

## Poll: Marriage / Children Status?

**Post by "Cassius" of November 2, 2019 at 1:28 PM**

Thanks to Nate for the suggestion of having a thread indicating our personal experience in this department. Don't give out too much personal information but this could lead to interesting discussion.

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**Post by "Cassius" of November 2, 2019 at 1:30 PM**

Over at the FB thread, **Nate commented:**

"Right now, it looks like we have 19 responders in relationships, 17 who are single, 18 responders with children, and 19 without children. It's almost an even split. Yet again, it looks like the individualized hedonic calculus of Epicurean philosophy works for everybody, because nature is universal, and the only "right way" to live is to pursue pleasure."

**Cassius responded:**

Well Nate, you might be jumping the gun there! 😊 Before we could be sure of that, we probably need to be sure whether those people are happy with their child / childless state!

As for me, I will frankly admit that I now regret my decision earlier in life not to have children, and my personal advice to you and other young people would be to think very very carefully about all the ramifications of being childless. Of course there is no one size fits all answer (child or childless), but Nature generally places a strong desire to engage in acts that generally lead to procreation, and before an individual decides to veto any strong urge of Nature, they are generally well advised to be very careful! 😊

"For when the buxom Spring leads on the year, and genial gales of western winds blow fresh, unlocked from Winter's cold, the airy birds first feel Thee, Goddess, and express thy power. Thy active flame strikes through their very souls. And then the savage beasts, with wanton play, frisk over the cheerful fields, and swim the rapid streams. So pleased with thy sweetness, so transported by thy soft charms, all living Nature strives, with sharp desire, to follow Thee, her Guide, where Thou art pleased to lead. In short, Thy power, inspiring every breast with tender love, drives every creature on with eager heat, in seas, in mountains, in swiftest floods, in leafy forests, and in verdant plains, to propagate their kind from age to age."

### **Cassius also responded:**

Nate your comment got me thinking further: "Yet again, it looks like the individualized hedonic calculus of Epicurean philosophy works for everybody, because nature is universal, and the only "right way" to live is to pursue pleasure." I know you were probably writing quickly and loosely, but I bet it would be interesting to discuss splitting that into a couple of components and seeing what people think:

(1) "It looks like the individualized hedonic calculus of Epicurean philosophy works for everybody..." Well yes, but (A) probably the first point to always make about it is that this is the standard given by Nature, in the sense of "What does Nature perceive or what does she judge of, beside pleasure and pain, to guide her actions of desire and of avoidance?" So pleasure and pain are the reality of nature / human nature, regardless of whether it "works" for a particular person or not. (B) It can always be implemented, but maybe not in a way that we find attractive at first glance, because some situations have no "happy ending" and we have to make hard choices about whether we wish to go on fighting them or not (end-stage cancer is maybe an example).

(2) "because nature is universal..." (A) Yes, nature is the universe and the universe is nature, in the most basic sense. (B) But what you're really talking about here is "pleasure" probably more so than "nature," and while the human faculty of pleasure probably operates broadly similarly from most people, it doesn't operate the same way universally, and that's really the premise of your comment, that different people find pleasure/happiness in different choices.

(3) and the only "right way" to live is to pursue pleasure." (A) "Right" probably implies "ought" and lots of people like to argue philosophically that it is not possible to derive "ought" from "is." In my case I conclude that it is a good idea to follow Nature, and not to think I am able to out-think her. 😊

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### **Post by “wynnho” of November 5, 2019 at 8:05 PM**

I am not an Epicurean expert and it has been 6 months since I've read his stuff, so correct me if i am wrong: didn't Epicurus also advise against romantic relationships such as marriage?

You mentioned whether people in this site were happy or not with their childless status, but you neglected to wonder if they are happy about their marital status. this subject has been on my mind a LOT lately and is tearing me up. It might be seen as a practical matter (even though marriage is hardly a necessity), but it was one that I hoped to explore or read more about here.

Not arguing, but...it is a big issue in a person's life and influences so many aspects of one's life - where you'll live, maybe where you'll work, what your schedule or diet might be like...

I'm sure there's a thread here somewhere about marriage or significant others and /or sex....i'm a newbie...

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**Post by “Charles” of November 5, 2019 at 8:43 PM**

[wynnho](#) This was recently talked about, and yes, Epicurus did say that wise people will marry. It's more of a matter of the message of "don't rush into marriage" among other quotes & statements regarding love, that was lost in translation and quickly became one of the key criticisms of Epicureanism. (Selection is from Epicurus: The Extant Remains from a Cyril Bailey translation)

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Sexual intercourse, they say, has never done a man good, and he is lucky if it has not harmed him.

119 Moreover, the wise man will marry and have children, as Epicurus says in the *Problems* and in the work on *Nature*. But he will marry according to the circumstances of his life. He will feel shame in the presence of some persons, and certainly will not insult them in his cups, so Epicurus says in the *Symposium*. Nor will he take part in public

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**Post by “wynnho” of November 5, 2019 at 8:47 PM**

????!! Oh, my...could he have changed his mind at some point or did I get someone else's advice mixed up with his?!

Children are NOT simple!

I want to marry, but still wonder if I'd be lucky enough to have a simple happy marriage...I am convinced most people do NOT.

Thanks for sharing this.

Part of my own criticism of Epicurus was that it is part of human nature to have sex and/or need physical affection/touch. I felt like denial of it might not be missed by some, but might break others. This topic is plaguing me right now in my own life.

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**Post by “Cassius” of November 5, 2019 at 8:51 PM**

Wynno a lot of the popular material on Epicurus has been misreported and one of our goals here is to get things straight by going back to the sources. Many of the commentators are not particularly friendly to Epicurus and that is why I suggest the Norman Dewitt book as the best way to get a good grounding.