

Social Media - Facebook

Post by “Cassius” of April 17, 2021 at 10:08 AM

The [primary Epicurean Philosophy Facebook group is here](#).

The [largest Epicurus "page" is here](#).

Post by “Cassius” of September 27, 2022 at 4:17 PM

Just a reminder and a request for this topic:

Over the years we have received a lot of benefit from participating on Facebook, and were it not for the Facebook Epicurean forum I doubt this EpicureanFriends forum would exist.

However for the last couple of months (and years) I have been reducing my activity on Facebook largely to just posting notices of new podcast episodes, and wishing people a happy Twentieth. Martin and I continue to monitor the page each week, but we are not posting much original content there. The problems with Facebook are well known, but if you discipline yourself to mainly read and write in the Epicurean group itself there's a lot less downside risk.

So the purpose of this post is this: if anyone here at EF is as active Facebooker (or would like to be) and is interested in helping us use the Facebook group to spread "the message" of Epicurus in that location, let us know and Martin and I can help give you access to help us coordinating the posting.

I am particularly be interested in the help of any of us who are regular readers here at EF, because we want to maintain the quality of posts over there so it does not devolve back into "Gee the Stoics and Epicureans were just like the Buddhists and can't we all just get along and assume our lotus positions and hum our mantras together!" 😊 That's largely a joke but I assure you that if we don't monitor the posting that's exactly what will happen, given the general level of discourse on Facebook.

But there is a lot of opportunity there, as the Facebook group has a worldwide outreach that's very difficult to duplicate. So if you're interested in "meeting" people worldwide and helping us get EF-quality posting over at Facebook, be sure to post here in this thread and let us know.

Same goes for Twitter, but that's a different thread: [Social Media - Twitter](#)

Post by “Pacatus” of September 27, 2022 at 6:27 PM

I had two linked FB pages: one to share with a small circle of friends, the other to promote a book of poems. Finally, I shut it all down and permanently deleted my FB account. In the end, I could not control the crazies: access or content. But I am a rank techno-peasant (note the quiz snafu).

You’re right: there is likely no bigger worldwide tool for reaching people. But -

If you’re using it for outreach (my promotional page), you have to have some effective means to eliminate the racists, haters and other crazies; and if it’s just an extension of this site (my page of close friends), what does it offer that isn’t already here on the forum?

So, really, it’s outreach. How, then, (I realize I’m being crassly repetitive) do you protect the Garden members from the crazies (not just the Stoics, etc.)?

Sorry for the rambling thoughts. I’d be lying if I did not say that I’ve been tempted back to FB - but I will not go through what I did before (likely far less than you go through in a day as it is).

Post by “waterholic” of September 28, 2022 at 2:09 PM

I wonder if the very concept of FB contradicts what this place is about (may be not, I can't be sure). I too have been out of FB and all other social media for nearly 5 years and seen my level of joy and contentment increase.

Having said this, [Cassius](#) in my opinion it would be very difficult to replicate epicureanfriends.com on FB by design. The very point of scale means that the messaging and content must be different - **more accessible** and **applicable** to people who don't necessarily enjoy historical texts, academic philosophy (or even read books), but would greatly benefit from the main concepts in these pages.

Sorry [Cassius](#) this is not much help, but I guess I would be interested in creating such accessible and applicable content for FB rather than going back to FB as such.

Post by “Cassius” of September 28, 2022 at 4:25 PM

Right the issues that waterholic and pacatus have observed are largely the reason the Epicurean forum at facebook is being little used right now.

However, and it is ironic as heck, but this forum would not be here had I not initially met enough people over the years on Facebook to generate interest in kicking up my efforts a notch. So I do think that a great deal of benefit can come from participating there, but it has to be strictly watched and budgeted or else you end up arguing over and over again on the same minor points.

There are people who enjoy that and I am probably a better student of Epicurus today because I went through that, but it's important to choose one's battles and we now have enough people here (and of much better "quality") that it makes sense to focus here.

However (and this is largely the subject of this week's podcast) there is a large stream of "evangelism" in Epicurean history and even modern practice (if we don't have Epicurean friends in our real lives we really need to work to find/cultivate/"make" them) and public places like Facebook and Twitter are largely the equivalent of the Oinoandan plaza or the literary circles that presumably transmitted Lucretius to us.

Post by “Pacatus” of September 28, 2022 at 5:50 PM

I'm a bit frustrated because I think both you and Kalosyni have strong, valid points about outreach (evangelism) – and all I seem to do is pour cold water.

And FB seems the logical choice.

When I was on FB, my personal page was restricted to a relatively few friends (unfortunately, some of them, and their friends, became the problem – and not so much friends anymore; likely there is some solution that didn't require me to permanently delete my account, but that's what I did). The poetry promotional page was more wide open, and had a different title (I don't even recall what it was) aimed at attracting folks to that specifically. There wasn't really any crossover between the two – but I don't know if that was just accidental.

So my thought is that you could create a linked FB page to the one you have now (wish I remembered how to do that, but someone here likely does). And use that 2nd FB page as an advertising (marketing) site whose content is simple, honest, optimistic and attractive – and that links to this forum, where you can control access. Your original FB page would then operate mainly as a kind of message board for members here to see what's going on, etc. (and to go check out the 2nd page from there).

