

Let's explore and reclaim pleasure

Post by “Kalosyni” of September 26, 2021 at 12:27 PM

This article might be a start for those of us who are in need of reclaiming all aspects of pleasure...and hope to hear from others on any further thoughts and ideas.

I myself am stuck on pleasure = food ... and hope to move beyond that.

Article title: "When did pleasure become a dirty word?"

Excerpt:

"Why is pleasure so valued in other parts of the world, but not here, not in the U.S.?"

On the heels of [International Happiness Day](#), which has been celebrated internationally on March 20 since 2012, let's begin to unpack our uniquely American aversion to pleasure and how that might be affecting our happiness. According to the Oxford Dictionary, [pleasure is defined](#) as "a feeling of happy satisfaction and enjoyment," or "enjoyment and entertainment, as opposed to necessity." Given that suicide has ranked among the top 10 causes of death in the U.S. every year since 2008, should we be asking ourselves this question: Have we been underestimating the importance of enjoyment, of pleasure? Is it possible that it really is a necessity?"

<https://www.theolympian.com/opinion/article207534699.html>

Post by “Kalosyni” of September 26, 2021 at 12:46 PM

Going out beyond the enjoyment of discussion and study of philosophy...for anyone who wants to share...Currently, what are your most pleasurable activities beyond eating and sexuality?

Post by “Cassius” of September 26, 2021 at 1:17 PM

[Quote from Philia](#)

I myself am stuck on pleasure = food ... and hope to move beyond that.

That's funny but a good start!

I was looking for the Metrodorus quote for that but all I found was:

****Plutarch, *Against Colotes*, 2, p. 1108C:**** ... those who keep shouting that the *_good_* is to be found in the belly and that they would not give a copper coin with a hole in it for all the virtues in bulk apart from pleasure.

Post by “Don” of September 26, 2021 at 2:29 PM

For me, pleasure encompasses a wide spectrum:

- Walking in the woods and admiring the sun shining through the leaves.
- Looking up at the sky, eyes closed, and feeling the warmth of the sun on my face.
- Partaking in lively conversation.
- Finding an old book on the shelves at the library and feeling the imprint of the printing plates on the page.
- Losing myself in reading or working on a translation.

Pleasure can be big and all-encompassing, or small and intimate, shared or solitary.

Those are my initial thoughts.

Thanks for starting this thread, [Kalosyni](#) !

Post by “Joshua” of September 26, 2021 at 4:25 PM

This is a wide subject! Allow me to narrow it through the lens of a few poems I like.

Romance:

Quote

Drink to me only with thine eyes,
And I will pledge with mine;
Or leave a kiss but in the cup,
And I'll not look for wine.

The thirst that from the soul doth rise
Doth ask a drink divine;
But might I of Jove's nectar sup,
I would not change for thine.

I sent thee late a rosy wreath,
Not so much honouring thee
As giving it a hope, that there
It could not withered be.

But thou thereon didst only breathe,
And sent'st it back to me;
Since when it grows, and smells, I swear,
Not of itself, but thee.

-Ben Jonson

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simple hospitalities:

Quote

Arrived there, the little house they fill, Ne looke for entertainment, where none was:
Rest is their feast, and all things at their will; The noblest mind the best contentment
has.

-Edmund Spencer

The countryside: (from a much longer poem)

Quote

[...] Now, Penshurst, they that will proportion thee
With other edifices, when they see
Those proud, ambitious heaps, and nothing else,
May say their lords have built, but thy lord dwells.

-Ben Jonson

Wine: (from a much longer poem)

Quote

O, for a draught of vintage! that hath been Cool'd a long age in the deep-delved earth.
Tasting of Flora and the country green, Dance, and Provencal song, and sunburnt
mirth!

-John Keats

Traversing the landscape:

Quote

Whose woods these are I think I know.
His house is in the village though;
He will not see me stopping here
To watch his woods fill up with snow.

-Robert Frost

Walking alone by night:

Quote

The Curfew tolls the knell of parting day,
The lowing herd wind slowly o'er the lea,
The ploughman homeward plods his weary way,

And leaves the world to darkness and to me.

