

Welcome Camotero!

Post by “Don” of June 12, 2020 at 6:58 AM

Excellent questions and perspectives, [Mathitis Kipouros](#) ! Thank you very much for sharing and welcome to the forum. I read echoes of my own experiences in your post.

[Martin](#) and [Cassius](#) have done a good job in beginning to address some of your points. Let me add a few initial thoughts myself.

You mention:

Quote

It's unappealing that it may be perceived as a selfish way to live life and act in the world. It worries me that the ethics won't comprise a care for the less fortunate and the downtrodden. Or that morality would be not relevant to it because of its ultra materialistic foundation.

In thinking through this (and I've had similar thoughts), I sometimes refer to another tradition, to what I've read the current Dalai Lama calls "selfish altruism" which [has also begun to be studied by academic researchers](#) including [research studies in neuroscience](#). The Dalai Lama is quoted as saying:

Quote

Being wise selfish means taking a broader view and recognizing that our own long-term individual interest lies in the welfare of everyone. Being wise selfish means being compassionate.

Please don't misunderstand. I'm not trying to import Buddhism into Epicurean philosophy. I'm just trying to bring in a perspective on altruism or empathy that isn't recognized sometimes. As [Martin](#) said, we feel pain when we see the plight of others. However, I would say it's more fundamental and goes to how we make our choices and avoidances: if we treat others kindly and compassionately, we have a better chance of being treated kindly and compassionately in return. No guarantees, but more likely. Epicurus said that even friendship "is based on our needs... but it is maintained by a shared enjoyment of life's pleasures." Those who treat others kindly, who work for the downtrodden, do it because it brings them pleasure to help people. If people are unkind, cruel, or indifferent, they may experience momentary pleasure in feelings of superiority, etc., but, in the long run, may be hurting their own chances for future pleasures in how people will interact with them.