

Welcome Max Duboff

Post by “Max DuBoff” of July 7, 2026 at 1:22 PM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

I don't think that the "in theory" gives us a clear answer as to what your position really is. You've just told us that your definition of blessedness, taken on its own terms, is fully satisfied by a life with no friends, no joy, no positive pleasure of any kind — nothing but an undisturbed absence of pain. The only thing keeping that from being your actual recommendation is a claim that it can't happen in practice, not a principled reason why it shouldn't count as the best possible life if it did. That's a strange place for a consistent theory of the good life to land. If your account of blessedness doesn't care whether the life it's describing contains anything anyone would actually want, in what sense is it still a theory of human flourishing rather than an edge case your chosen framework happens to generate?

On the textual basis for "some goods don't contribute to blessedness" — you cited [PD20](#), Men. 128, and [PD03](#). But don't those passages actually establish that once pain is removed, there is no further need to seek anything more. That's a claim about cessation of motivation. What your position would need to show is the stronger claim that additional pleasures, once had, don't count toward the blessedness already achieved. Those are two different claims. "I don't need to look for more" is not the same as "if more comes anyway, it doesn't add to my good."

Helpful points, indeed! Splitting this into two parts.

Wait, no, all pleasures always motivate us to pursuit them--that's true for pleasures that don't contribute to blessedness just as much as it is for those that do. So what keeps us from having that bare life is that we're very motivated to seek out all kinds of pleasures (as long as they don't interfere with ataraxia/aponia). (Warren doesn't recognize this in *Facing Death*; that's why he worries, around pp. 200-212, that an Epicurean will have no reason to live on once they achieve blessedness. The reason to keep living is exactly the reason to achieve blessedness: because all pleasure motivates us to pursue it, and that's true whether we're already blessed or not.)

So when I say it wouldn't happen in practice, I don't just mean it's extremely unlikely to happen; I mean that the kind of person who's going to achieve blessedness won't let it happen.

This response sets up for responding to your second paragraph above. There's no *need* to seek more, but we *want* more (i.e., we want kinetic pleasures even once we've achieve katastematic pleasure--in addition to wanting to maintain katastematic pleasure). PD 18 clearly states that pleasure is only varied, not increased, once we have the absence of pain. So I think I'm on firm

ground in saying that further pains don't contribute to blessedness, i.e., don't increase pleasure beyond its maximum (the maximum which is noted in PD 3).