-Thomas Gray

Thinking about nature and the cosmos:

Quote

There is a pleasure in the pathless woods,
There is a rapture on the lonely shore,
There is society, where none intrudes,
By the deep Sea, and music in its roar:
I love not Man the less, but Nature more,
From these our interviews, in which I steal
From all I may be, or have been before,
To mingle with the Universe, and feel
What I can ne'er express, yet cannot all conceal.

-Lord Byron

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Finding a good translation of a classic text:

Quote

Much have I travell'd in the realms of gold,
And many goodly states and kingdoms seen;
Round many western islands have I been
Which bards in fealty to Apollo hold.
Oft of one wide expanse had I been told
That deep-brow'd Homer ruled as his demesne;
Yet did I never breathe its pure serene

Till I heard Chapman speak out loud and bold:

Then felt I like some watcher of the skies

When a new planet swims into his ken;

Or like stout Cortez when with eagle eyes

He star'd at the Pacific—and all his men

Look'd at each other with a wild surmise—

Silent, upon a peak in Darien.

-John Keats

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And now one or two of my own:

Quote

No more! Aye, fly! Fly to thine pleasure

Great noble bird, sun-midst sailing,

Prow a-gleaming, southward seeking;

Seek thee still a sweeter shore

And I, a sweet philosophy.

Yet I will linger here a time

Tasting of the morning's fruits—

'Ere long the yawning sea shall call:

The tide shall fail, and then the light,

And we shall mingle, you and I

Void with void, and mote with mote.

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And in lieu of a lucrative synecure for writing poetry: the pleasure of my day job, land-surveying!

Quote

Thoreau and the Geometry of Misattribution: Field Notes

Mid-morning, June the twenty-fifth. Clear, calm;

The water's edge of Choctawhatchee Bay—

All glass and brass and darting precision—

Where little fins answer the noiseless psalm

Of some invisible magnetism.

Our survey maps the shore's meandering way

Easterly; thence perambulates this marsh

And cypress swamp. "Never look back unless

You are planning to go that way"? A harsh

And hollow saw; return is not regress—

A surveyor's first sight is his backsight.

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That last one I sent off to the Walden Woods Project (Thoreau was a surveyor by trade), and they (allegedly) filed it away in their archives. 😄

Post by “Godfrey” of September 26, 2021 at 5:28 PM

A couple of quite pleasurable activities that I've recently begun are restorative yoga and meditation. Although I've done both activities for years at a time in the past (yoga having been far more active than passive), I'm pursuing them free of dogma and with no "path" and am discovering a new and somewhat guilty and decadent pleasure in them. Which somehow makes them even more pleasurable!

Post by “Kalosyni” of September 27, 2021 at 12:06 AM

Thanks [Cassius](#), [Don](#), [Joshua](#), [Godfrey](#)

Reading all your inputs...lots of pleasures!

I realize I am just going through a phase of "dampened" pleasure right now, so I am needing to mentally clear out my mind in order to open back up to receiving enjoyment from the activities that I usually enjoy doing (hiking, dancing, biking, going to the library and to coffee houses). The past two weeks were stressful, visiting my parents and sisters. Now back home in recovery mode...

...and so it would seem that the mind must be tenderly cared for so that pleasure and joy can flower.

Post by “Godfrey” of September 27, 2021 at 1:34 AM

A very insightful post, [Kalosyni](#) ! What you are describing is exactly the process of opening to the Feelings as a guide. Half of the guide is "pain": not avoiding or suppressing the unpleasant, but being guided by that as much as by pleasure.

A pleasant and fulfilling recovery to you!

Post by “Don” of September 27, 2021 at 6:37 AM

[Quote from Philia](#)

.and so it would seem that the mind must be tenderly cared for so that pleasure and joy can flower

A lovely way to phrase it!

Post by “Kalosyni” of September 29, 2021 at 11:16 PM

To summarize the pleasures from the above posts, for the sheer enjoyment. 😊

And for sure there are many more than these.

---nature/outdoors/cosmos - sensations of warmth on the skin from the sun and taking in pleasing sights and sounds with the eyes and ears

---joy of the intellect and thinking - books, reading, writing, poetry

---movement of the body - walking, yoga, dance

---stillness of the body - meditation

---conversation

And I would create a separate category for the following (due to the possibility of mixed results and the need for moderation)

---romance, wine, food, sex

Then also there is the pleasure of recollection...

