

# Practical Daily Pleasure-- Creating Pleasurable Habits

Post by "Cassius" of July 5, 2019 at 6:58 PM

From Elayne:

This is a thread to discuss practical application of EP in the small, daily habits of our lives. It is easier to realize we are making decisions when it comes to the big things like education, career/ job choices, whether to marry or have children, where to live, etc. But most of our days are spent doing habitual actions. Neurologically, our brains create habits to conserve effort-- if we had to think about every single action all day long, we would have decision fatigue before lunch and maybe even before breakfast.

If you have been practicing EP for a long time, you have probably already developed daily habits that are pleasurable. However, if you are newer, it is worth your time to examine what you do habitually during a typical day and try out new habits if your old ones are not pleasurable. And even if you have been practicing for a long time, sometimes your old pleasures may grow stale and you will want to change them rather than stick with a habit.

Typical habits include things like sleeping times/ places, diet, amount/ type and timing of physical movement, activities that engage your senses, hobbies, friendships and social activities you participate in as a routine (such as, for me, Thursday night Chorus practice). I would also include how you arrange your daily surroundings-- your home and outdoor settings, and even your clothes. These are all potential avenues for pleasure, and none of them are trivial-- because we have no absolute scale to rate pleasures by importance and triviality. Those are labels people put on your pleasures to try and influence you.

How we make decisions about these small daily habits is the exact same process as for all decisions: we ask ourselves "Every desire must be confronted by this question: What will happen to me if the object of my desire is accomplished, and what if it is not?" (VS 71).

In addition, because our culture inundates us with Stoicism, Platonism, and other idealisms, maybe it will help beginners to ask themselves a few more questions. If you skip this part, you are at risk of inserting these ideologies into your daily schedule and missing out on your pleasure.

1) Is there any other goal I am inadvertently putting above pleasure, such as minimalism, social utilitarianism (the greatest good for the greatest number), etc? If this is the case, remind

yourself that the universe is material. There is no supernatural world, and you will live only until death. This means there are no absolute standards of virtue, and there is no ideal or "perfect" world to achieve. Remember that we include our subjective feelings of pain and pleasure as valid information about reality, and that pleasure is our goal. There are times when having less stuff will increase your pleasure, and times when having more stuff will do it. Use pleasure as your guide rather than an arbitrary concept someone else is giving you. You can feel your pleasure directly.

2) Are you aiming for pleasure or trying to avoid pain? Although increasing pleasure in life does mean decreasing pain, because it is an either-or situation, practically speaking you will get more pleasure by aiming at it. Just thinking of pleasure brings more pleasure. It is necessary to keep pain in mind if you are continuously trying to avoid it, and this is a pain you don't need to have. I like the pothole/ motorcycle metaphor. If a biker gazes at potholes, they will often drive right into them. Gazing at the pothole-free road is a more successful strategy. Sometimes your road of pleasure has a pothole you have to go through to get to the good part-- if so, rather than stopping cold to avoid the scary pothole, focus on your pleasure goal and get right on through the pothole. Avoidance as your primary strategy can lead to a fearful, constricted life.

3) Are you trying to limit/"balance" your pleasure with anything else, out of fear that you can have "too much pleasure"? If so, the good news is that there is no such thing as too much pleasure. If it is "too much", that means it is not pleasure at all but pain! Some specific activities that bring pleasure also bring more pain than pleasure. In that case, find a way to modify the activity so it is more pleasurable/ less painful, or choose a different activity entirely. Stopping eating when you are full, for example, is maximizing your pleasure, not limiting it. A common error is thinking you need to "balance" your own pleasure with the pleasure of others. But an Epicurean knows that the pleasure of our loved ones and even sometimes the pleasure of strangers is not separate from our own pleasure-- we are entangled closely with friends and often have empathy for strangers. This is a feeling process, more than a cognitive assessment. There will be times when you have an opponent, someone who directly presents a threat to your pleasure-- and in these cases, it certainly won't make you enjoy life more to please them.

