

What amount of effort should be put into pursuing pleasure or removing pain?

Post by "Don" of June 24, 2025 at 8:15 AM

I don't think "effort" is the right way to think about it.

The pleasure of aponia connotes both "without toil or trouble, effortless" and "painless; free from pain."

A more productive way to think about pursuing pleasure is to get out of its way, to recognize the pleasure that's already present in our lives and to which we stubbornly refuse to admit into our lives.

Start small, recognize the beauty of a sunset, the lack of pain in a spot in your body, the company of loved ones. Don't just acknowledge it. Feel it. Appreciate it. Value it.

By struggling in an effortful way, one is adding an unnecessary level of pain. Sure, we choose pain sometimes for greater pleasure. My go to example is always exercise, but there are much more serious examples: ex., leaving an abusive relationship in which the oppressed partner has a "sunk cost" ("they can change. I can change them.")

A start is just to get out of pleasure's way. Let it in.

I'm not saying it's easy after years of conditioning. But sometimes we ourselves are our own worst impediment to feeling pleasure.