The tag line for the evangelism page might be that of the Garden: "Dear Guest, here you will do well to tarry; here our highest good is pleasure."

Just some rambling thoughts ...

Post by "Pacatus" of September 28, 2022 at 5:59 PM

Just for curiosity, Cassius, how many members are here and how many seems to check in to the FB page at least a bit?

Post by "Cassius" of September 28, 2022 at 8:12 PM

That is hard to say Pacatus as to how many regularly check in at Facebook or here. I bet we actually have more "regulars" here than at Facebook, but the issue is that the EP group at facebook has been "liked" many thousands of times, and posts there go far and wide but to non-committed readers. Our FB group was and I think is the largest "Epicurus" group, and tons of people search Epicurus casually and like it. So it really does have the potential to be seen much more than material posted here - but the readership is much more casual and even hostile

Post by "Cassius" of September 28, 2022 at 8:23 PM

I just checked FB and it says the EP page there has 3.9 thousand "members." Of course that is not realistic as to who sees the posts, but it is still a significant number. I need to look up how many "members" we have had here over time, but I doubt that we have more than a hundred (and probably less) people who regularly check in - even lurkers included.

The forum software says we had 1022 "visits" today, which would include lurking non-members, but I have no idea what that really means and surely the serious readership is less than that..

Post by “waterholic” of September 29, 2022 at 4:09 AM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

(if we don't have Epicurean friends in our real lives we really need to work to find/cultivate/"make" them)

I like the idea, but to do so I feel I miss a simple and modern body of knowledge/message. Vatican collection is the closest, but even then it's archaic and requires a predisposition to reading old texts. There is little point in attempting to convey valid, strong and sensible ideas driven by facts in a language that is not accessible for most people. Most religions use the old language to package the message: ancient means wise, ancient means coming from sages or deity. Epicurean philosophy does not need any of that since the message is very simple and applicable.

Post by “Cassius” of September 29, 2022 at 6:35 AM

Yes waterholic the work we do here is very helpful but I see it for myself and others as the first step, not by any means the last. I personally feel a lot more competent to articulate a message than I did 10+ years ago when I started, but there is no way I / we would have gotten better without the ability to discuss and interact. Reading and studying alone is a necessity but will never produce the confidence in expression that interaction brings.

But once we gain some level of competence that's just the beginning, and we all need to figure out ways to express the views ourselves in new articles and materials.

As you say we can't just repost the Principle Doctrines or the Vatican Says or any of the material. We need to understand the message so we can internalize it but then rewrite and repackage into new presentations.

Post by “Don” of September 29, 2022 at 6:42 AM

[Quote from waterholic](#)

I like the idea, but to do so I feel I miss a simple and modern body of knowledge/message

By "modern" do you mean contemporary, modern science communicators or modern figures that present "Epicurean" ideas whether or not they identify specifically as Epicurean?

[Quote from waterholic](#)

Vatican collection is the closest, but even then it's archaic and requires a predisposition to reading old texts. There is little point in attempting to convey valid, strong and sensible ideas driven by facts in a language that is not accessible for most people.

I think it all depends on the translation. I could certainly advocate for "updated" translations and certainly wouldn't advocate for anything with thee's, thou's, or behold's that give off a "Biblical" vibe.

That said, I also think there's something very valuable in reading "old texts" if for no other reason than to clearly see that human nature hasn't changed all that much in say several millennia. Even Ancient Babylonians were worried about dying, losing friends, and the exercise of power. We still do that and, no doubt, will continue to do that as a species. That thread is worth investigating, from Gilgamesh, Euripides, Shakespeare, even through even Ecclesiastes and religious and literary texts we don't necessarily agree with. Recognizing and struggling with texts makes us better able to decide what we ourselves believe and why and why not. Seeing what we believe - or sharpening what we believe - by using the classical Epicurean texts to me is a way to make a human connection to a well-worn path instead of cutting a way down the jungle path again and again.

I think there's also something to be said for being part of - dare I say - that tradition, lineage, or a worldview informed by a cohesive "body of knowledge." For me, I take pleasure in attempting to apply a school of thought that has stood the test of time. Being able to see reflections of Epicurus's Garden in contemporary thought and science amazes me and was something that attracted me enough to say "What is up with this 2,500 year old philosophy that sounds so modern??"

I don't think we can abandon the "old texts," but I also don't think we should intentionally imbue them with archaic language or fetishize them. Updating time-tested ideas is how the modern "Stoics" have managed to corner the market on "look at this ancient wisdom we're selling." But they've thrown out or repackaged a LOT of inconvenient ancient Stoic principles to speak (i.e., to make sense) to a modern audience to the extent that I feel Marcus Aurelius or Seneca would say "Well, those are interesting ideas but... Stoicism? I don't quite recognize that as my school." I think Epicurus can survive MUCH more intact and still appeal to a modern audience. That's my argument for keeping the original texts and encouraging people to study

them.

[Quote from waterholic](#)

Epicurean philosophy does not need any of that since the message is very simple and applicable

I agree Epicurus's message is very simple and applicable, but it can be deceptively simple. That's a LOT behind it, serving as a foundation, that, if one doesn't grasp that, it can be a thin veneer. That's one reason why I now agree with [Cassius](#) and others on this forum about getting a grasp of how and why Epicurus's physics is so important and how it underpins the philosophy and why one shouldn't jump right to the ethics. I disregarded a lot of the physics for awhile, but without building from the ground up, the understanding of the whole system isn't as steady. Listening to them go through the letters to Herodotus and Pythocles specifically were very instructive.

