

How To Convert A Neo-Epicurean Into A Classical Epicurean

Post by "Cassius" of May 1, 2020 at 3:53 PM

[Quote from melkor](#)

However, an Epicurean could still be a libertarian or a liberal or a conservative or a Marxist or anything else of that nature?

I think that an Epicurean would find it very hard to take any position that was ultimately religious-based, but the ones you have listed are more perspectives on how to organize an economy, and I would say that it *would* be possible to an Epicurean to think that the interest of himself and his friends might under some circumstances be best served by adopting any of those systems depending on circumstances, and changing those systems as circumstances changed. My quote that comes to mind on that point is Jefferson's to the effect that "the earth belongs to the living."

[Quote from melkor](#)

My highest ideal in life is still pleasure, and I want to pursue pleasure in life and believe it is the end of life. My political views reflect that, but I don't necessarily need to use Epicureanism for advocating it, I suppose

I want to repeat something that I think can be confusing but ought to be very clear. I think political goals CAN be and often ARE the things that generate some of the most intense pleasure and pain in life, and so in that sense I do think that Epicurean philosophy is a direct part of pursuing political goals. I think that is exactly the way Cassius Longinus saw it. I do not think Epicurus would agree with the extreme to which it is frequently stated that Epicurus advised against **all** political involvement. I think that is clearly wrong and misunderstanding of the texts. "Political involvement" is regularly and probably frequently a requirement of maintaining our peace and safety and pleasure.

[Quote from melkor](#)

but we are allowed to be political in our own way but not usually discuss it or be very open about it.

So when you say that, that is not what I am saying exactly at all. It's more that there is a time and a place for those actions and discussions, and the organizing principle of the association is going to determine what is appropriate. We **here** at Epicureanfriends.com have more of an

educational / teaching function, and so direct political action and identification with only a segment of our target audience would undermine that mission. It's going to be up to each individual to decide whether their political perspective and activity is consistent with what Epicurus taught.

And we shouldn't forget that Epicurus was pretty clear in advocating against a "career" in politics. The "Cincinnatus" model of getting involved to deal with a pressing problem and then pulling back when the problem is over is one thing. But there's a certain type of person who really enjoys "being a politician" and just wants to constantly be involved in running for office and telling other people what to do, and I personally think that that kind of career choice is the most direct danger that Epicurus was warning about.

Maybe I should repeat that the ultimate point about being "NeoEpicurean" would not mean that someone can never be involved in politics. It's more the other ethical issues discussed already, and in fact I would argue that the "never get involved in politics" rule is ITSELF "neo-Epicurean" and not what Epicurus taught.

So personally I could look at someone who was advocating libertarian economics for his local "group," and someone who was advocating socialist economics for his local "group," and I would not necessarily call them neo-Epicurean unless they were arguing that the entire world should live that way, in which case the error would be extending their own preference to the whole world, which would clearly conflict with the Epicurean view of the nature of the universe and views on pleasure, especially the last ten PDs.