4) If you are developing habits that you hope will lead to future pleasures, ask yourself if your goal is concrete or idealistic. An idealistic, imaginary goal is one that can't actually be achieved, like "perfect health" or "perfect freedom"-- with an imaginary goal you will never be satisfied. For concrete goals, is it likely you can achieve the result you desire? Can you do anything to make your actions towards the goal pleasurable, so that even if you don't "get there", you will still enjoy the process? Is the end goal something you really want, or is it someone else's idealistic goal?

Once you have chosen your new daily habits, be sure to savor the pleasures of each activity. That way you will get the most pleasure out of them, and you can also create memories to rely on for later pleasures.

At least sometimes, at the end of the day, look back and evaluate how pleasurable your activities were. Think about changing them if your experiments were not enjoyable.

In practice, here is what this could look like (your day will likely be different):

I have experimented with waking at different times, and I prefer an early morning, around 5:30-6 am. I can wake then without an alarm-- I am a "lark". So I try to go to bed in time to make my mornings enjoyable.

I enjoy coffee, only 1-2 cups a morning-- very much. I have learned to roast my own coffee, in my garage, and I make myself a delicious cup every morning using my Chemex/ pour-over with fresh ground coffee. This is an easy habit. I sit and savor my delicious coffee-- weather permitting-- on my deck under the trees. I take my time to wake up fully, think about things, read, and sometimes do some writing, before starting work.

After coffee, I exercise. I have experimented with different types of physical exercise, and the two things I like the most are hiking and dancing around free-style. I mix in free weights with the dancing around-- I have an Olympic bar in my garage with plates-- and I have a yoga swing with handles which functions like a trx. I have taken time to make playlists of my favorite exercise music. I go hiking as many times a week as I have time, depending on work and the weather. During the day, if I am sitting a lot, I set my phone alarm for every 20-30 minutes and jump up to do some dancing around for a few minutes.

I am in a more pleasant mood if I get outdoors often, so I make a habit of daily walks even if not hiking. At night, I go out and look at the stars if it is clear.

I love singing, so I belong to a women's Chorus-- this mixes the pleasures of singing in with the pleasures of friendship! I sing in the shower, in the kitchen... sometimes on the hiking trail.

I enjoy bright colors, so I have taken time to decorate my condo in my favorite colors--turquoise, bright orange, green, pink. I found a condo which was more affordable than the apartments locally, and I bought it mainly for the deck with a view of the mountains and trees. The virtue of the lower cost living is not in minimalism or frugality-- it is in the absence of worry that I won't be able to pay my mortgage and in the daily enjoyment.

I love listening to music, so I have good quality headphones. A Sunday afternoon of reading a well-written book while sipping spiced hot tea and listening to Chopin is sublime, for me.

I enjoy reading for pleasure, so I make sure to always have a queue of things I want to read, and I have a habit of reading in the evenings.

I invite family and friends over some evenings, and I enjoy cooking for them and watching them smile when they taste my cooking.

What do your daily pleasures look like?

## Post by “wynnho” of November 5, 2019 at 8:44 PM

this subject is what I came to this site for...practical things, not just ideological. And it is empty.

I haven't eaten mammals or fowl for 33 years or so, but 2 years ago went vegan. i try to eat whole foods plant-based/WFPB (low oil). i try to be as minimalist as my current budget will allow, but have more items to eliminate once I find suitable replacements...and I love Marie Kondo's saying, "If it doesn't spark joy, get rid of it". I used to grow some produce, but now live in a metro area. I hope to do edible landscaping again.

I love pets, but am no longer sure this i true simplicity. But, i am single, so I think a pet helps me with health. I am human and need affection and someone to care for. When my 12 year old dog passes away, I may not replace him...at least until the next stray comes along. I struggle in this area: what is and isn't my duty and when does caring for a pet become self-sacrifice. Case-by-case, I guess. My current dog is a breeze, but some pets aren't.

I mostly stopped wearing make-up, fingernail polish (i do my toes, though), and gave away (grudgingly) all of my high heels.

I've tried to minimize my wardrobe, but am working on the drabness of it. Since color brings me joy, I need to incorporate more. The balance between efficiency and the pleasure of that pop of color is hard to obtain as of yet.

