

On Freedom And Happiness -- A Post By Elayne

Post by "Cassius" of September 6, 2019 at 6:46 PM

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A post by Elayne... regarding this link:
<https://psywb.springeropen.com/articles/10.11...yHZlg7Jm-rjNez4>

One of the ways we interact with reality is through the evidence of our senses (and their instrumental extensions). I thought you might be interested in seeing some evidence regarding the relationship of freedom to happiness (pleasure).

Rather than getting caught up in politics or national comparisons, I think it's worth looking at some key points in the write-up. I was very pleased to see the researchers define happiness in terms of people liking their lives-- to me, that means they are understanding that happiness is made of pleasure, because "liking" is impossible to understand without the feeling of pleasure.

Notice that not just freedom but awareness of freedom was important for happiness.

I love that they ended their paper by saying we need to have "guts" to live freely and happily!

I think this relates to our philosophy in three key ways. First, freedom from absolute "necessity"-- from hard determinism-- is critical to the coherence of Epicurean Philosophy. Without a probabilistic future, aka the swerve, the whole philosophy falls apart. Our knowledge of that core freedom inherent in matter itself, without any supernatural intervention, is important to our happiness.

Second, what the researchers call psychological freedom seems to correspond to our sense of agency-- our ability to choose and avoid-- and it affects whether or not we have a pleasurable life. Epicureans are not fatalists.

Third, having freedom from outside interference by other humans was also important for happiness in this study. I would say this is likely similar to other conditions Epicurus found useful for pleasure, in that there can be individual variations-- it's not going to be an absolute. Epicurus could not imagine a happy life without friendship-- for some of us, freedom to live as we choose is as inseparable from pleasure as friendship, and the specific types of freedom we want will vary. I personally have a high need for freedom-- when I am asking myself what will be the outcome if I do an action or not, one of the factors I consider is how the action will affect my freedom, because I know loss of freedom tends to reduce my pleasure.

Pleasure is still the goal-- freedom can be a tool. I'm a hiker, and we have a saying "hike your own hike", HYOH. ☐☐