

Community Standards / Rules of the Forum

Post by "Cassius" of April 29, 2015 at 3:52 PM

[**Update 07/27/19:** This post was originally made April 29, 2015, with subsequent revisions as indicated. These standards are implemented by our [Not Neo-Epicurean, But Epicurean and our Posting Policy statements](#) and [associated posts](#).]

The purpose of EpicureanFriends.com is to promote the study and application of the philosophy of Epicurus, and to allow those who share this goal to communicate with one another in a dedicated community. Posters should conduct themselves as part of a community of friends and always treat each other with graciousness and consideration "*as though Epicurus were watching*." Participants should be ready to receive criticism and disagreement with *frankness, firmness, and good humor*, and should consult the principles followed by ancient Epicureans, as referenced in Norman DeWitt's article "[Organization and Procedure in Epicurean Groups](#)."

Participants in this site are in no way "members" of any organization or pledged to hold a particular set of beliefs. Participants are in no way submitting to any authority or doctrinal rules. However, this community was founded by and for people who are devoted to applying Epicurean philosophy accurately, and experience has shown that there are identifiable characteristics that typify the sincere Epicurean, as exemplified by the following:

1. An Epicurean does not have a Stoic-like ascetic personality which views pleasure with suspicion and seeks to eliminate all but the most necessary of desires. The Epicurean follows Vatican Saying 63 in holding: "Frugality too has a limit, and the man who disregards it is like him who errs through excess."
2. An Epicurean is not a "Tranquilist" who construes "absence of pain" as something separate or distinct from the goal of pleasurable living. The Epicurean understands that "pleasure" describes a faculty which encompasses all pleasurable physical and mental activities and which is in itself the guide to the best way of life. The Epicurean holds: "[W]e call pleasure the beginning and end of the blessed life. For we recognize pleasure as the first good innate in us, and from pleasure we begin every act of choice and avoidance, and to pleasure we return again, using the feeling as the standard by which we judge every good." The Epicurean understands that there is no need for argument to prove that "pleasure" is desirable, The Epicurean remembers that Epicurus said "I know not how to conceive the good, apart from the pleasures of taste, of sex, of sound, and the pleasures of beautiful form." The Epicurean therefore recognizes with Cicero that Epicurus taught that "Nothing is preferable to a life of tranquility crammed full of pleasures." (Cicero - Defense of Publius Sestius)

3. An Epicurean does not seek "virtue" or "nobility" or a "greater good" as superior to the goal of living pleurably. The Epicurean understands "virtue" as a tool which successfully produces pleasurable living, not an end in itself. The Epicurean agrees with Diogenes of Oinoanda: "But since, as I say, the issue is not 'what is the means of happiness?' but 'what is happiness and what is the ultimate goal of our nature?,' I say both now and always, shouting out loudly to all Greeks and non-Greeks, that pleasure is the end of the best mode of life, while the virtues, which are inopportunately messed about by these people (being transferred from the place of the means to that of the end), are in no way an end, but the means to the end."
4. An Epicurean does not embrace Platonic / Aristotelian / Socratic devotion to "logic" and "reason" as goals in themselves which are superior to pleasurable living. The Epicurean views logic and reason as tools for producing pleasurable living.
5. An Epicurean does not embrace Platonic / Aristotelian / Socratic "idealism" which holds that truth exists only in some other and higher dimension above the reality in which we live. The Epicurean holds that this life is all that we have, and that the state of being dead is a state of nothingness to us.
6. An Epicurean does not embrace Stoic / Platonic / Aristotelian / Socratic religious abstractions such as supernatural gods, prime movers or divine fire.
7. An Epicurean does not embrace eclecticism or the radical skepticism that holds that reality is not knowable and that nothing is certain.

Please also observe the following:

- 1) Posters shall respect the right of each member to "**live unknown**" to the extent that he or she sees fit. Postings here are available to others to reread for an indefinite time in the future, so please post responsibly.
- 2) Posters shall adhere to the purpose of this forum, which is to participate in a community of friends to promote the philosophy of *Epicurus*. Many forums for the discussion of other philosophers exist elsewhere, and discussion of other philosophies should be done here only to assist in the better understanding of Epicurus. Posts which are primarily discussion of non-Epicurean ideas should be made elsewhere.
- 3) In order to encourage the free flow of information, participants are welcome to register with a pseudonym / "pen name." Use of real names is not necessary, and posting of personal information of any kind should be minimized. Participants are free to disclose personal information about themselves as they see fit, but personal information about participants shall not be disclosed without their consent.
- 4) Discussion of specific modern political issues should be severely limited. That is not because Epicurean philosophy has no application to these issues, but because we are in the early stages of building a viable Epicurean community, and contentious discussion of specific political issues which divide us before that can be accomplished is not consistent with the goal of this site.

Please keep the big picture in perspective, and if you must discuss application of Epicurus to modern politics please do it privately or elsewhere.

5) Do not create posts composed of nothing other than links. Any links to locations outside the forum must contain comment on whether they are endorsed or criticized which explain how they relate to the forum. (Added 09/15/19)

6) All posts are subject to moderation. Leadership of the forum retains at all times the right to accept, reject, and remove any post and any participant at any time for any reason.

Thank you for your participation here!