In the end, I think the old texts ground us, show us we're not alone in our ages-old struggle to come to grips with our mortal lives, and allow us to avoid reinventing the wheel over and over again.

All that said, if I've addresses something you didn't intend or completely misinterpreted what you were saying, mea culpa! 😊

Post by “waterholic” of September 29, 2022 at 10:17 AM

[Quote from Don](#)

By "modern" do you mean contemporary, modern science communicators or modern figures that present "Epicurean" ideas whether or not they identify specifically as Epicurean?

Indeed Don, I did not mean modern interpretations of Epicurean ideas, but rather a **contemporary** language. That's a better word.

[Quote from Don](#)

That said, I also think there's something very valuable in reading "old texts"

I will not argue with that at all. The greatest impact of everything I read was that many of the questions and answers were available to us for thousands of years, and yet we chose to forget, give up, give in to tradition, superstition and brute force of bigotry. It is painful and useful to know.

But now I imagine myself in front of my 20 something son, who lives in the world of all the social media, gaming, basketball, memes (you can add to the list). Should I expect him to have the same patience and curiosity? If not, then do I give up on him and concentrate only on people who have the predisposition to philosophy?

Certainly we cannot abandon the old texts, but I believe they are not for everyone, at least in the beginning. At the same time I totally agree that it's difficult to convey the whole body of knowledge in a simple form, but Epicureans have always attempted that!

[Quote from Don](#)

"Stoics" have managed to corner the market on "look at this ancient wisdom we're selling."

I believe this is not (only) due to the effective communication. Stoicism has been merged with most despotic states since Rome. It has always been an extremely convenient philosophy for the central state alongside any superstition. Consequently, most governments, ancient or contemporary, have been in support of stoicism. Epicureanism, on the other hand, has always been highly inconvenient for the state. In the end, any sovereign would much rather have an army of stoics ready to do the duty (however that duty is defined by the state) than a bunch of people who just want to be happy (and probably left alone).

[Quote from Don](#)

All that said, if I've addresses something you didn't intend or completely misinterpreted what you were saying, mea culpa! 😊

No worries at all, heated arguments are more than welcome. I don't claim I know the answer and I very much appreciate the chance to look at other facts and opinions in order to change mine.

Post by “Cassius” of September 29, 2022 at 10:23 AM

Here's another example (the number is endless) of what happens when one jumps right to the ethics. We could paste this in any of a hundred threads here but I just saw this through Kalosyni and it's on my mind at the moment. If you DON'T get the grounding Don is talking about, this is the kind of mishmash you come up with:

From: <https://www.verywellmind.com/epicurean-phil...ppiness-4177914>

The Epicurean Lifestyle

To experience tranquility, Epicurus suggested that we could seek knowledge of how the world works and limit our desires.^[1] For him, the pleasure was to be obtained through things such as:

- Abstaining from bodily desires
- Community
- Friendship
- Knowledge
- Living a virtuous life
- Living a temperate life
- Moderation in all things

This is a totally different picture of pursuing an Epicurean life than I think most of us here hold, or that we think that Epicurus advocated.

But unless you go through the grounding in physics and epistemology, it all sounds plausible and even uncontroversial if you start with high-level abstracts like "Epicurus taught that we should pursue happiness" and "pleasure is the absence of pain."

So the task of setting up the presentation is a huge one.

I don't think we throw up our hands and give up. We can set up generalities that are also pretty clear, and we can educate people as we go along.

But maybe the most important and for some "dispiriting" thing is that we can't expect to convert the world, and we have to realize that huge numbers of people violently disagree with what Epicurus taught about the universe and how to think.

So we have to be very clear-eyed about what is possible and what is not.

Post by "Cassius" of September 29, 2022 at 10:27 AM

I almost want to laugh out loud:

Happiness

There are three states Epicurus considered to constitute happiness. ^[1]

Factors for Happiness

1. Tranquility
2. Freedom from [fear](#) (ataraxia)
3. Absence of bodily pain (aponia)

It is this combination of factors that would, ultimately, allow people to experience happiness at the highest level. Although it may seem impossible to attain or sustain, there are people who follow epicurean beliefs and seek to experience this level of happiness in their lives.

How do you set up an outline of Epicurean happiness without ever mentioning "pleasure"?

But after laughing out loud it really make me mad, or better stated, resolved to do as much as possible to improve the situation. This isn't just innocent misunderstanding or misrepresentation. It's the result of trying to be all things to all people, and of trying to say to all the hard-core religionists and absolutists of the world:

"You don't have to put aside any of your current beliefs, YOU TOO can profit from Epicurus without changing a single thing in the way you think!"

Post by "Don" of September 29, 2022 at 10:36 AM

[Quote from waterholic](#)

No worries at all, heated arguments are more than welcome.

Thanks! And I hope my post came across as more "light" than "heat" 😊

[Quote from waterholic](#)

I imagine myself in front of my 20 something son, who lives in the world of all the social media, gaming, basketball, memes (you can add to the list). Should I expect him to have the same patience and curiosity?

