

I'm back.....:-)

Post by "brett" of November 11, 2020 at 7:00 PM

hi folks,

I hope this finds everyone happy and healthy.

I was quite active on this forum 2 years ago and then went dormant with no notice.

Essentially, I got sucked back into the Stoic mindset. I struggled with how to apply EP to my life (surely it can't be as simple as maximizing pleasure and minimizing pain) and fell back into the very readily available and easy to apply Stoic mental exercises.

I won't bore you with the details of my life, but Jules Evan's wrote a short biography of me in his book about Stoicism (and other life philosophies) and how it has helped people. So, falling back into Stoicism was easy to do.

What brought me back? Well, two things:

1. I got tired of working my ass off to minimize my desires and live as unemotional life as I could muster. I know this is a gross oversimplification of Stoicism, but it goes without saying that the Stoic's response to challenges in life is to retreat into the 'inner citadel' and fortify oneself from the external dangers. I can only deny my own emotions and desires for so long. Especially in this pandemic, it's easy to retreat into oneself and close off from the challenges around us.

2. I started a journey of physical fitness about a year and a half ago. Since then I've changed my eating, begun an exercise program, and have lost 60 lbs and feel the best I have in life. I've struggled with how a Stoic would justify physical fitness. All I could reasonably come up with is that one takes care of one's body out of a sense of duty. What I have been experiencing over the last year is an amazing boost in pleasure at the changes in my body. I've come to revel in the feeling of accomplishment and pleasure when I finish a workout and when I step on the scale and I'm a lb lighter.

I know none of this is a repudiation of Stoicism per se, but as I've been really thinking about this over the last few months I've realized that the perfect philosophy to explain how I want to live my life is Epicureanism. I hopped over a few days ago and read Elayne's essay and Garden Dweller's piece and it reminded me how much I really enjoyed EP. I think the separation and time to contemplate has allowed my mind to open to the truth that eP is not about living in a 'neutral state' between pain and pleasure: the goal truly is to maximize pleasure. That's a life worth living.

Anyway, I felt the urge to write about this. Not sure it all makes sense but here you go.....:-)

Brett