

Welcome Dlippman!

Post by “dlippman” of July 7, 2025 at 11:56 AM

Dear Good People

I've been a long-time listener of *Lucretius Today* and have greatly enjoyed the podcast. I'm an internal medicine physician and currently serve on the Board of the American Board of Lifestyle Medicine, which promotes six key pillars for chronic disease prevention: nutrition, physical activity, sleep, avoidance of risky substances, stress management, and social connection.

I find it fascinating that the ancient debate between Aristotle and Epicurus continues today in modern medicine—particularly in positive psychology's focus on **Eudaimonia (Aristotle)** vs **Hedonia (Epicurus)**. Interestingly, several studies suggest Hedonia may offer more tangible mental health benefits—such as reduced anxiety, depression, and improved sleep—especially in times of stress.

For example, this recent 2024 study concludes: *“An orientation toward pleasure may be the path to achieving mental health in the midst of stressful circumstances.”*

<https://www.mdpi.com/2673-5318/5/4/47#:~:text=The%20results%20showed%20that%20hedonia,;%20eudaimonia;%20stress;%20ment>

Despite this, many in medicine still emphasize Eudaimonia—perhaps overlooking the direct and observable benefits of Hedonia, which simply asks: *What brings you joy, and how can you do more of it without harming others?* In contrast, Eudaimonia often demands sacrifice for abstract ideals that may or may not bear fruit.

Finally, if you asked any physician today whether they believe in atoms, the answer would be yes. Yet Democritus and Epicurus arrived at this truth long ago by observing nature without preconception. In contrast, Plato and Aristotle imposed human judgment onto nature—giving us forms and essences, paths we now see as philosophically problematic.

Thanks again for your work—it continues to inspire thoughtful reflection. And most importantly, it's useful!

David