

# Welcome Max Duboff

Post by "Cassius" of July 2, 2026 at 8:04 AM

## [Quote from Don](#)

So, tranquility, peace of mind, freedom from anxiety IS foundational.

I never said it was not foundational or fundamental and I agree with you that it is. But foundational and fundamental are very different from "the goal." Those who push something other than pleasure as "the goal" know this very well. Food is foundational and fundamental. Water is foundational and fundamental. Air is foundational and fundamental. But neither food, water, or air are the goals of life. We do not live to eat, drink, or breathe, we eat, drink, and breathe in order to live.

The arguments I am targeting are those by people who are affirmatively taking the time to aswert to others that Epicurus clearly held tranquility to overrideall other concerns. It certainly does not. As Max's own topics point out, we will sometimes die for friends, even though that does not bring us tranquility. We sometimes have sex, and pursue marriage and children, even though those are far from tranquil activities.

Add to the common sense the clear statements in the texts, to which we could add many more than these, including other sections of the letter to Menoeceus - but these are among the most clear:

As Torquatus said,

*The problem before us then is, what is the climax and standard of things good, and this in the opinion of all philosophers must needs be such that we are bound to test all things by it, but the standard itself by nothing. Epicurus places this standard in pleasure, which he lays down to be the supreme good, while pain is the supreme evil; and he founds his proof of this on the following considerations.*

As Diogenes of Oionada said in Fragment 32

*If, gentlemen, the point at issue between these people and us involved inquiry into «what is the means of happiness?» and they wanted to say «the virtues» (which would actually be true), it would be unnecessary to take any other step than to agree with them about this, without more ado. But since, as I say, the issue is not «what is the means of happiness?» but «what is happiness and what is the ultimate goal of our nature?», I say both now and always, shouting out loudly to all Greeks and non-Greeks, that pleasure is the end of the best mode of life, while the virtues, which are inopportunately messed about by these people (being transferred from the place of the means to that of the end), are in no way an end, but the means to the end.*

And as Torquatus stated in the quote that is currently on the top page of the site:

*If then even the glory of the Virtues, on which all the other philosophers love to expatiate so eloquently, has in the last resort no meaning unless it be based on Pleasure, whereas Pleasure is the only thing that is intrinsically attractive and alluring, it cannot be doubted that Pleasure is the one supreme and final Good and that a life of happiness is nothing else than a life of Pleasure."*

So to be clear I am not accusing any particular individuals of bad faith. But I am accusing these *arguments* of being absurd and malicious when made in the philosophical context by professionals who should know better. Advocating this position as if they could divine Epicurus' true intent from one short letter better than than Cicero and Diogenes Laertius and Lucretius and even Epicurus himself in other quotations available to us is absurd. DeWitt doesn't come to this conclusion, Gosling and Taylor don't come to this conclusion in their extensive analysis of the katastematic and kinetic pleasure debate (which Emily Austin endorses, even aside from her choice of naming her book) and neither else who is trying to be fair to Epicurus and look at all the evidence.

If this debate had no consequences we could easily put it aside and go along to get along. But it is not only slanderous but offensive to think that Epicurus devoted his life to achieving "tranquility" or "absence of pain" in the way that these words are understood today. In the end that's my real beef. The road is open for advocates of something other than pleasure to go further and explain how there are only two feelings, and that Epicurus used words (like "gods") very precisely and in unconventional ways. They could explain in detail that "tranquility" is but one of many pleasures, and that "absence of pain" means something much different than "nothingness." But in almost every case they fail to do any of that, even while knowing -- as anyone of reasonable intelligence would -- that these words are far more associated with resignation, withdrawal, acceptance and asceticism than they are with how Epicurus taught and lived his life

The implication that Epicurean philosophy teaches resignation, withdrawal, acceptance and asceticism is not only wrong but its also insulting, offensive, and slanderous. People who respect Epicurus as a real person for his real contributions ought to come to his defense, as Cosma Raimondi did , or Torquatus or Diogenes of Oinoanda or Lucian did. In Lucian's words, they should be happy to 'strike a blow for Epicurus" in defending him when he is attacked and his life's work is transformed into the opposite of what he taught.