I hear you!! I agree that avenue could be about marketing (what Diogenes might call "evangelism"). Social media is, for better or worse, THE giant stone wall with inscriptions in the marketplace now. That's also where heartfelt conversations come in between father and son, between friends, etc. Not lectures but "what do you think?"

[Quote from waterholic](#)

I believe this is not (only) due to the effective communication. Stoicism has been merged with most despotic states since Rome. It has always been an extremely convenient philosophy for the central state alongside any superstition.

Amen! Come to think of it, there's a reason the Christians kept transmitting Stoic (and Platonic) texts and burned Epicurean ones. 🤔 Hmm. Why could that be?

Thanks for the thoughtful response!!

Post by "waterholic" of September 29, 2022 at 10:36 AM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

If you DON'T get the grounding Don is talking about,

Is it possible to assemble the grounding that Don is talking about in a structured, contemporary manner? I am not saying it is, just wondering.

Mathematics springs to mind. There are very successful textbooks that built the whole core from basic elements all the way up. Most of that knowledge comes from 2000 years of research from India and China to Arabia, Europe etc. But students don't have to go through the originals then attempt to make the logical connections themselves.

Post by “waterholic” of September 29, 2022 at 10:38 AM

[Quote from Don](#)

Thanks! And I hope my post came across as more "light" than "heat" 😊

It did [Don](#) - same here!

Post by “Cassius” of September 29, 2022 at 10:45 AM

[Quote from waterholic](#)

Is it possible to assemble the grounding that Don is talking about in a structured, contemporary manner?

Yes of course it is and that is what "we" need to do. It's a huge job but you have to start somewhere, and not let the awful state of current discussions of Epicurus discourage us.

Post by “Joshua” of September 29, 2022 at 11:35 AM

Stephen Greenblatt starts us off, and not too badly, in the Preface of *The Swerve*.

Quote

“The stuff of the universe, Lucretius proposed, is an infinite number of atoms moving randomly through space, like dust motes in a sunbeam, colliding, hooking together, forming complex structures, breaking apart again, in a ceaseless process of creation and destruction... There is no master plan, no divine architect, no intelligent design. All things, including the species to which you belong, have evolved over vast stretches of time... In a universe so constituted, Lucretius argued, there is no reason to think that the earth or its inhabitants occupy a central place, no reason to set humans apart from all other animals, no hope of bribing or appeasing the gods, no place for religious fanaticism, no call for ascetic self-denial, no justification for dreams of limitless power or perfect security, no rationale for wars of conquest or self-aggrandizement, no possibility of triumphing over nature, no escape from the constant making and unmaking of [physical] forms... What human beings can and should do, he wrote, is to conquer their fears, accept the fact that they themselves and all the things they encounter are transitory, and embrace the beauty and the pleasure of the world.”

Post by “Kalosyni” of September 30, 2022 at 10:22 AM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

How do you set up an outline of Epicurean happiness without ever mentioning "pleasure"?

But after laughing out loud it really make me mad, or better stated, resolved to do as much as possible to improve the situation.

Right! And so how would we list The Factors of Happiness?

- the study of philosophy (and right understanding of death/God/choices & avoidances, etc.)
- good friends
- the daily fullness of pleasure
- ?

-- ?

Post by “Cassius” of September 30, 2022 at 12:55 PM

[Quote from Kalosyni](#)

And so how would we list The Factors of Happiness

That leads back into the question whether happiness is a feeling or an abstraction - the "map vs the territory issue.". As a feeling, we can say we feel happy and that's that.

But as an abstraction we can list generalities that generally lead people to consider themselves to be happy, but it's probably not possible to create a definitive list because each situation is different. (And I really should not hedge with that "probably.")

As a map the word happiness helps us define the goal, but I think we have to remember that there is a major limit to what we can list within a definition - no definition can fully convey a feeling.

Post by “Cassius” of September 30, 2022 at 3:29 PM

On that last point - of the difference between happiness as a feeling and happiness as an abstraction (the issue of the difference between maps and the real world):

Torquatus:

Hence Epicurus refuses to admit any necessity for argument or discussion to prove that pleasure is desirable and pain to be avoided. These facts, he thinks, are perceived by the senses, as that fire is hot, snow white, honey sweet, none of which things need be proved by elaborate argument: it is enough merely to draw attention to them. (For there is a difference, he holds, between formal syllogistic proof of a thing and a mere notice or reminder: the former is the method for discovering abstruse and recondite truths, the latter for indicating facts that are obvious and evident.)

Letter to Herodotus:

First of all, Herodotus, we must grasp the ideas attached to words, in order that we may be able to refer to them and so to judge the inferences of opinion or problems of investigation or reflection, so that we may not either leave everything uncertain and go on explaining to infinity or use words devoid of meaning. [38] For this purpose it is essential that the first mental image associated with each word should be regarded, and that there should be no need of explanation, if we are really to have a standard to which to refer a problem of investigation or reflection or a mental inference. And besides we must keep all our investigations in accord with our sensations, and in particular with the immediate apprehensions whether of the mind or of any one of the instruments of judgment, and likewise in accord with the feelings existing in us, in order that we may have indications whereby we may judge both the problem of sense perception and the unseen.