But, i have found the right home color pallet that it simply yet brings a peaceful, pleasant touch of color.

Back to my diet: because steaming and microwaving retain the most nutrients, color, and taste, this is what I do. it also minimizes Advanced Glycation Endproducts. I am trying to avoid grains for various reasons: addictive, high methionine to lysine ratio, can't grow and clean easily at home, and most require sauces/spreads which add a mess and calories.

I try to minimize waste, but find zero waste almost impossible...it prevents joy!

I use dishes and cookware and other items that have multiple functions.

I buy socks in packs so that all or most of my socks will match...cheaper and easier to do laundry....if one gets a hole/gets ruined, it'll match others.

I try to always drive a Honda since I have more of a chance to understand how things under the hood work...vs. having a different make and model each time I buy a car. And, i try to buy quality and ease of maintenance over "bells and whistles".

I try to avoid A/C, but need heat...depends on where I live. This meaning I need breathable storage areas, so usually open shelves or breathable doors to allow for air flow. I have gotten

used to having a mattress or futon on the floor....no frame to take up space or that has to moved if i move. All of my belongings can be broken down/unscrewed to move if need be and can be arranged in a few ways...flexibility means buying less stuff.

I have many pretty airtight jars that can store dry foods....helps with self-sufficiency somewhat, less trips to the grocery store, less electricity used...

I mostly quit drinking coffee because the clean up (stains) and the rank breath were more of a burden compared to tea.

All of my linens are in the same color family (light) so can go in one wash. I am struggling with the clothing color pallet...but, now it is mostly darks which can all go in one wash without ruining anything.

For health reasons, I eat an 'intermittent fast" which is basically NOT a fast at all, but an eating window. I find it can help with simplicity a bit....no breakfast, but a soy shake at 10 am, which may be around break time at many jobs...and my last meal is at or just before 6 p.m. I don't like to eat out usually, so this helps with an excuse to not eat out.

I've mostly kept the same dress/pants size for 40 years or so and this means i may still have some classic styles of well-made clothes from 20+ years ago. My dad taught me that trick....I used to laugh when he's show off his jackets that were 30+ years old and he'd tell me all about getting elbow patches put on them.

Though I like books, having no A/C makes them difficult to keep, so I try to keep files on flash drives and find it much more efficient than real books (sacrilege, i know).

I would love any other practical ideas.

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### **Post by "Cassius" of November 5, 2019 at 8:58 PM**

is your focus on simplicity bringing you happiness, or just more simplicity?

Vatican Saying 63: Frugality too has a limit, and the man who disregards it is like him who errs through excess.

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### **Post by "Joshua" of November 5, 2019 at 9:30 PM**

Lot to digest there!

We've discussed many of these subjects, but the forum is broader than it is deep right now. It'll take some poking through the sub-forums to find them.

I was a vegetarian for a little over a year, until I started driving truck. Something I'd like to explore again.

Welcome to the forum!

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### **Post by “Elayne” of November 5, 2019 at 9:59 PM**

I don't get any particular pleasure from simplicity or minimalism-- in fact, there's something about all that which irritates me. Probably just a style preference. I like the Bohemian look.

In general I prefer to go right up to the knife's edge of pleasure, the limit, not holding back until right before the point where more of something would cause pain. I'm a maximalist, lol.

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### **Post by “Cassius” of November 5, 2019 at 9:59 PM**

Also Wynnho, feel free to post your own thread specific to your questions and thoughts if you don't see a topic on point.

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### **Post by “Charles” of November 5, 2019 at 10:43 PM**

I love the contrast here, between Elayne's "Maximalism" & Wynn's Minimalism. Though you could easily see the two and want to find some median between them, I think that would be redundant as long as both are Epicurean. While VS 63 comes to mind, we should all embrace the pleasure that comes with finding, and living comfortably within our own style.

Frankly, I'm more of the maximalist mindset that [Elayne](#) has, I indulge in the extreme

pleasures, right up to that limit, often pushing the envelope until I realize I may need to take a step back and examine my choices through the hedonistic calculus as a fall-back method, but when that refrain has had its time, I quickly reciprocate to more pleasure.

