

# "Choice" and "Avoidance"

Post by "DaveT" of February 26, 2026 at 1:03 PM

Hello [Don](#), @ Joshua [Kalosyni](#) I found Don's post from 2020 while reading Kalosyni's post from yesterday on using "Joy" as a goal. It started me thinking; how might one actually find the time to make choices or avoidances in a practical sense.

When I got to Don's post, the first thing that caught me, (I know this wasn't your main point) was a part of the quote below from [PD25](#): "If at all *critical times*, you do not connect your actions...."

And then when I compared PD 25 with the quotation below from the Letter to Menoikos "...the *starting point* of every choice and aversion...." I saw a distinction between the two concepts and particularly I wondered about the time periods of Epicurus' life when he wrote [PD25](#) and the Letter to Menoikos. **I mean to ask, which came first the generalization of at the *starting point* of every choice, etc, or the at *critical times*?**

**And this question is perhaps a subset of the foundational question of what does he mean by "at critical times"?**

And I think these two questions of mine are important for my consideration of [Kalosyni](#) 's post for the following reasons.

- 1. Who has the ability to make daily choices before the question arises or the sensation of pain, or excess pleasure arises?**
- 2. Did Epicurus expect us to constantly analyze our physical and mental states to gauge our, let's call it adjustments to balance our experiences to tend toward pleasure, or happiness or joy?**

If we all share the sensations of daily life, it seems worthy of knowing **did Epicurus originally in time say "at the start of" and later decide to clarify his teaching to remind his followers that they need to make choices at "critical time."**?

**I'd love to see various translations of Epicurus's use of the word Greek word for *critical* to help me better understand these issues. Thanks in advance.**

## [Quote from Don](#)

Letter to Menoikos where we read: "we honor [pleasure] in everything we accept or reject" in one translation of a line and "[Pleasure] is the starting-point of every choice and of every aversion" in another translation of the same line. In these, we are to

"accept and reject" or to engage in "choice" and "aversion." What does the original say? Αἰρέσεως καὶ φυγῆς. The same words as the title of the lost book, but this time with different shades of meaning in translations.

#### [Quote from Don](#)

Consider Principal Doctrine 25: "If at all critical times you do not connect each of your actions to the natural goal of life, but instead turn too soon to some other kind of goal in thinking whether to avoid or pursue something, then your thoughts and your actions will not be in harmony." Here we are told to decide "whether to avoid or pursue something" εἴ τε φυγῆν εἴ τε δίωξιν. We encounter φυγῆν again, but now αἰρέσις "choice" is replaced by δίωξις meaning "chase, pursuit." So, "choice and avoidance" in this case takes on a sense of "from what should I flee or what should I pursue." Again, giving us a richer sense of the practice.