

# Starting Discussion of "Free Will"

Post by "KDF" of March 25, 2018 at 2:43 PM

In my [Epicurean Outline](#) I noted my view on free will:

1. 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.")<sup>1</sup>

I arrived at the conclusion that the lack of free will is not contradictory to living a purpose and meaning driven life after several years of reading and contemplation. The conclusion follows from several points that I believe to be true:

1. The evidence for determinism is compelling (I am not sure that it is worth rehashing this in the context of how it relates to epicureanism in this thread, but I would be happy to discuss)
2. "The Swerve", and its analogs in more recent scientific discoveries (e.g. quantum physics and the uncertainty principle) if proven do not form the basis for a belief in free will. In other words, if there is indeterminacy it does it follow that some type of agency can control one's thoughts and actions.
3. If our conscious experience is that of having free will, why does it matter if we do or do not. We will always act and feel as if we have free will.
4. If our end is to increase happiness by avoiding pain and maximizing pleasure (in an orthodox epicurean sense), why would lack of free will have relevance.

I know that some of what I write above may challenge a core principal of epicureanism. It is not my intent to overturn or diminish any aspect of the ethical principals - I hold these principals to be cohesive and consistent with my personal philosophy. I am hoping to reconcile my epicurean principals with a lack of belief in free will. I believe that it is possible, but am certainly open to be convinced otherwise.

<sup>1</sup> It might be worth noting that Christopher Hitchens called himself an Epicurean.