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### **Post by “Cassius” of November 5, 2019 at 10:47 PM**

i think personally i am more of a calculating type who tries to optimize but sometimes calculates too long for his own good 😊

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### **Post by “Godfrey” of November 6, 2019 at 12:30 AM**

Wynnho, your post sounds very ascetic to me. This is a value judgement on my part: what you describe may be pleasurable to you, and that is the most important thing.

The reason I mention ascetic is that many academics interpret Epicurean philosophy as being ascetic or something approaching it. But here the general feeling is that that interpretation is a gross misrepresentation of the philosophy. Elayne wrote a piece on pleasure that's posted elsewhere on this forum (I think under Articles, I'll try to find it and copy the link in this thread) which I think is a good summation of Epicurean pleasure as many of us view it.

I personally enjoy minimalism as both a lifestyle choice and a design expression, although I tend more toward Alvar Aalto than Mies van der Rohe. While Bang and Olufson has a sense of perfection, traditional Japanese design has a richness to it. And the richness, to me, is where the pleasure lies.

It sounds like you've got some great systems in place which bring you pleasure and contentment. It also sounds like you're looking to bring more joy into your life. In my life I have tended to err on the side of duty (for lack of a better word at the moment) at the expense of pleasure, and discovering this philosophy has been a godsend (pardon the expression) in terms of putting me on a better path. One of the first things that I put into practice was a hedonic calculus: in any given circumstance, project, etc., how can I get the most pleasure without causing myself a bunch of stress?

As I read your post I kept thinking of the book Joyful by Ingrid Fetell Lee. It contains a plethora of tips for bringing joy into your life. She also has a blog, I think it's called The Aesthetics of Joy. To my knowledge she's not an Epicurean, but then Epicureans don't have exclusive access to

pleasure!

Also worthwhile is Hiram Crespo's book *Tending the Epicurean Garden*. He includes lots of ideas for a hedonic regimen which you might find useful.

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### **Post by “Godfrey” of November 6, 2019 at 12:34 AM**

Here's the link to Elayne's post:

[On Pain, Pleasure, and Happiness Second Draft](#)

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### **Post by “Cassius” of November 6, 2019 at 5:00 AM**

[Quote from wynnho](#)

this subject is what I came to this site for...practical things, not just ideological.

Wynnho's comment is a good reminder that some number of people are going to come to this website hoping to go straight to a "practical tips" section rather than being sure that they understand the philosophy first.

We should probably make a subsection devoted just to people like this, combining some initial advice with explanation of why this approach can at times be counterproductive.

So as the thread continues it would be good to consider discussing both (1) the hazards of this approach (how do you know what will bring you happiness if you don't know what happiness is?) and (2) examples of specific \*preliminary\* advice on practical steps that might be generally applicable.

If we don't orient people quickly to the hazards of for using on tools, we will find ourselves giving esthetic design advice for assistance in arranging the deck chairs on the Titanic.

But we \*can\* still give some tips that ought to be immediately useful to most everyone.

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### **Post by “Cassius” of November 6, 2019 at 5:02 AM**

Unfortunately some people are not going to like the initial advice, the foundations of which are things like *giving up false ideas of life after death, giving up false religion, giving up false ideals of "virtue," giving up their affection for thinking of themselves as "rational above all," giving up toxic relationships that they think they have a duty to continue, and fully embracing that pleasure is the goal of life.*

All of these will often be painful initially, even though they are the most productive of pleasure both over time and in "intensity."

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### **Post by “Godfrey” of November 6, 2019 at 11:54 AM**

#### Quote

... some initial advice with explanation of why this approach can at times be counterproductive.

Understanding the basic ideas actually IS practical: I would think and act much differently if I was focused on "avoiding pain" rather than "maximizing pleasure"!

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### **Post by “Cassius” of November 6, 2019 at 11:57 AM**

That is absolutely the key Godfrey. So would I and I think most anyone would. Also, most normal young people who are new to the philosophy are going to sense this and immediately reject anyone who advises this.

