

# Neither "ataraxia" nor "not ataraxia", but "Joy as the goal"

Post by "Kalosyni" of February 27, 2026 at 6:42 PM

## [Quote from Cassius](#)

I should also point out that this quotation in post 7 is a long distance from the point where this thread started out, when you advocated "Joy" as the goal ("Neither "ataraxia" nor "not ataraxia", but "Joy as the goal").

I presented several ideas in the first post of this thread (the first point should have been addressed in a separate thread):

Point 1) There is no mandate to spread Epicurean philosophy to the masses

Point 2) There are some who study Epicurean philosophy and put more emphasis on one or the other...either pleasure (moving pleasures) or ataraxia.

Point 3) An alternate way to word "the goal" is by using the word "joy" (and I now see that joy is a subset of pleasure and so this would not correlate with the Epicurean texts).

We can continue to see that the words we use can be unclear or confusing, if they are too abstract (for both "camps" of Epicureans - both maximalists or minimalists).

This goes to show that both "camps" still need to consider "the ladder of abstraction" which illustrates the difference between abstract and specific words (developed by linguist S.I. Hayakawa in 1939, and introduced in his book "Language of Action". This tool illustrates how language moves from concrete, sensory details at the bottom (e.g."my speckled apple") to high-level, abstract concepts at the top (e.g."fruit" or "nutrition"). The bottom rungs consist of specific, tangible details, while the higher rungs represent increasingly broad, conceptual, or categorical terms - and it helps make communication more clear.

The following website has an illustration of the full ladder of abstraction:

[Up and Down the Ladder of Abstraction - Choosing the appropriate abstraction level - jtoy](#)

I believe that it is possible for something to sound correct (or even "wise") while being presented using highly abstract words, however those words end up not "working" in reality for two reasons:

1) differing understandings (cognition) of highly abstract words depending on the individual.

2) when you attempt to pin things down with specific and tangible human experiences, the "wise sounding" but abstract ideas don't work - are not helpful because they are too vague.

So that is what I want to shed some light on...and hopefully find some clarity and also continue to find language and words that actually work! 😊