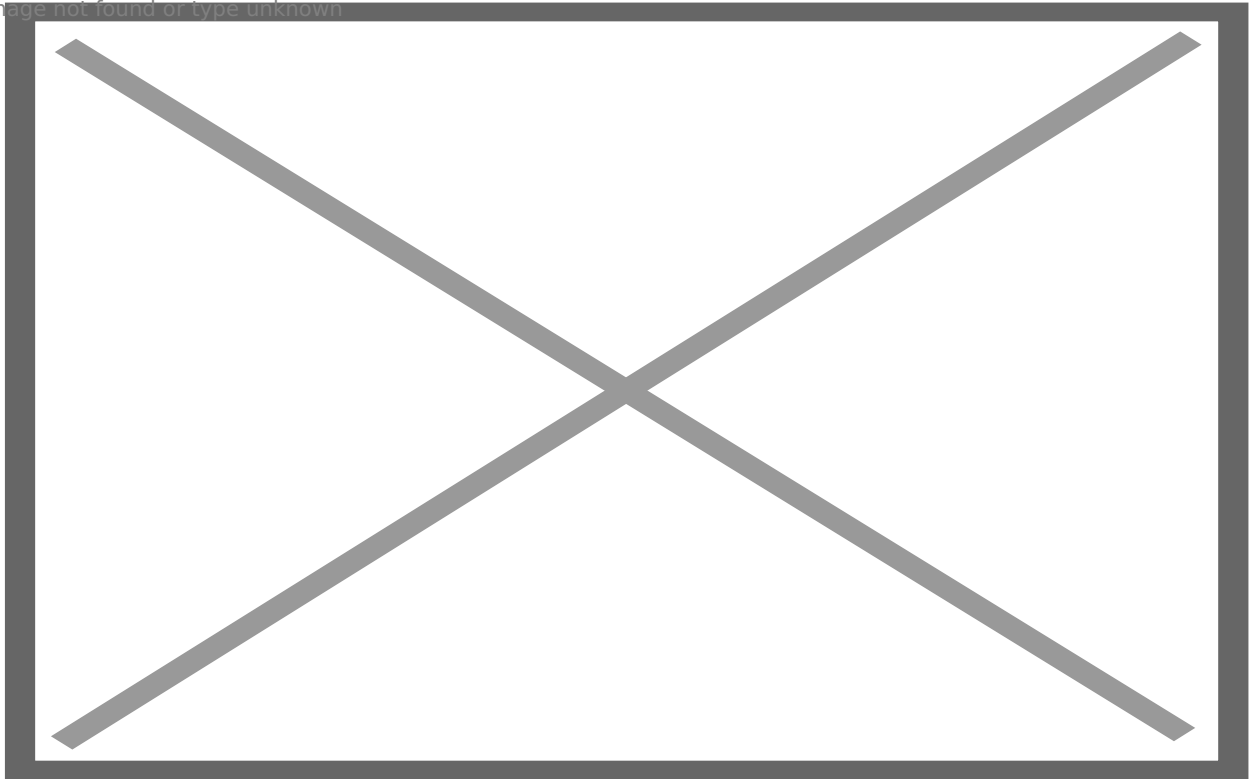
Diogenes Laertius:

The internal sensations they say are two, pleasure and pain, which occur to every living creature, and the one is akin to nature and the other alien: by means of these two choice and avoidance are determined. Of investigations some concern actual things, others mere words. This is a brief summary of the division of their philosophy and their views on the criterion of truth.

Post by “Don” of September 30, 2022 at 3:29 PM

For consideration:

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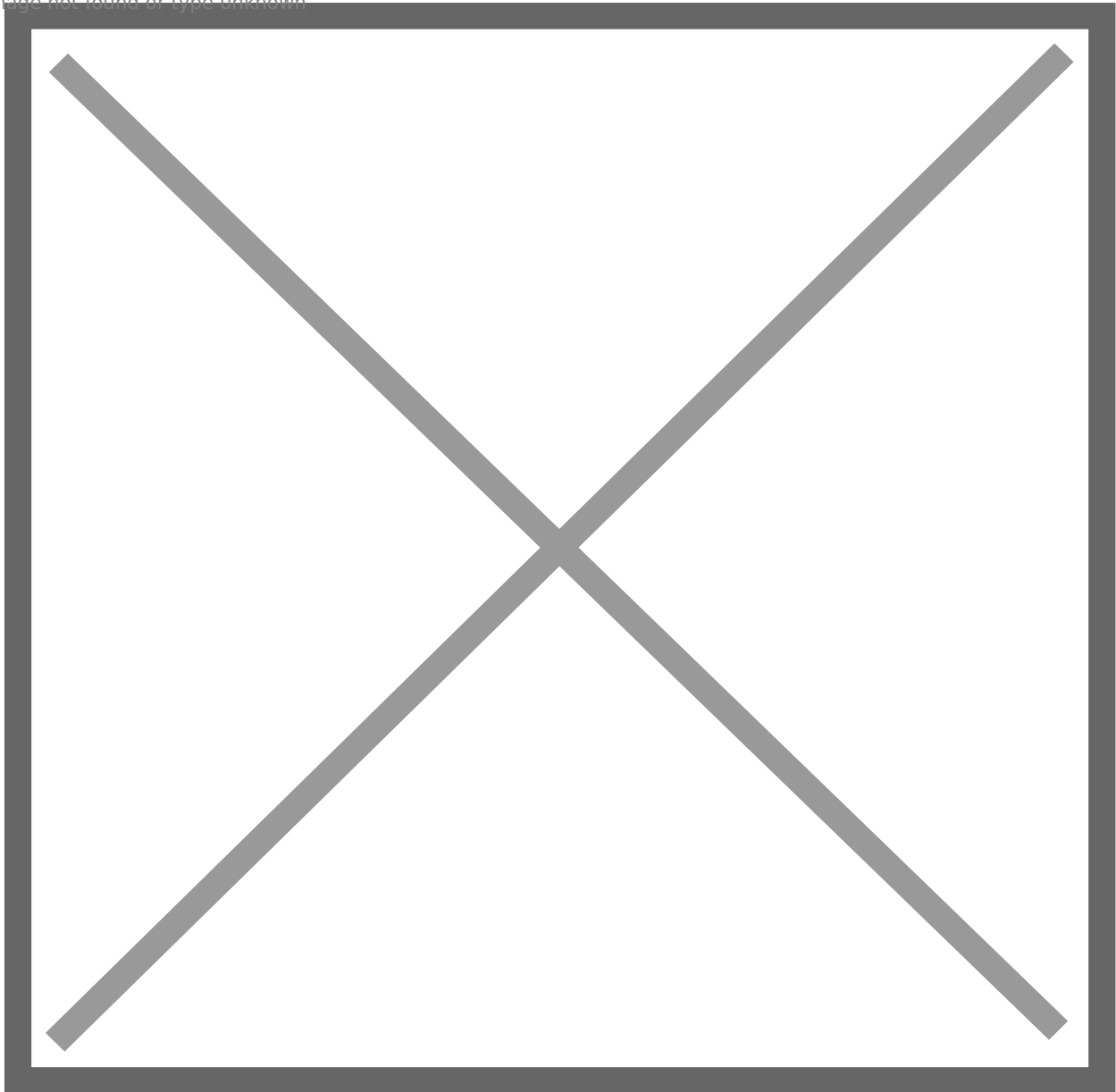
[What Is Happiness and Why Is It Important? \(+ Definition\)](#)

Do you think happiness is the same thing to you as it is to others? Find out!

positivepsychology.com

<https://www.berkeleywellbeing.com/happiness-definition.html>

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[What We Get Wrong About Happiness, According To A Real Happiness Professor](#)

There's a Yale class that teaches students how to be happy. We asked the instructor to share some of her lessons.

www.huffpost.com

Commentary:

I come back to the Greek (big surprise) with *eudaimonia* instead of English "happiness." I know Cassius isn't keen on using untranslated Greek words but I think words like *eudaimonia* or *ataraxia* can also jolt us out of preconceptions and make us reexamine what we mean when we use an English word casually. I don't think "well-being" is exactly synonymous with "happiness." I think a sense or feeling of well-being can be more stable while happiness can be fleeting. But

maybe that's just me. I think that's why it is SO important to know what word is used where in texts when translations use "happiness."

Post by “Godfrey” of September 30, 2022 at 7:45 PM

From The Aesthetics of Joy blog:

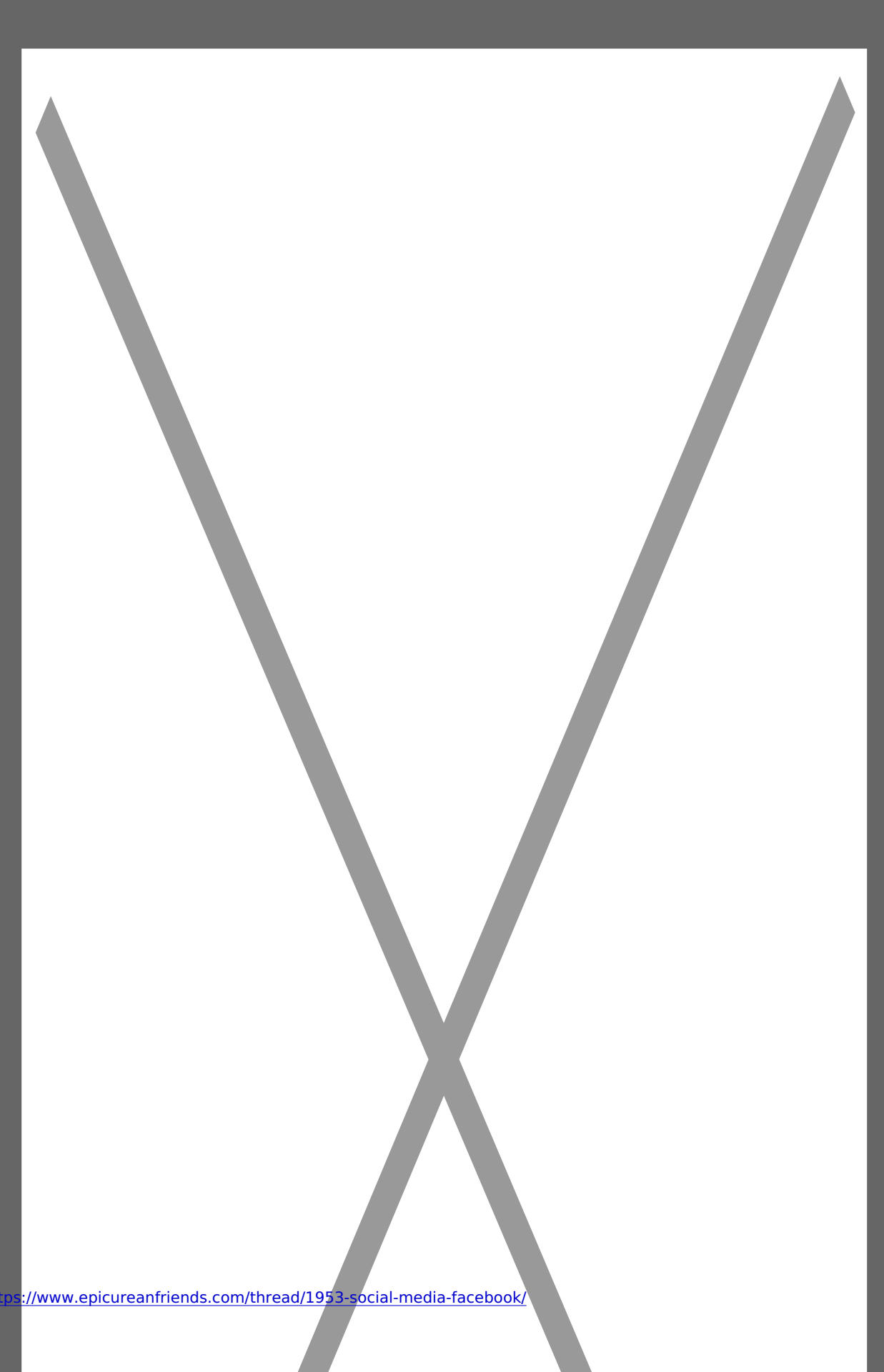
"One of the first things I learned in my research was that happiness and joy are different things. I know I'm a broken record about this, but it's such an important distinction that I want to take a moment to pull them apart. Happiness is a broad evaluation of how we feel about our lives over time. It's made up of a range of factors: how we feel about our health and our work, whether we have a sense of meaning and purpose in life, how connected we feel to other people. This explains why sometimes we can't easily answer the question — happiness is a big concept, and it can be hard to encapsulate the complexity of our lives in one answer.

"Joy, on the other hand, is much simpler and more immediate. Psychologists define joy as an intense, momentary experience of positive emotion. Joy can be measured through direct physical expressions, like smiling, laughter, or a feeling of wanting to jump up and down. It's about how good we feel right now, in the moment. It's the opposite of vague — when we feel a moment of joy, there's no doubt.

"With this distinction clear, I realized that happiness is often a red herring. Thinking about whether I'm happy takes me out of the flow of my life and prompts me to evaluate and compare. Am I happier than I was a year ago? Am I as happy as my friends? That smiling influencer I follow on social media sure looks happy. If I'm not that happy, am I really happy at all? Without a clear benchmark, I find I'm often measuring against some imagined ideal of happiness, and it's easy for my everyday life to fall short.

"But as I began to focus more and more on moments of joy, I noticed that I stopped thinking so much about happiness."

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[5 ways my work has changed my life - The Aesthetics of Joy by Ingrid Fetell Lee](#)

What can the science of joy teach us about living well? In this post, find five ways you can harness joy to build a life you love.

aestheticsofjoy.com

I'm not exactly sure where pleasure fits in to this view... Seems like it would encompass both happiness and joy, and all that's in between the two?

Post by “Cassius” of October 1, 2022 at 12:16 AM

I didn't read the link but the distinction in the text you quoted seems to be making the same point.

We can "feel happy" and know it just by observing the feeling (which is pleasurable). But if we start looking to evaluate "happiness" and whether we meet that evaluation, it's a much more intellectual process that involves a lot more than feelings.

I actually think "joy" has the same issue (and really, the issue is not with the particular word, but with "words" in and of themselves). I can no doubt feel it when I am joyful, but if I were asked to sit back and construct a written definition of the word "joy," that would be just about as difficult as the word 'happiness.'

I think the issue that has to be articulated is that we have to be clear that "feelings" are the true guide of life. We can do our best to construct "maps" and write down all sorts of definitions of "happiness" and "pleasure" and "joy" and eudaimonia and everything else, but in the end we have to be clear about the limits of words. Words are maps and they are highly useful, but elaborate definitions can only serve that "map" function -- they cannot be equated with or confused with the feelings themselves. Trying to equate them in every respect leaves us confused and frustrated and shouldn't even be attempted without first making clear this difference between feelings and concepts.

Post by “Kalosyni” of October 1, 2022 at 8:55 AM

This morning a song came to mind. When I was a teen I went to private singing lessons and my teacher had me practice Broadway hits. One song that stuck with me is from Oklahoma (and since back in time I had no idea of the story line from this play it has a kind of simplicity for

me).

Part of the lyrics:

Oh, what a beautiful mornin'
Oh, what a beautiful day
I've got a beautiful feelin'
Everything's goin' my way

And further thoughts -- that there are so many variations of feelings, and sometimes thinking about them makes it even better!