A Further Note On Why This Website Is Not "Stoic In Disguise"

Many people who come here have been influenced by the modern tendency to emphasize the alleged importance of a distinction between "kinetic" and "katastematic" pleasure. This argument is unsound, probably not of Epicurean origin at all, and can be very damaging to a proper understanding of Epicurus. To research this issue, start with [Boris Nikolsky's "Epicurus on Pleasure,"](#) which argues that the katastematic issue was not introduced by Epicurus and reflects a later Stoic-influenced viewpoint. Next, read the chapters on Epicurus in [Gosling and Taylor's "The Greeks on Pleasure,"](#) from which [Nikolsky](#) got the inspiration for his article. Add to that the Wentham article ["Cicero's Interpretation of Katastematic Pleasure,"](#) which highlights how emphasis on katastematic pleasure contradicts other core aspects of Epicurean philosophy. These shorter articles should then take you back to the best general book on Epicurus, [Norman DeWitt's "Epicurus and His Philosophy."](#) DeWitt provides a sweeping overview of Epicurus which hardly mentions the katastematic - kinetic distinction except to point out how - even if one considers the categories relevant - Epicurean philosophy embraces **both types**. If you don't read anything else at this website, check out the articles listed above, and you'll see how important this issue is to a proper understanding of Epicurean philosophy.

[For a detailed summary of Epicurean Philosophy assembled from the passages of the ancient texts, see the video below:](#)

[The text of this narrative is available at the wiki here.](#)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7JWG1Xt1bGg>

Post by "Cassius" of November 22, 2017 at 9:07 PM

Also in regard to Forum purpose and standards, here is a video which lists the general Epicurean viewpoint on a series of important issues. A text version is below:

<https://youtu.be/O2-4q3AQ4BY>

A PDF version of this printed list is available by clicking the graphic below.



Major Characteristics of the Epicurean View of Life

The ancient Epicurean viewpoint emphasizes the following:

- 1 - A Universe that operates by and contains only Natural, not supernatural, forces.
- 2 - A Universe with nothing divine, mystical, or imaginary outside it, but only a reality within it that is endless in extent.
- 3 - A Universe neither created by gods nor springing into existence at a single moment in time, but eternal, with nothing coming from or going to nothing.
- 4 - A Universe where the only eternal things are the ultimate particles which comprise it, with no eternal Platonic forms, Aristotelian essences, or rationalistic ideals constituting a "higher truth."
- 5 - A Universe neither ordered nor chaotic, but operating on Natural principles derived from the properties of the ultimate particles and the qualities that emerge from their movements and combinations.
- 6 - A Universe which contains life that is neither mystical nor unique to Earth, but plentiful throughout eternal time and boundless space.

7 - A Universe in which individual consciousness exists to experience Pleasure and Pain only for a single lifetime, not before birth or after death.

8 - Knowledge that is based on observation through natural faculties, not abstract logic or rationalism.

9 - Knowledge that embraces emotions as things to be felt, not suppressed.

10 - Knowledge that holds with confidence that facts which are based on clear evidence are true, rejecting both radical skepticism and belief that is contrary to or without evidence.

11 - Ethics holding that the goal of life is Pleasure, not virtue or religious piety.

12 - Ethics holding virtue, wisdom, and friendship to be valuable tools for producing Pleasure, but not ends in themselves.

13 - Ethics in which desires are evaluated as to whether they are natural or necessary, not so as to choose only what is necessary or to reduce desires to a minimum, but so that those desires which are chosen will maximize Pleasure and minimize Pain.

14 - Ethics in which the goal of life is to fill experience with Pleasures and to reduce Pains to a minimum, not to set up paradoxical abstractions such as "detachment" or "tranquility" or "absence of pain" in the place of Pleasure as ordinarily understood.

15 - Ethics based on achieving Pleasure within a society of friends, protected and separated from enemies, with political involvement, whether of engagement or withdrawal, chosen or avoided according to its efficacy in achieving Pleasurable living.

16 - Ethics based on embracing free will as core to human existence, rejecting both determinism and wishful thinking that all things are possible.

17 - Ethics in which the decision to engage in sexual love is evaluated - as are all choices and avoidances - according to the total amount of Pleasure and Pain the choice will bring, not as an illusory ideal to be pursued under the intoxication of the moment.

18 - Ethics which does not seek for "meaning" in false religion or idealism, but in living for the goal of experiencing the most Pleasure and the least Pain that our personal circumstances will allow.

19 - Ethics in which "Pleasure" as a thing to be pursued means the experience of any number and combination of mental and physical feelings which to us are pleasurable, and "Pain" as a thing to be avoided means the experience of any number and combination of mental and

physical feelings which to us are painful.

20 - Ethics in which "Pleasure" describes the highest goal for each living being, which cannot be improved upon, because Pleasure is the only faculty given by Nature through which we know what to choose, and the highest experience of Pleasure any being is capable of achieving is the complete filling of its experience with Pleasures, undiluted with any mixture of Pains.

21 - Ethics in which in Pains are sometime chosen and Pleasures are sometimes avoided, but for no other purpose than the achievement of the greater pleasure or lesser pain arising from that particular choice or avoidance.

22 - Ethics in which there is no such thing as absolute justice that applies to all people at all times at all places, only relationships which change according to circumstance so as to obtain the most pleasure and the least pain for those who are part of the agreement.

Post by "Cassius" of January 22, 2018 at 4:32 PM

I have added paragraph numbers to the "Terms of Use" page to make any section of it easier to discuss should anyone have any questions, suggested changes, etc.

<https://www.epicureanfriends.com/wcf/index.php?sc-terms-of-use/>