

"Not Neo-Epicurean, But Epicurean"

Post by "Cassius" of July 26, 2019 at 5:53 PM

In the time since this website was founded several years ago, we have had many people come through it, stay a while to agree with a couple of points, and then leave. We'll continue to have that happen, but one of our goals has been to find **friends**. And a major part of what makes someone a potential long-term friend is that we not only agree with a couple of Epicurean ideas, but we agree with the idea that Epicurean philosophy is something special that we don't want to just stuff in a closet to pull out on special occasions. For us Epicurus isn't just one book on our shelf, but the key book that helps us organize all the rest. We don't just consider ourselves to be students of philosophy, we consider ourselves to be "Epicureans."

While we haven't grown to huge numbers, in recent years we **have** finally succeed in building our regular participants to the point where we can in good faith say that we have the beginnings of a new Epicurean community. It may be "on-line" but it is real nevertheless.

The changes announced today are intended to help us accelerate in that direction. We want to encourage those who come here and agree with Epicurus to post more and produce more content themselves. And that means that they should not have to sidetrack themselves day after day dealing with the same misrepresentations and uninformed criticisms that have been used to suppress Epicurus' ideas for 2000 years. That's why we're making more clear what characteristics we think make a good member of this Epicurean community, and what characteristics indicate that someone would be a better fit in a generalist philosophy group of some other type.

All who are sincerely interested in communicating in good faith with people who consider themselves to be Epicurean will always be welcome. That definitely includes people who are only beginning to study Epicurus and confused ideas about him. But we are going to keep a tighter leash on posts that are obviously intended to be negative or disruptive and are made by people who clearly have no long-term interest in becoming Epicureans.

We also want to improve the quality of posting by making sure that new topics are moderated. By doing that we can be sure that most discussions are worth the general attention of the community. That's why we recently implemented the "approval" requirement for new posts, and why we set up the "Open Thread" feature to accommodate questions that are more narrowly targeted.

The changes we are making are not designed to suppress debate or questioning of the teachings of Epicurus. The opposite is in fact the goal: By making sure that discussions are productive and positive, we can all do a better job of exploring the details of Epicurean philosophy. And in those circumstances where we may find something we don't accept, we can

at least pay Epicurus the courtesy of learning how and why he reached his conclusions, so we can understand where we really differ.

What I have personally found is that even in those areas where Epicurus is held to have reached incorrect conclusions, such as the size of the sun, the story is much less damaging to Epicurus' reputation than critics would have you believe. Epicurean philosophy is less about a list of **conclusions** than it is about methods on **how to reach conclusions**. The focus is first and foremost on how to determine evidence to consider, and how to evaluate that evidence. When you track back on how Epicurus reached his conclusions given the information available to him, you invariably find an ****approach to life**** that is even more important than any individual doctrinal conclusion.