

Welcome Maxfreeman!

Post by “Cassius” of August 28, 2020 at 6:50 AM

Hello and welcome to the forum [maxfreeman](#)

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!

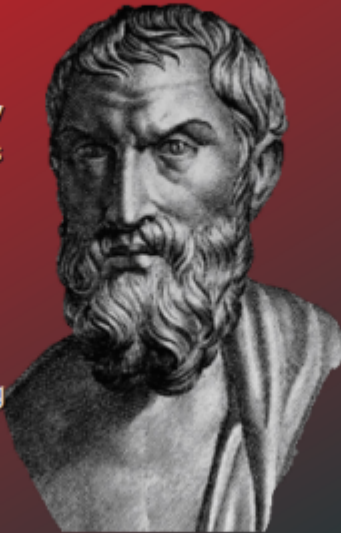
Not Neo-Epicurean, But Epicurean

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.

Post by "maxfreeman" of August 29, 2020 at 2:49 AM

Thank you, Cassius! Glad to be on board 😊

I have read The Epicurean Reader, translated by Gerson and Inwood, which contains most of the existing Epicurean texts. I am also interested in Stoicism, and I believe Stoicism and Epicureanism actually complement each other, however, my synthesis is more Epicurean than Stoic.

Post by "Cassius" of August 29, 2020 at 7:23 AM

Glad to have you Maxfreeman! My joking rejoinder is that the best complement Stoicism provides to people studying Epicurean philosophy is that by digging deeper into the details the differences between the premises of the two come out in every-greater relief, and it becomes

pretty much impossible to stay in the muddy Marcus Aurelius "middle ground" for very long.

But that is something everyone has to explore for themselves.

I do want to stress in all seriousness though that if you have not read the DeWitt book I hope you will prioritize that. There's no book that brings out the premises of the Epicurean approaches with greater "sweep" than Dewitt does, and I don't think you'll have any trouble seeing why I and others here can recommend it so highly. You'll disagree with some of his details, no doubt, but --- you'll see.

Also, given your comment, I think you would get a great deal out of Frances Wright's "A Few Days In Athens" since she spends a lot of time contrasting Epicurus and Zeno in a way that I bet many people who are "on the edge" may find appealing.

But for a point by point survey of the philosophy and how it contrasts to Plato, the Stoics, and others, DeWitt will save you the most time.

I still have a large bust of Cicero in my office (of course he wasn't really a Stoic) and I know many if not most or even all of us came through Stoicism too -- it's pretty much inevitable given the prejudices of the modern world.

But I think all of us sensed early on - as you seem to be doing too - that there is more to Epicurus than meets the eye, and I'm confident that there's no one whose studied Epicurus who hasn't been richly rewarded by the study no matter where they end up.