

Can Emotions be Trusted?

Post by “Don” of October 7, 2020 at 10:31 AM

I am *SO* glad you started this thread. I've been meaning to address this too.

I'm slowly coming around to the following understanding which may or may not be shared by others on this forum.

The problem is the English words "feeling" or "emotion." The connotation of this is that we "go with our gut." If using "our gut" is the only criteria, that's not what Epicurus meant. We also don't use happy, sad, angry, contempt, surprised, etc.

The key term about the criteria in the original text from Diogenes Laertius's Lives (X.34), is pathē: "and they say the pathē are two: pleasure (hēdonēn) and pain (algēdona)." I've come to the understanding that a better translation would be "response" or "reaction" instead of "feeling" or "emotion". We can have two reactions - pleasure or pain - to all of our experiences. That reaction helps us make decisions to choose or reject a course of action. That reaction is not the only criteria of course. We need the evidence from our physical senses and our mental perceptions and prolepses.

That's a brief summary of my understanding.