In a separate thread [Cassius](#) shared a passage that I find to be very helpful from Torquatus "On Ends":

"...let him never suffer the pleasures of the past to fade away, but constantly renew their enjoyment in recollection, and his lot will be one which will not admit of further improvement."

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Post by "Cassius" of September 29, 2021 at 11:21 PM

Yes that's a great way to summarize.

We need all the help we can get in articulating the point as eloquently as possible - which is - that "pleasure" as Epicurus is describing it is a wide and sweeping term that includes everything that we "feel" to be pleasant. No matter how much the high-brows look down their noses and accuse the Epicureans of focusing on the "belly," even the most intellectual of pleasures also qualify as pleasure because the criteria is that we "feel" it to be so - not that we identify it through logical analysis.

Post by "Kalosyni" of September 29, 2021 at 11:21 PM

Oops, some how it posted twice...

...double the pleasure 😊

Post by "Don" of September 29, 2021 at 11:24 PM

Well summarized, [Kalosyni](#) !

People seem to sometimes think that pleasure always has to be capital-P Pleasure. But the simple everyday pleasures can be powerful due in fact to their being readily at hand. We just have to remember to appreciate and notice them.

I had an experience today driving to work in traffic. Several cars ahead of me, another driver had his window down and I could see soap bubbles coming out his window and floating through traffic. It was so whimsical and unexpected, it made me smile for several blocks the whole way to the parking garage. It was a wonderful way to start the day! 😊

Post by “Don” of September 29, 2021 at 11:26 PM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

No matter how much the high-brows look down their noses and accuse the Epicureans of focusing on the "belly,"

Not that there's anything wrong with satisfying the belly!! 😊

Post by “Kalosyni” of September 29, 2021 at 11:30 PM

And even better to satisfy the belly and the intellect at the same time!

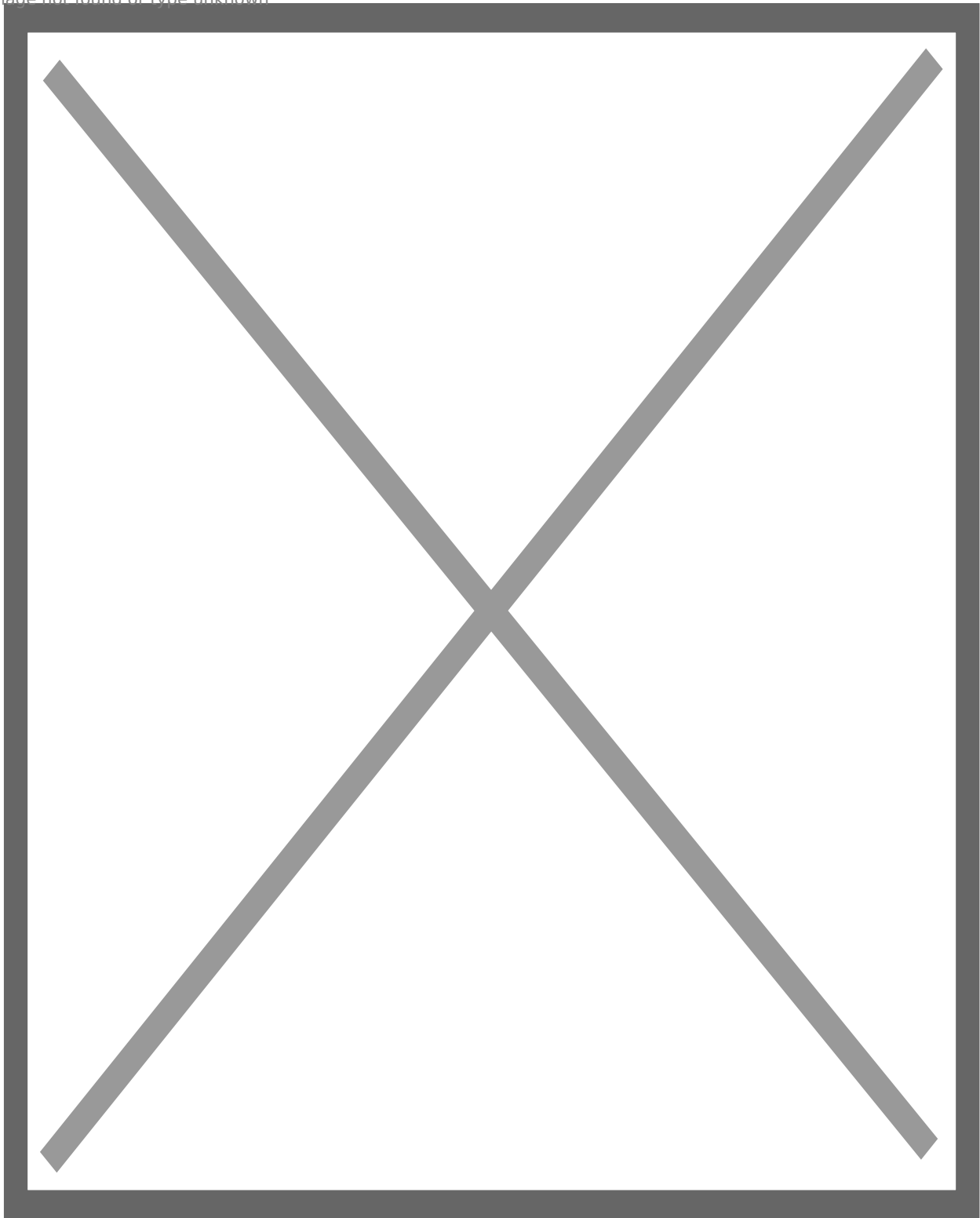
Post by “Kalosyni” of March 5, 2022 at 12:11 AM

