

# KDF's Epicurean Outline

**Post by "Cassius" of March 25, 2018 at 11:57 AM**

Welcome KDF! Thank you for posting your outline as it is a great way to discuss differences and similarities in Epicurean philosophy. My comments below are made in that spirit - not to criticize any aspect of what is "your" outline, but to comment on how it might differ from Epicurus:

First, as to "A.) The Nature of the Universe" - (2) you no doubt realize, but I must point out, that you are stating a position very different from Epicurus as to "free will." Epicurus contended that the swerve of the atom provides a basis for some freedom of will (within limits) and held that freedom to be essential to our confidence in being able to live happily.

1. The universe is indifferent to the cares and wants of conscious beings
2. We live in a deterministic universe. There is no free will, but as conscious beings that can never be aware of our own lack of free will, this lack is not relevant to how we find meaning in our lives. (I think that Christopher Hitchens put it best when he said that he believes in free will, because he "has no choice.")

As to Knowledge and truth, it seems to me that your statements are generally consistent with Epicurus, but would require considerable more elaboration to be more clear. But I think especially as to (2) the observation that there are biological limits is an important aspect.

B.) Knowledge / Truth

1. We know what we can observe with our senses or has been passed on to us at a genetic level
2. There are biological limits to what we can know and observe (this does not imply a non-material universe)

As to Ethics, again I think you are largely consistent with Epicurus. Certainly there is no absolute morality that applies everywhere and at all times. "Happiness" is clearly a word that approximates the goal, although there is a great need for clarity in explaining how happiness relates to pleasure. And clearly independence is also critical to the best life, as we can observe starting with how any young animal reacts when placed in a cage.

C.) Ethics / How to Live

1. There is no absolute morality
2. Happiness is the ultimate goal to life
3. Financial independence greatly improves, but is not essential to, an individual's ability to attain happiness (I think that if Epicurus lived today that PDs 6, 7, 21, 39, & 40 would have referenced having F-U Money)

4. By reducing wants and needs one can greatly improve one's ability to achieve financial independence
5. All that we should ask from society is to ensure that no one be compelled by force to do anything against their will
6. One has the ability to remove resentment and self-pity from their thinking; removing resentment and self-pity greatly improves happiness
7. One should not suffer a contradiction in their principles; self-deception is the root of much unhappiness

Every one of your observations is worth much more detailed discussion. Welcome again to the forum, and I hope you will look around at the various topics and post questions and your own comments in the topics that interest you!