

Is Self Preservation a Virtue?

Post by "Godfrey" of November 7, 2019 at 11:59 AM

Quote

By self preservation, one might include avoiding high risk activities, seeking preventative healthcare, practicing good diet and exercise, and learning ways to extend one's health and lifespan ?

Self preservation taken to its extreme might look something like Oblomovitis! On a more sensible level it would lead to "freedom from bodily pain and mental disturbance". Also, there is the consideration of intensity of pleasure v the length of pleasure: a longer life isn't necessarily better than a shorter but more pleasurable life.

To me, there's a point where pursuing good health, fitness, and keeping up with the latest health info goes from good sense to obsession, and I confess I tend to cross that line all too frequently. EP keeps reminding me to focus on enjoyment, while being aware of the hedonic calculus. My interpretation of the hedonic calculus contains a factor of self preservation, but mainly because the nature of the calculus is maximizing pleasure and minimizing pain.

So I would say self preservation isn't an Epicurean virtue, but it is quite sensible. And what it entails is entirely subjective.