

# Continuous Life Improvement

Post by "Cassius" of November 12, 2019 at 2:49 PM

That makes good sense to me.

Part of what we always dance around in coming up with formulas is the issue of whether the goal of avoiding pain is somehow entirely separate or more important than that of pursuing pleasure.

That's where I think the perspective has to focus on that there really is not a conflict here. Yes there are times when a train is coming at you and your immediate attention is focused on getting out of the way, but in reality since the feelings are only two, then **every** choice, and not only when you are standing in the path of the train, but **always**, is basically that of avoiding a pain by choosing a pleasure, or choosing a temporary/smaller pain in order to experience a longer/larger pleasure.

Once your perspective opens up to including EVERYTHING that you experience/feel as either a pain or a pleasure, then there really is no issue of worrying that you are at any point "shifting into neutral" and doing something that is neither a pain nor a pleasure. Each and every action is geared toward the same ultimate result.

And that's why I also think that Epicurus seems to have tended to collapse the wording into saying that [PLEASURE is the guide of life](#). Each time he could have said "pursuing pleasure and avoiding pain" but I think when the overall goal is seen as pleasure, which is really the same thing as avoiding pain, then it makes sense to talk in terms of the one word "pleasure" (even using the "accursed" term "hedonism") rather than always saying "pursue pleasure and avoid pain."

Because it seems to me that really both terms are encompassed in "feeling" and so ultimately what we are discussing is the competition between ultimate goals: Are the ultimate goals set by "feeling" or by "gods" or by "Ideal forms / virtue." And of course Epicurus comes down for "feeling."