is dependent on the body, and so it dies when the body dies. And so we are not eternal, but we exist only for a short time.

Needing a sense of "meaning" can be considered "natural" and arising out of human consciousness.

Perhaps for those people who were not raised with a particular religion, they will cognate "meaning" as something different than those who were raised with religious "fundamentalism". Those raised with religion may end up needing more time to adjust from an "eternal consciousness" framework to a "finite consciousness". Also, the switch from "supernatural powers" permeating the earth, to "material forces that follow laws of physics" (but this would be a kind of "recovering from religion" issue that some may need to ponder - and what may initially feel like a loss of meaning).