

Episode 298 - TD26 - Facts And Feelings In Epicurean Philosophy - Part 1"

Post by "Cassius" of September 13, 2025 at 3:07 PM

[Quote from DaveT](#)

I think even poorly educated people who hear (rather than read) as well as anyone educated can understand that putting your feet up at the end of a rough day can diminish pain. It simply feels good, to chill. So, whether they think the good thoughts or just go blank, it doesn't seem ridiculous to me.

And of course I agree with that, and I would call that the activity of resting, or of relaxing. That is something that you do consciously to take a break from something else, like eating when you are hungry or drinking when you are thirsty. You aren't literally "closing your eyes and clearing your mind from any conscious thought" except in the case of sleep where you intend to do exactly that. The bottom line of my position is referring back to the common situation today where viewpoints and attitudes toward the world are corrupted and perverted, as Torquatus references when he explains that Epicurus looks to the young of all species before they are corrupted as his standard for proving nature's guidance. If your default manner of thinking is that gods control your life and that you are going to be punished or rewarded for your actions after death, then clearing your mind from conscious attention to other things is simply going to allow those erroneous thoughts to take over whatever attention is left.

As Lucretius says repeatedly in his poem, you can't just look at the rays of light and understand from just looking the implications of what you are seeing. You need a scheme of systematic understanding - Epicurean philosophy - to see that what the senses are bringing to you are not things to worry about but instead can be dealt with successfully to live a happy life. The most basic example after gods and death is pain, and that's why the attitude required in [PD03](#) that pain is short if intense and manageable if long is important. Every aspect of epicurean philosophy requires action of the mind to attain it, not just "breathing" or "getting out of the way" or "clearing your mind" in order to appreciate it.

[Quote from DaveT](#)

Can you discuss specifics here? And individuals?

What negative impact do you think those "friends" have on any understanding of the Epicurean pursuit of happiness?

I'd like to organize examples further but many of them already exist in the subforum on absence of pain. Here's one example:

Thread

[An Unfortunate Article Suggesting That Katastematic Pleasure is "Necessary" and Kinetic Pleasure is "Unnecessary"](#)

I haven't had time to read this article by Yosef Liebersohn, and I am not sure if or when I will, but this abstract that came across my email just reminded me for the 500th time of this issue. I'll skip over the fact that the author suggests that kinetic and katastematic are "the most dominant terms in Epicurus' theory of the pleasures (despite the fact that this comes from Cicero and Diogenes Laertius and isn't a significant factor at all in Epicurus' or Lucretius' work, as explained by Boris...



Cassius

April 14, 2021 at 11:23 AM

<https://www.epicureanfriends.com/wcf/attachment/1785-pasted-from-clipboard-png/>

And then there's wikipedia:

While Wikipedia is not a "friend" of Epicurus, the problem is all over the main entry on Epicurus, which I freely admit is amply justified by most modern writing:

Quote

Epicurus was a [hedonist](#), meaning he taught that what is pleasurable is morally good and what is painful is morally evil. For his ethical system he redefined "pleasure" as the absence of suffering and taught that all humans should seek to attain the state of [ataraxia](#), meaning "untroubledness", a state in which the person is completely free from all pain or suffering.^[1]

Epicureans had a very specific understanding of what the greatest pleasure was, and the focus of their ethics was on the avoidance of pain rather than seeking out pleasure. ^[27] As evidence for this, Epicureans say that nature seems to command us to avoid pain, and they point out that all animals try to avoid pain as much as possible. ^[28]

<https://www.epicureanfriends.com/thread/4711-episode-298-td26-facts-and-feelings-in-epicurean-philosophy-part-1/?postID=37238#post37238>

And this is just atrocious:

Quote

In order to do this an Epicurean had to control their desires, because desire itself was seen as painful. Not only will controlling one's desires bring about *aponia*, as one will rarely suffer from not being physically satisfied, but controlling one's desires will also help to bring about *ataraxia* because one will not be anxious about becoming discomforted since one would have so few desires anyway. The Epicureans divide desires into three classes: natural and necessary, natural but not necessary, and vain and empty:[\[30\]](#)