

# A Draft Epicurean Pleasure Maximization Worksheet

Post by "Cassius" of July 11, 2019 at 10:25 PM

**Feelings cannot be reduced to numbers,** and there are important limitations in the use of a "worksheet" as an aid in evaluating choices and avoidances. However it may be helpful to some people to visualize an illustration of the weighing process that some term the "hedonic calculus." Here is a draft example for your consideration and comment. Scores included here are of course fictional and for example only. A version of the spreadsheet in xlsx format is attached for downloading.

# Epicurean Net Pleasure Maximization Worksheet

*"For we recognize pleasure as the first good innate in us, and from pleasure we begin every act of choice and avoidance, and to pleasure we return again, using the feeling as the standard by which we judge every good."*

Life Activity	Feelings Of Pleasure (+)					Net Score	Feelings of Pain (-)					Notes	
	Intensity / Extent of Pleasure	Current Bodily Pleasure	Future Mental Pleasure	Future Bodily Pleasure	Total Pleasure Score		Total Pain Score	Intensity / Extent of Pain	Current Bodily Pain	Future Mental Pain	Future Bodily Pain		
Sleep		6			4	10	10	0					
Go to Work				4	4	4	12	7	-5		-2	-3	
Have Lunch with Friends		6	5	7	2		20	20	0				
Go to Gym		4		1	1	5	11	3	-8	-4	-4		
Go to Museum		5		5	5		15	15	0				
Read Lucretius		8		8	8		24	23	-1	-1			
Read Plato						0	-21	-21	-7		-7	-7	
Choose Activities To Maximize The Pleasure Score ... >>							92	<b>57</b>	-35	<< ... At A Cost In Pain You Find To Be Acceptable			

## Scoring Considerations:

- (1) Feelings cannot be captured in numerical terms. All scoring is relative. Nature provides no absolute standards and no authority higher than your own feelings.
- (2) The goal of life is to maximize under your personal circumstances the net pleasure score in the gold box.
- (3) The theoretical scoring limit is that which can be attained when a person's experience is completely filled with pleasures with no mixture of pain. This theoretical limit is not attainable for indefinite periods by human beings, but is considered "god-like" and serves as the goal toward which to strive.
- (4) Maximizing net pleasure is achieved by choosing activities which maximize pleasure at a cost in pain that you deem acceptable.
- (5) All pleasures are pleasing, but some pleasures exact a greater cost in pain than do others.
- (6) Sometimes we choose pain when a choice that is painful in the present brings us greater net pleasure or lesser net pain.
- (7) In predicting the cost in pain of any activity, remember that pleasures neither natural nor necessary will frequently (but not always) exact the greatest cost in pain; pleasures which are both natural and necessary will generally (but not always) exact the least cost in pain.
- (8) Remember to consider how your choices produce pain or pleasure in your friends, because this impacts your own scoring.
- (9) A net score of zero does not indicate that there are "neutral" states of feeling. Activities may produce both pleasurable and painful results, but feelings, like oil and water, do not mix to produce a third category beyond pleasure and pain.