It just came to me that there could be a kind of map of pleasure in the body, based on the chakra system. Seeing this as a mix of mental awareness, emotion, and physical sensation. Even as materialists we can have a kind of understanding of "spirit" as arising out of, and dependent upon, the material elements. And would also say that chakras need not be something "otherworldly" but just a way of thinking about the combined energies of the body

and mind.

I found this article, which covers all the chakras:

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[The 7 Chakras and Their Connection to Pleasure](#)

A brief intro

Here are some good excerpts:

Quote

Pleasure is the most sought after feeling on the planet. It is entirely subjective; no two people experience it the same way. A pleasurable event can not be duplicated. Yet it can be experienced, in some form, over and over again.

The human body is designed to feel. Bundles of nerves and miles of synapses make it possible to perceive unimaginable sensations. Pleasure and pain, hot and cold, comfort, and *dis*-ease can all be felt and recognized, sometimes simultaneously.

....

When things appear to be spinning out of control and your instinct is to constrict, pleasure invites you to expand.

Permitting yourself to experience pleasure, not despite, but *because of* life's stresses, is an act of radical self-care.

Relish in the flavors of good food. Notice your ears perking when you hear the musical sound of laughter. Feel the hairs on your arms prickle to life when a gentle breeze caresses you. See the beauty in little things: weeds breaking through concrete, puffy clouds against a blue sky. Find comfort in the scent of fresh bread or the smell of your beloved.

Even now, in the midst of so much uncertainty, pleasure is still medicine. ☐☐☐

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Post by "Don" of March 5, 2022 at 10:17 AM

Those are really some great excerpts from that article. I'm not ready to embrace the idea of chakras (maybe a little too "woo" for me, but taken metaphorically... Maybe?), but I fully endorse the idea of the importance of listening to what one's body is saying. Western inculcation has a generally bad relationship with the body.

But an aspect of this is one's sense of interoception. From researchers like Dr. Lisa Feldman Barrett and many others, this sense is linked to well-being. See for example <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5985305/>

