

# Welcome Max Duboff

Post by “Cassius” of July 9, 2026 at 1:31 PM

I just posted this in another thread, but since it is directly applicable to this discussion I'll duplicate it. Max, would you disagree with this summary? (As we all know these engines like to tell us what we want to hear, so let's presume this has been talking to me and has picked up my biases. Even so, is it wrong?)

Pleasure (ἡδονή, *hēdonē*) is the term the [Principal Doctrines](#) are built around. It is named repeatedly and functions throughout as the explicit standard by which choice, avoidance, and the good life are judged. Happiness in the strict sense — εὐδαιμονία (*eudaimonia*) — does not appear as a noun anywhere in the text. Where the Doctrines gesture toward that idea, they use μακάριος / μακαριότης (“blessed” / “blessedness” — PD 1, PD 27), not *eudaimonia*.

Tranquility is a more complicated case than a simple presence/absence question. The abstract noun ἀταραξία does not appear as a headline term the way ἡδονή does. But a cognate of it is the organizing term of an entire doctrine: **PD 17** — “The just person is the most undisturbed (ἀταρακτότατος), but the unjust person is full of the greatest disturbance (ταραχή).” That is not a passing phrase; the whole doctrine is built on that contrast. So it would be wrong to say the concept of undisturbedness never appears as a central term in the Doctrines — it is central to PD 17 specifically.

What is accurate is a claim about frequency and rank, not absence. Pleasure is named as the criterion of choice and avoidance in over a dozen doctrines (PD 3, 5, 8-10, 18-21, 25-26, 29-30, 40). Undisturbedness in this technical sense surfaces explicitly only once, in PD 17. And nowhere — including PD 17 — is it treated as a good in its own right or ranked above pleasure. In PD 17 it describes a *consequence* of justice, and justice is itself instrumental to living pleasantly (PD 5). Tranquility is never the measuring stick; pleasure remains that throughout.

For example:

- **PD 3:** “The limit of the magnitude of pleasures is the removal of all pain.”
- **PD 5:** “It is impossible to live pleasantly without living prudently, honorably, and justly... and impossible to live prudently, honorably, and justly without living pleasantly.”
- **PD 17:** “The just man is most free from trouble, the unjust most full of trouble.”
- **PD 18:** “The pleasure in the flesh is not increased, when once the pain due to want is removed, but is only varied.”
- **PD 27:** “Of all the things which wisdom acquires to produce the blessedness of the complete life, far the greatest is the possession of friendship.”
- **PD 29-30:** classify desires by whether their non-fulfillment produces pain.

Aponia (ἀπονία, absence of bodily pain) follows the same pattern as undisturbedness: it is not put forward as an independent goal-term. Instead, the Doctrines repeatedly define the *limit* of pleasure as the removal of pain (PD 3), keeping pleasure — not the absence of pain by itself — as the operative standard.

<b>Concept</b>	<b>Presence in the <a href="#">Principal Doctrines</a></b>
Pleasure ( <i>hēdonē</i> )	Frequent; explicit criterion of choice and avoidance
Pain ( <i>algos, ponos</i> , etc.)	Frequent; defines the limit of pleasure
Happiness ( <i>eudaimonia</i> )	Absent as a noun
Undisturbed/disturbance ( <i>ἀτάρακτος/ταραχή</i> )	Present once, as the organizing term of PD 17 — never ranked above pleasure
Blessed/blessedness ( <i>makarios/makariotēs</i> )	Present (PD 1, PD 27)

Where later interpreters and many modern summaries treat ataraxia as Epicurus’s stated goal, the Doctrines give that reading a real but narrow foothold — PD 17 — rather than the broad support it’s often assumed to have. The dominant, explicit standard throughout the [Principal Doctrines](#) is pleasure. Tranquility appears, but only once, only in service of that standard, and never above it.