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### **Post by “Garden Dweller” of November 6, 2019 at 7:16 PM**

Strategies which minimize maintenance are very helpful. So much of our time is spent on maintenance, storage and employment to pay for our collection of things. For most people in today's world, a process of simplification and reduction in one's accumulation of things is very healthy in the sense that it frees up time for more pleasurable activities.

After working on simplification for some time (decades), I did find that in some areas of life I had bottomed out, and was practicing simplification only because it had worked before. I had to change my strategy and focus on the activities I enjoyed doing, and in some cases started purchasing things that I previously sold at a garage sale (for example).

Most people would benefit from simplification of their lives. However, someone who has successfully made their life more tranquil through simplification may need to redirect their efforts to maximize joy-comfort-fascination-pleasure.

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### **Post by “Elayne” of November 6, 2019 at 9:04 PM**

Even for maintenance, it depends on whether one enjoys the process of maintaining whatever possession it is in question (in addition to the pleasure of having and/or using the object. I happen to enjoy certain types of routine maintenance. As for the work needed, if the work itself is enjoyable this is not a problem either. As long as you keep pleasure as the criterion, making these types of decisions tends to be relatively easy in my experience.

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### **Post by “Elli” of November 7, 2019 at 11:43 AM**

There is a movie that is based on this novel. Here is some critics on the movie and the book.

An inactive (all I want in my life is absence of pain) nobleman, with the name Oblomov, a classic good-hearted lazy of the aristocratic old school, and the other with the name Stoltz, who is a dynamic and ambitious businessman, imbued with the spirit of rationality and progress. These two men have been friends since their childhood. Oblomov, is sticking to the values of a lost old world, stubbornly refuses to accept his friend's life stance and dismisses it as frivolous, cynical and superficial. Of course, he suffers deeply because he knows that he is already out of things and that he has no place in a rapidly changing new world era. When a beautiful woman with the name Olga comes between them, their lives and their relationship will be tested.

The film is a cinematic rendition of Oblomov's novel, written in 1859 by Ivan Aleksandrovich Goncharov (1812-1891), who, along with Gogol, is considered one of the founders of realistic tradition in Russian literature. Goncharov is a keen observer of the changes that happened in the Russian spirit, psyche and mentality, by the Napoleonic invasion in Russia, and the consequences of the Russian army's reverse course to the west, have brought to these

historical paths, for the first time contact of two different worlds to be collided: the traditional obsolete feudal structures of the East with individualism, rationality, entrepreneurship and the scientific conquests of the West. In this film - his first major production - and one of his best, Mikhalkov manages to capture and capture on screen, with great clarity and confrontation, the conflict as well as the contradictory aspects of the old and the new world era, through the diametrically opposite central characters.

The superbly sketched figure of Oblomov - a prodigal Chekhovian hero - symbolizes the lazy and dreamy eternal Russian soul, full of emotional outbursts, while the positivist Stolts is the aggressive, dynamic and energetic playmate of the new era, who, not only he will win the game of life, but in the end, he will conquer the heart of Olga. A velvet-driven film, full of lyricism, poetry, and stunningly natural landscapes, it delivers the historical conflict between the receding past and the futuristic future within the relationship of the central characters. Mikhalkov manages, in a unique way, to capture the crucial historical changes in the inner landscapes of the heroes, just when Oblomov is lost in the waste of History and the other Stolts finds the passage to the future. Great is Oleg Tambakov's performance on the Oblomov's role.

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## **Post by “Elayne” of November 9, 2019 at 10:01 AM**

Garden Dweller, I like the final piece of practical planning! I advise strongly against the section on constantly monitoring your body for discomfort, though. This is guaranteed to result in discomfort, because of the way our brains work. When we tell our brains to check for pain, this requires our brains to keep the sensation of pain in mind, looking for a match. Most of us are suggestible enough that we will get a "nocebo" effect from this (opposite of placebo), but at a minimum it requires keeping the feeling of pain in mind, which is painful itself.

