

Welcome Max Duboff

Post by "Cassius" of July 4, 2026 at 10:33 AM

[Quote from Don](#)

. For my understanding of the philosophy, a primary purpose of a tranquil mind, free from anxiety and fear and worry, is to more fully experience every other choiceworthy pleasure and to make prudent decisions on what those are

Agreed!

[Quote from Kalosyni](#)

By contrast, ataraxia is a highly active, unshakeable state of mental resilience.

I agree with your contention, but I also think this is exactly what is in dispute. Neither of these terms have readily-understandable meanings in English beyond "calmness" at best.

The major purpose of EpicureanFriends is to make Epicurean philosophy understandable and useful for living people today. Epicurus definitely sometimes uses words differently. We have to explain that when Epicurus was referring to gods he was referring to something supernatural. We have to explain that when Epicurus referred to pleasure he meant all that is desirable, not just stimulation. Those are explanations which are not particularly difficult and readily understandable. If someone wants to go on a campaign to assert that "tranquillity or ataraxia implies a full complete active life full of ordinary pleasures experienced calmly" then that in my mind is a much harder lift. it might be doable, but it's far beyond the differentiation of meaning that Epicurus gave to gods or pleasure. And the best evidence of that is that most academicians make no effort in that regard. They simply cite ataraxia or tranquility without further explanation as if it is self-evident that we are talking Buddhism or Stoicism.

[Quote from Kalosyni](#)

Active Engagement: To the ancient Greeks, ataraxia wasn't about completely removing oneself from the world (which tranquility implies) . It was about actively managing and overcoming unfounded anxieties and destructive passions so you can live a flourishing life, often referred to as eudaimonia.

I would love for that definition of ataraxia to be true, but I am unaware of any authoritative source that would make that statement easy to argue and explain persuasively. Reference to "flourishing" and the like is, as we've discussed, largely a weasel word way of discussing it. In contrast, pleasure is something we feel without need for outside or academic explanation. Even

Epicurus' extension of pleasure to "all that is desirable" (pleasure is the absence of pain) is readily understandable if we stop forcing other contradictory philosophies into the mix and simply look to sensations, pleasure and pain, and anticipations for direct evidence of what is desirable.