

# Discussion of the Society of Epicurus' 20 Tenets of 12/21/19

Post by "Hiram" of December 23, 2019 at 10:52 AM

[Quote from Elayne](#)

14 is fine

15-- I am not sure what you mean by this. It is unclear, and it seems to leave the door open for Stoicism. Again you link to your own writing, which does contain original quotes this time, and you end with this "Consistent with what's been said before, in Fragment 112 Diogenes states that the "sum of happiness is our disposition, of which we are masters", by which he argues against choosing a career in military service—which produces dangers to our lives and health—or public speaking—which produces nervousness and insecurity. The idea is that we can more easily be self-sufficient in our pleasure if we retain our ability to control our mental disposition."

By arguing against military service, Diogenes is saying we control our disposition by taking action to control our circumstances. Similar to Epicurus advising not to commit crimes, because we will be anxious about getting caught. He doesn't say we can do what we want, because we can have control over our mental dispositions anyway.

With all the "new thought" stuff going around and the revival of the Stoic belief that external circumstances are of no consequence-- that something in us is controlling our attitude and feelings, unaffected by the world around us-- I think this is not a Tenet I would endorse. I would say rather that we can act on the external world and thus create pleasure for ourselves.

(This tenet also implies that we are free + responsible to develop our characters)

So the source of that is Diogenes' "'sum of happiness is our disposition, of which we are masters", but Philodemus also discusses our disposition, so this is not a Stoic idea, it comes from more than one source and seems central to how Epicureans discussed the art of living. In On Piety, it's discussed in terms of the psychosomatic effects of pious practice. In On Anger, it's discussed in terms of how a furious disposition makes us ugly and disliked, how it's bad for our relationships and creates many other disadvantages. In On Arrogance, a similar treatment is given to the vice.

Sentience is very important to us, the quality of the sentient experience, and disposition (unlike mere "states of mind or emotion" which come and go) is HABITUAL, steady, stable and crucial for [moral development](#). So any science or art of happiness would have to concern itself with it.

<https://www.epicureanfriends.com/thread/1319-discussion-of-the-society-of-epicurus-20-tenets-of-12-21-19/?postID=5581#post5581>