People who have various types of health anxiety turn out to be very high on body awareness. The typical amount of body awareness, not training yourself to be unusually aware, is what we've evolved to have. If there truly is a noxious stimulus needing your attention, most of the time you'll know it without special effort. Sometimes there can be minor issues like sitting in an awkward position while reading and being so absorbed that your foot goes to sleep, lol. But these are generally minimal issues. You can improve this by checking for bodily pleasure at the onset of reading. I also set my phone alarm to periodically remind me of the pleasure of getting up and stretching/dancing around.

I look for pleasure in my body, when I'm checking in, even more key for me due to chronic inflammatory arthritis. If there is a major flare, I'll know, but otherwise I have no need to focus

on the parts that are sore. It isn't information that leads to increased pleasure because it isn't fixable.

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## **Post by “Elayne” of November 11, 2019 at 11:46 AM**

Here was the original post that started this discussion: I replaced it with the current topic header. I wrote it a few months ago, and since then I have found that being an omnivore but exercising more is working better for my pleasure and future health markers.

"Here is something I have had to make decisions about recently: what I eat. I have had a long-standing preference for foods like beans, pasta, olive oil, nuts, fruits, vegetables, cheese, and good bread. I don't eat much sugar, but when I do, it is usually in the form of chocolate!

These foods have agreed with me, physically. I had given up meat for several years, because it aggravated my autoimmune arthritis and made my feet hurt, but about 6 months ago, I started eating some meat here and there. After passing menopause, it didn't seem to bother me as it had previously.

Then, I went for my routine physical, and my fasting blood sugar was in the pre-diabetic, insulin resistant range. I had never had trouble before. This was scary, because everyone I know of on my mother's side of the family has diabetes. I have 3 high risk genes for macular degeneration, and my grandmother had it-- my mother died too young to know if she would have gotten it. This condition causes people to lose their central vision-- my grandmother was unable to read or write after she got it. The risk of macular degeneration is sharply increased in the setting of insulin resistance.

Because adding meat was the only change I had made, I decided to try stopping it, leaving me with basically a vegetarian Mediterranean diet. Unfortunately, my blood sugars remained high. I have read a good bit about this issue due to my profession, and I re-reviewed the latest studies. This is not medical advice, but the main strategies I have seen with research support are Mediterranean, whole foods plant based (very low fat), and ketogenic, which can be either meat or plant based. It seems harder to get things to work with both carbs and fat-- for many people, one or the other has to go. With the meat based keto, there is some concern about increased insulin resistance over time. These studies have multiple problems-- all manner of confounding factors. And we have so many possible genetic enzyme variants. I doubt that the same diet will work for every person.

I thought about my goal of pleasure in life, as I am in the habit of doing. Eating 2-3 times a day is one of the easiest times to have pleasure. I cannot imagine living without the sensory pleasure of food I enjoy. And cooking for myself and friends is a great pleasure. It doesn't have

to be complicated or expensive food, but I want it to taste good, by gosh! However, my vision also provides me with extraordinary pleasure-- reading, writing, art-work, crafts... it is a key pleasure sense for me.

As an Epicurean, I decided to experiment and find the diet that provided the best intersection of short term (taste) and long term (vision) pleasures. I got a glucose meter and started tracking what happened. The ultra low fat high carb whole foods plant based diet fixed my blood sugars quickly-- my fasting sugar went into the 70's, and I never got over 120 after meals. But without nuts or olive oil, I was not getting a lot of taste pleasure. If that had turned out to be the only option that worked, I would have tried to adjust to it, because of the importance of vision to my happiness.

Next I tried ketogenic, mainly plant based except the cream in my one cup of morning coffee. This tastes really good to me, and it has also worked very well for my numbers. I still get to eat most of the vegetables I like, and some berries. Every time I try adding fish, meat, or cheese, my fasting and post-meal glucose go up. Apparently my body is not thrilled about those proteins. The absence of meat turns out to not really affect my pleasure-- I don't feel deprived. I am going to have to learn some new recipes, lol. After a few months, I will probably experiment with adding meat and cheese back in, just in case.

