

# Sunday November 2, 2025 - Zoom Discussion 12:30 PM EST - Continuation of Discussion of Nature of Pleasure

## Post by "Cassius" of October 28, 2025 at 11:49 AM

You're raising lots of good points for discussion DaveT. At this point I'll insert these thoughts into the record as we take it further:

1. DeWitt's point as to the true goal being "life" in my personal opinion has a lot of merit, BUT, we have a lot of disagreement here about whether that is in fact the case, and I would myself say that this formulation suffers from much the same problem as other formulations. The whole issue is that the way people think about life and pleasure is too narrow and/or erroneous, and whatever words you end up focusing on have their own problems to unwind. Clearly the word "life" itself is insufficient standing on its own, because Epicurus makes clear that we sometimes give our lives for our friends, and even more generally, we will "leave the theatre when the play ceases to please us," as I think probably Epicurus and certainly Atticus and probably others chose to do to accelerate their impending deaths. So "Life Alone" isn't logically sufficient, and you'd have to explain that what you mean is "a life in which you can expect to experience more pleasure than pain" to be more precise. This point number one i am writing here is one of many separate issues that's involved in the discussion you are raising.

2. As for this ...

### [Quote from DaveT](#)

not for the purpose of evangelizing this philosophy to the masses, it is for an alternate approach to answering the new inquirer's question of what's it all about,

... I see your distinction and agree that it's valid, though the issues do bleed together. Both "the masses" and "the new inquirer" need clarity as quickly as possible, but I think you are right that "the inquirer" probably comes to the discussion with a more positive and open mind than does "the masses."

3. This seems to be ultimately the concern that a lot of people have:

### [Quote from DaveT](#)

his followers leaves the modern sensitivities at the mercy of modern language.

And that seems to me almost EXACTLY what Cicero's own complaint was -- that Epicurus was doing violence to common language.

And yes I'd say that that is true - Epicurus made the decision as Don / Joshua quoted above that he would prefer to be misunderstood rather than not speak the precise truth. I'd say that there is room for lots of different approaches, and that we should encourage people to develop alternative websites, or (given to whom i am speaking) write alternative books, produce alternative arguments, etc., to explore new ways to cut across the existing mental barriers. All I can say for what I think "this" website needs to be is a place where the people who are most dedicated to exploring Epicurus can speak about it in most clear and precise terms regardless of what the rest of the world likes to hear. But as you can tell, I hope, I am all in favor of producing videos and other forms of messaging that explore new ways to get the message across.

It's my own observation that most of the "compromisers" however don't accomplish very much. Even going back to Gassendi and others who tried to mash together Epicurus and Christianity or Deism, I don't think they really got very far. All those efforts probably helped to preserve some mention of Epicurus during very hostile periods, but in the end I personally think they just added to the confusion rather than resolving it.

Right now we have what may be a brief period in history where at least we in the USA, and to some degree other countries, can speak more freely than usual to a wider audience than usual, and we can choose from being extremely direct on the one hand or be "diplomatic" on the other. I don't want to see us on this forum discourage anyone from taking initiatives in new ways, but the flip side of that is that while some of us explore certain ways of arguments I don't want to let those ways squelch others who like different approaches.

My hopes for this forum is that we will always focus on accuracy, clarity, and directness, so we can provide a place for the most "hard-core" of Epicureans to collaborate together. But at the same time I want to see us encourage in every way we can other approaches. It's likely going to be appropriate that the different approaches keep some distance from each other to maximize their respective chances of success, but I don't see a problem with that, and it actually seems to me to be more consistent with the "atomistic" nature of the universe.

I'd particularly cite @Eikadistes as an example of someone who's doing exactly what in my own personal view they should be doing. He (and others including some here on the forum but I won't go down a list) are putting a lot of time and effort into their own websites/blogs/etc while still collaborating here, and I think that's really the optimum approach.

I'll wrap this up by referring back to your DeWitt comment. I think what we're talking about here now is what DeWitt himself did. He broke from the pack and cut his own path. Some of it was more successful than others, but if he had not broken from the path I'd probably never have gotten as interested in Epicurus as I became, and this website wouldn't be here. I don't like that he spent so much time drawing parallels with Christianity, and some of his formulations are probably too speculative, but many of Dewitt's insights, even the "life is the

goal" formulation, I think are definitely in the right direction. And to the extent that DeWitt made some mistakes, some of them ( e.g. life as the goal) were because *he didn't carry his ideas far enough*.