

# Welcome LukeL!

**Post by “Cassius” of July 13, 2020 at 9:20 AM**

Hello and welcome to the forum [LukeL](#) !

This is the place for students of Epicurus to coordinate their studies and work together to promote the philosophy of Epicurus. Please remember that all posting here is subject to our [Community Standards / Rules of the Forum](#) our [Not Neo-Epicurean, But Epicurean](#) and our [Posting Policy statements](#) and [associated posts](#).

Please understand that the leaders of this forum are well aware that many fans of Epicurus may have sincerely-held views of what Epicurus taught that are incompatible with the purposes and standards of this forum. This forum is dedicated exclusively to the study and support of people who are committed to classical Epicurean views. As a result, this forum is not for people who seek to mix and match some Epicurean views with positions that are inherently inconsistent with the core teachings of Epicurus.

All of us who are here have arrived at our respect for Epicurus after long journeys through other philosophies, and we do not demand of others what we were not able to do ourselves. Epicurean philosophy is very different from other viewpoints, and it takes time to understand how deep those differences really are. That's why we have membership levels here at the forum which allow for new participants to discuss and develop their own learning, but it's also why we have standards that will lead in some cases to arguments being limited, and even participants being removed, when the purposes of the community require it. Epicurean philosophy is not inherently democratic, or committed to unlimited free speech, or devoted to any other form of organization other than the pursuit by our community of happy living through the principles of Epicurean philosophy.

One way you can be most assured of your time here being productive is to tell us a little about yourself and personal your background in reading Epicurean texts. It would also be helpful if you could tell us how you found this forum, and any particular areas of interest that you have which would help us make sure that your questions and thoughts are addressed.

In that regard we have found over the years that there are a number of key texts and references which most all serious students of Epicurus will want to read and evaluate for themselves. Those include the following.

1. The Biography of Epicurus By Diogenes Laertius (Chapter 10). This includes all Epicurus' letters and the Authorized Doctrines. Supplement with the Vatican list of Sayings.
2. **"Epicurus And His Philosophy" - Norman DeWitt**

3. "On The Nature of Things"- Lucretius
4. Cicero's "On Ends" - Torquatus Section
5. Cicero's "On The Nature of the Gods" - Velleius Section
6. The Inscription of Diogenes of Oinoanda - Martin Ferguson Smith translation
7. A Few Days In Athens" - Frances Wright
8. Lucian Core Texts on Epicurus: (1) Alexander the Oracle-Monger, (2) Hermotimus
9. Plato's [Philebus](#)
10. Philodemus "On Methods of Inference" (De Lacy version, including his appendix on relationship of Epicurean canon to Aristotle and other Greeks)
11. "The Greeks on Pleasure" -Gosling & Taylor Sections on Epicurus, especially on katastematic and kinetic pleasure.

It is by no means essential or required that you have read these texts before participating in the forum, but your understanding of Epicurus will be much enhanced the more of these you have read.

And time has also indicated to us that if you can find the time to read one book which will best explain [classical Epicurean philosophy](#), as opposed to most modern "eclectic" interpretations of Epicurus, that book is Norman DeWitt's ***Epicurus And His Philosophy***.

***Welcome to the forum!***

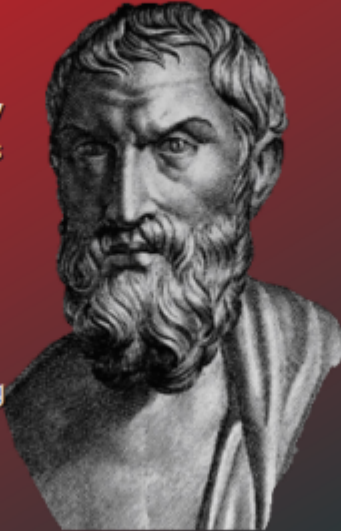
## Not Neo-Epicurean, But Epicurean

1. Not "flourishing," "human potential," "self-actualization," or "meaningfulness," but happiness grounded in the feeling of pleasure.
2. Not "absence of pain" as a full statement of the goal of life, but "the Feelings are two, pleasure and pain" and "Pleasure is the beginning and the end of a happy life."
3. Not virtue for the sake of virtue, but virtue as instrumental for the attainment of pleasure.
4. Not "the greatest good for the greatest number," but "Every desire must be confronted with this question: What will happen to me if the object of my desire is accomplished and what if it is not?"
5. Not "humanism," "transhumanism," "individualism," "collectivism," "egoism," "altruism," "social progress," "Marxism," "democracy," "tyranny," or any "one size fits all" political ideal of any kind, but social structure based on friendship which "is formed and maintained by means of a community of life among those who have reached the fullness of pleasure."
6. Not "hard determinism," but "some things happen from necessity, some from chance, and others through our own choice."
7. Not "supernaturalism," but "materialism."
8. Not "supernatural gods," or "life after death," but confidence in a fully material universe and "for those men for whom wisdom is possible, and who do seek it, such men may truly live as gods."
9. Not only "short term hedonism," but "it is to continuous pleasures that I invite you."
10. Not "rationalism," but "all reason is dependent upon sensations."
11. Not fearful of death nor careless of losing life, but valuing life for the opportunity of pleasure it brings.

## Our Posting Policy At EpicureanFriends.com:

"No Partisan Politics," "No Supernatural Religion," and "No Absolute Virtue"

This forum is dedicated to promoting the philosophy of Epicurus, and not to any partisan political positions whether "left," "right," or "center." The task of rediscovering Epicurean philosophy requires that such discussions be held elsewhere. Posts violating this rule are subject to removal.