Anyway, that is a long explanation of my decision, but the key is that I did not approach it just with taste pleasure alone or future health alone-- I found a way to have my (nut) cake and see it too. I thought about my own pleasure, not what my doctor might find most pleasurable for herself. I studied nature, in the form of published research and my own responses to my actions.

- And I didn't just give up, as I see many people do, and say something like "well, that's just my bad genetic luck"-- I took action."

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### **Post by “Hiram” of November 11, 2019 at 12:59 PM**

Morning ritual: a gourd of Yerba maté tea (once or twice in the day)

Night time ritual: around six shells of Kava kava in evenings, sometimes accompanied by my favorite Pandora channel (“Shamanic Way channel”)

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### **Post by “Godfrey” of November 11, 2019 at 2:18 PM**

A good cup of loose leaf tea in the morning, with a square of delicious dark chocolate.

Sitting outside in the morning, either with said tea and chocolate or with some water, reading and noticing any birds, butterflies, squirrels, clouds, sun, breeze... or just the blue of the sky and the colors of the landscape.

Preparing and eating a big, tasty, healthy breakfast.

Going to the neighborhood YMCA to exercise: cardio some days, strength training others, followed by a stretch. Some days a walk along the beach replaces cardio in the Y; this is a vast improvement, but I'm currently benefiting from the increased intensity that I'm getting indoors.

Evenings, either stream a good show or movie with my wife or read a book on my own.

Sundays, a few hours of date time with my wife and perhaps some friends.

Each night before bed I go outside to look at the stars. As I live in the city this is a mixed bag: I often think of the line from a movie (Dan Aykroyd? Bill Murray?) "ah, look at the stars! There must be dozens of them!" A trip to the desert or mountains is overdue!

I keep thinking that I need to schedule more pleasures into my day and week, but after making this list I see I've got a good start. One pleasure that is forthcoming (and tantalizingly close) is the completion of a garage studio in which to enjoy a variety of creative endeavors and ping pong.

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### **Post by "Elayne" of November 11, 2019 at 2:30 PM**

Godfrey, in my garage I currently have my coffee roaster corner, the very tall stand for my yoga trapeze (with a gym mat under it), and weights... I may have room, actually, for ping pong, come to think of it! Lol! My family had a ping pong table when I was growing up, and my dad's parents also... lots of fun memories.

My possibly strange interior design tastes are going to show up big time in the garage, eventually... I'm going to paint it midnight blue, hang bistro lights, stick glow in the dark stars on the ceiling, and hang things like planet mobiles and bird pinatas. This winter when it gets cold, I plan to try making a giant papier mache tree for my living room. I have a spare room downstairs that my son and I use to do paintings and various craft projects.

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### **Post by "Godfrey" of November 11, 2019 at 7:04 PM**

Wow! That sounds great Elayne! My interior design is pretty much the opposite: walls and rafters painted white, and a couple of new skylights to add lots of light. Over time I anticipate it getting populated with a variety of as yet undetermined creations. I've got a gigantic drafting table that's been passed down for a couple of generations which will feature prominently as well.

Outside are a red door and a blue door, along with a west facing patio wall painted "golden buff" which catches the sunset quite nicely. All rather modern though.

Ping pong wise, I plan to keep half of the table vertical while it's in the garage so it will be a practice table. For games it can roll out onto the driveway/patio with both sides down, if that makes any sense. Although I normally play just for fun, I've got a friend who destroys me when we play; hopefully the practice time will help in addition to providing some fun breaks from other activities.

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### **Post by “Joshua” of November 11, 2019 at 11:05 PM**

This thread turned out to be quite a lot of fun!

Two years ago I was working 12+ hours a day in two different restaurants. Now I spend 8-10 hours a day on the road, listen to books or podcasts, pay nothing in rent, and live well within my means (for the first time since college). So while I sometimes miss the little comforts of a settled life, I have a MUCH healthier mind-space day to day.

Today I listed to *A Walk in the Woods* by Bill Bryson, for the 5th or sixth time. Elayne, you should look into it before your spring hiking!