

# Evaluating "In Defense of Being Average"

Post by "Cassius" of June 14, 2019 at 2:42 PM

[Quote from JJElbert](#)

It's clear that the market selects for Specialists.

This comment caught my eye. I totally agree with it -- the **market** selects for specialists

The issue then is whether we will find our greatest happiness as being part of that market, and as the world moves on (and I get older) I am increasingly sceptical that "the market" is the answer to everything.

I know in my past I was deeply influenced by libertarian arguments, and I still think that "freedom" is generally going to be desirable and lead to the greatest happiness. But now as a function of realizing that "virtue" and everything similar is a "tool" for happiness, and not intrinsically and always desirable itself, I see the limits of the "libertarian" argument.

Presuming that "the market" will always lead to the most desirable result has been, I think, a huge error in the thinking of many Americans in the last 100 years. In many cases the market can and well be the best way of deciding disputes and conflicts, but it's not always going to be the best way, and elevating "the dollar" to the ultimate decision point is going to lead to just as bad a result as if we elevated "simple living" to an end in itself -- and probably worse.

ALSO (I got carried away on the first point) I think it is important that one point that is decidedly in favor of being a generalist is that you do often have wider choices available to you, and if you become the world's best programmer of some arcane computer language that only the NSA uses and understands, then your options are going to be limited to working for the NSA, and your livelihood becomes so tied to them that you can no longer afford to disagree or do anything "outside the box" of your masters.

All this I guess is why Epicurus did spend significant time talking about the likely better outcome of not overreaching "economically." But at the same time:

[VS63](#). There is also a limit in simple living, and he who fails to understand this falls into an error as great as that of the man who gives way to extravagance.