But I would say that the consideration of happiness is very important, and any kind of furtherance of Epicureanism will depend upon how we present our ideas of happiness, what happiness is, and how to increase happiness. 😊

Post by “Godfrey” of October 1, 2022 at 4:23 PM

Didn't the ancients discuss "the most pleasant life" rather than happiness?

Post by “Don” of October 1, 2022 at 4:44 PM

[Quote from Godfrey](#)

Didn't the ancients discuss "the most pleasant life" rather than happiness?

Epicureans or in general?

Happiness is the usual English translation of ευδαιμονία eudaimonia.

I've actually just started today deciding to work thru Aristotle's Nichomachean Ethics and he uses eudaimonia and makarion and they are translated happiness and supreme happiness.

Post by “Pacatus” of October 1, 2022 at 4:58 PM

[Quote from Don](#)

Happiness is the usual English translation of ευδαιμονία eudaimonia.

I had a friend of mine who did his PhD on the Nichomachean Ethics, and insisted that the best translation for eudaimonia is "flourishing." I would think this can fit with Epicurus, where the most flourishing life is one defined in terms of pleasure. For myself, I tend to use "happy well-being" (where I intend well-being to be the opposite of ill-being -- say, tarache and pone). And I take happiness as a feeling and a sense of pleasurable/pleasant well-being, not an (Aristotelian?) abstraction. [I sometimes get the impression that, for the Stoics, eudaimonia reduces to a kind of self-righteous pat on the back: "Look how virtuous I have been! What a happy feeling!"]

Post by "Pacatus" of October 1, 2022 at 6:07 PM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

We can do our best to construct "maps" and write down all sorts of definitions of "happiness" and "pleasure" and "joy" and eudaimonia and everything else, but in the end we have to be clear about the limits of words. Words are maps and they are highly useful, but elaborate definitions can only serve that "map" function -- they cannot be equated with or confused with the feelings themselves.

I think this whole "the map is not the territory" is of bedrock importance. And the point is always to measure the map against the (real/experiential) territory -- and not the other way around (which, it seems to me, a whole lot of religionists do). Objectively, empirical investigation can reveal the general territory -- but, in terms of sensual and emotional experience, we are each our own navigator.

Maps, as you say, are helpful -- but the map can only guide to the territory (like the Zen parable of fingers pointing to the moon); and that understanding in itself might separate Epicurus (and his writings) from his philosophical rivals. The Platonists and the Stoics (as I understand them) privilege their maps over the territory; maybe Aristotle, too.

It is so easy (at least for me) to get lost in this or that map. And to thereby lose sight of the territory right here ...

Post by “Eikadistes” of October 1, 2022 at 6:22 PM

“What a useful thing a pocket-map is!” I remarked.

“That’s another thing we’ve learned from your Nation,” said Mein Herr, “Map-making. But we’ve carried it much further than you. What do you consider the largest map that would be really useful?”

“About six inches to the mile.”

“Only six inches!” exclaimed Mein Herr. “We very soon got to six yards to the mile. Then we tried a hundreds yards to the mile. And then came the grandest idea of all! We actually made a map of the country, on the scale of a mile to the mile!”

“Have you used it much?” I enquired.

“It has never been spread out yet,” said Mein Herr: “the famers objected: they said it would cover the whole country, and shut out the sunlight! So we now use the country itself, as its own map, and I assure you it does nearly as well”

(Lewis Carroll, Sylvie and Bruno Concluded)

Post by “Don” of October 1, 2022 at 6:23 PM

[Quote from Pacatus](#)

insisted that the best translation for eudaimonia is "flourishing."

My personal preference is "well-being," playing of the literal breakdown of eu + daimon.

[Quote from Pacatus](#)

For myself, I tend to use "happy well-being" (where I intend well-being to be the opposite of ill-being -- say, tarache and pone)

And don't forget there's the literal opposite of eudaimonia, kakodaimonia.

[Quote from Pacatus](#)

not an (Aristotelian?) abstraction

I'd say Platonic. I was surprised in Book I of Nichomachean Ethics that Aristotle doesn't like Plato's abstract Ideal Forms. I think I know this but he's basically like "I liked Plato but I am not a fan of the Forms."

[Quote from Pacatus](#)

I sometimes get the impression that, for the Stoics, eudaimonia reduces to a kind of self-righteous pat on the back: "Look how virtuous I have been! What a happy feeling!"]

And from which they get pleasure. LOL. It just always seems to end up with pleasure! No getting around it.

Post by “Cassius” of October 1, 2022 at 7:14 PM

Don't I have read parts of Nichomachean ethics but not all. My understanding of one of the major issues is that Aristotle ultimately has no good foundation for what is virtue or the best life other than looking around to see what the leading citizens of Athens choose to do. So that flourishing or whatever terms he employs end up being without a clear foundation such as "pleasure" or even "do what the gods tell you to do" (religion). Even his "prime mover" position ends up being useless in providing a clear guide stone, and his tendency to try to explain things through categorizing them (which only plays games with names and ultimately solves nothing) does not save him either.

I am sure my comments there are overbroad so I will be very interested in your commentary of how you see the Aristotle - Epicurus difference shaking out when you finish.