

# Welcome Max Duboff

Post by "Max DuBoff" of July 7, 2026 at 3:34 PM

## [Quote from Cassius](#)

Max,

The twentieth-meal example is very useful.

Let me restate it to make sure I have it right: given a choice between 10 units of pleasure/0 pain and 30 units of pleasure/3 pain, "refer your actions to the goal of nature as tranquility" tells you to take the first option — forfeiting 17 units of net pleasure - solely to avoid the 3 units of pain.

Is that a fair restatement of your own answer?

So you're saying that on your view, no amount of net pleasure gained can outweigh even a modest amount of pain accepted to get it. That's the "even a small amount of pain is too much to pay for a large amount of pleasure" position I've been thinking your view amounts to. Is that correct?

As to what that would mean, Epicurus wrote on his last day, in real physical agony, that the joy of memory and friendship that day outweighed (or arrayed against in the military metaphor) the pain in his body. This is a direct claim that a great pleasure was worth to him a very great pain, in full net balance. Regardless about what we think of whether he changed his calculation as the pain got worse (which would be entirely reasonable to do), Epicurus did not avoid or forfeit those pleasures in advance just because great pain was involved.

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Excellent point, this is really helpful.

No, I want to nuance my previous point: choose against pain if it'll interfere with enjoying katastematic pleasure. It's totally fine to accept some pain if it promotes katastematic pleasure. That's why we should run some risks for the sake of friendship (VS 28). And if there's a pain that won't interfere with enjoying katastematic pleasure (because anticipation/recollection allows us to manage it, and it doesn't prevent the fulfillment of our needs), it's fine to accept that pain. That's why junk food (which doesn't satisfy hunger) is a problem even if it's very pleasurable, but overeating a bit of something nutritious could be ok.

But in general, yes: don't take on risky kinetic pleasures, which might foreseeably prevent enjoying katastematic pleasure.