Epicurean philosophy firmly rejects the viewpoint that there are any supernatural forces or absolute virtues or Platonic ideals of any kind. Argument which is based on supernatural claims, or "absolute" virtues or ideals of any kind, are in violation of this rule and subject to removal.

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### Post by "LukeL" of July 13, 2020 at 10:32 AM

Well hello new community,

I teach upper high school English, and my created curriculum theme is exploring the question how ought one to live from many perspectives in the western canon of literature.

My first encounter with Epicurus was while researching how best to teach the different character's perspectives on what makes the good life in *Brave New World*. I then revisited him while attempting to get to the root of happiness in the protagonist Janie's life in *Their Eyes were Watching God*. Later, I found the whole point of *Candide*, satirical ending or not, to be preaching Epicureanism. Admittedly, I have free autonomy to choose which novels and how to teach them, so I am sure I had some inkling of a connection before my realization, but it still struck me as quite unique.

I read Dewitt's "Epicurus and his Philosophy" and Lucretius. I then read Catherine Wilson's *How to be an Epicurean*, which I found informative, but lacking in its stated purpose, unfortunately.

My viewpoint on life has fluctuated from stoicism when I was young, to new and exciting when I was a young adult, to neo-platonic in my 20s, to much more Epicurean in nature now. I have bought a 10 acre farm an hour away (haven't informed my job yet) and am selling my city house next week, most likely quitting unless they allow me to administrate and teach online, and want to start an Epicurean-lite school. My understanding, shallow as it is, is that Epicurus had more of a control over his school and had a cult of personality. I have given a lot of thought to cults, having grown up in a pseudo-benign one and seeing how controlling our educational system is, and I find that while cults do indeed jump-start movements, I believe they are unethical today, so I will attempt to teach my pupils as much autonomy as possible, including autonomy from me.

Why am I doing this? 1. I feel it will give me an authentic life of contentment through simplicity. 2. I feel that no philosophy is a one-size-fits-all, but that ataxia through community, mental pleasure, and avoiding pain seems to be lacking in today's zeitgeist. 3. It seems that consuming is the order of the day in the western world, from goods to food to media. My weakness is consuming information- I can never have enough of it, and it gives me temporary pleasure at the longtime pain of anxiety and disappointment of not doing what I want to do for myself and others.

TLDR: The core ideas of Epicurus seem to align with what I have learned in life, and I want to teach others about him.

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## Post by “Cassius” of July 13, 2020 at 11:15 AM

### [Quote from LukeL](#)

I then read Catherine Wilson's *How to be an Epicurean*, which I found informative, but lacking in its stated purpose, unfortunately.

Ha! That's funny ... but a good way to describe it!

### [Quote from LukeL](#)

My understanding, shallow as it is, is that Epicurus had more of a control over his school and had a cult of personality

I think that this "cult" aspect is far overstated, even perhaps a little by DeWitt, but less so by him than some others. My view is that anytime you want to accomplish something you have to set some rules and boundaries, and you also have to keep people generally in line with those

same boundaries if you want to keep moving toward a goal. It's also natural that someone like Epicurus could actually become looked up to as a sort of father figure. So my view is that those aspects are natural and perfectly proper and need not mutate into the kind of mind control and absolute authority that most of us probably associate with the world "cult" today.

#### [Quote from LukeL](#)

I have bought a 10 acre farm an hour away (haven't informed my job yet) and am selling my city house next week, most likely quitting unless they allow me to administrate and teach online, and want to start an Epicurean-lite school.

That sounds like a great goal and "we" (all of us here at the forum) will find it fascinating to talk about it with you.

Glad to have you here!

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### Post by "Don" of July 13, 2020 at 4:30 PM

#### [Quote from LukeL](#)

I then read Catherine Wilson's *How to be an Epicurean*, which I found informative, but lacking in its stated purpose, unfortunately.

Welcome, [LukeL](#) !

I had the same the same reaction to Wilson. Well stated! 😊

As for the "cult" aspect of classical Epicureanism, I agree with [Cassius](#) in that you need someone to start a school to get a school going, although when you read about the busts, rings, etc. that his followers had + the celebrations of the 20th and other regular celebrations of persons in the Epicurean "pantheon" (We live like unto the gods, right?), there was a little of that cult of personality. But I do think it was more father figure/founder than cult leader with Epicurus. I don't see the stereotypical mind and behavior control of a cult in the texts. Friendship and mutual support seemed the order.

As for the Garden itself: Do we know if everyone lived full time in the Garden or did they visit to learn or both? In other words, was it a residential "compound" or more like an actual school where people came for lessons and went back home? Do we know for sure? And I'm assuming

Epicurean communities all over the ancient world were more informal, not necessarily having a Garden of their own.

Your farm sounds idyllic! "EpicuriCon 2025" at [LukeL](#) 's farm 😊 (It seems like we need some sort of -con to compete with [StoiCon and Stoic Week](#))

Ευ πραττειν! May you practice well!

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### **Post by “Martin” of July 14, 2020 at 1:06 AM**

Welcome, LukeL!

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### **Post by “LukeL” of July 14, 2020 at 3:06 PM**

Thank you all!

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### **Post by “Mathitis Kipouros” of August 1, 2020 at 9:00 AM**

Welcome [LukeL](#) . The school your planning sounds like a very interesting project. Congratulations.

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### **Post by “Cassius” of August 1, 2020 at 9:06 AM**

Yes LukeL, try to check in periodically and give us updates as you make progress, run into obstacles, or whatever. News of any kind, good or bad, would probably be useful to the group since this is the kind of project most all of us would be interested in.