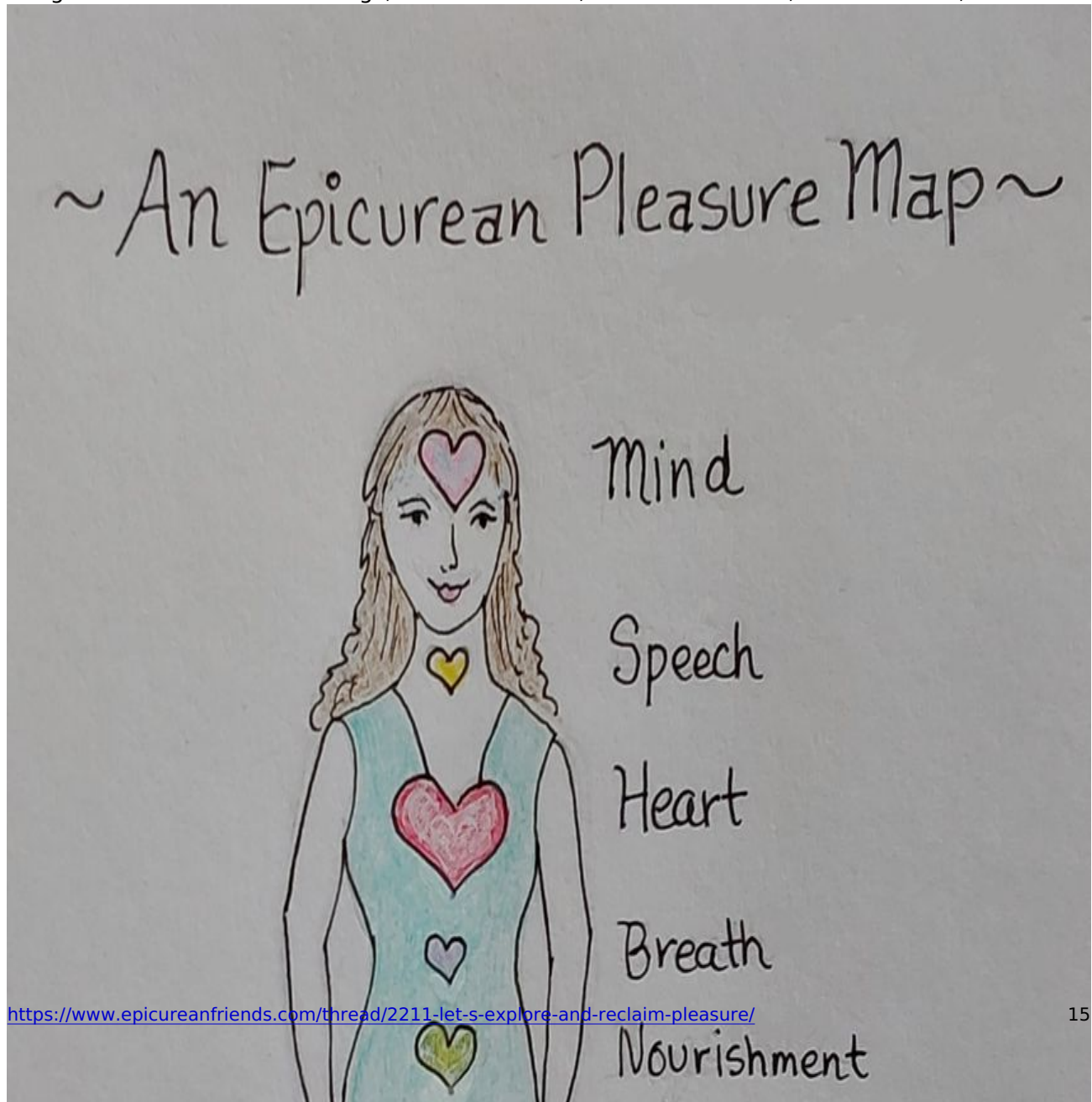
Post by “Kalosyni” of March 5, 2022 at 1:18 PM

Quote

Interoception is the perception of sensations from inside the body and includes the perception of physical sensations related to internal organ function such as heart beat, respiration, satiety, as well as the autonomic nervous system activity related to emotions

That is a great article [Don](#) (I read a portion and definitely want to read all of it).

Here is a quick sketch of something less "woo-woo" -- though it leaves a lot out and would be open to hearing feedback or additional ideas for labels, etc. And may need to show how to integrate of feelings, emotions, sensations, desires, etc.



Post by “Cassius” of March 5, 2022 at 1:31 PM

Wow we have quite an artist here!

Post by “Godfrey” of March 5, 2022 at 5:19 PM

From reading the article it seems like there are interesting connections to be drawn, such as the solar plexus having an association with sight and the throat having an association with listening. I don't go in for the woo, but there are connections throughout the body that we don't normally think of and which can perhaps deepen understanding of certain pleasures and pains in some instances.

Post by “Kalosyni” of March 5, 2022 at 5:43 PM

Instead of a Buddhist wheel of Samsara, my next idea for a drawing is an Epicurean wheel of Pleasure!

Coming soon, and please enjoy your anticipation 😊

Post by “Martin” of March 5, 2022 at 7:33 PM

I guess that "the solar plexus having an association with sight and the throat having an association with listening" is rather a part of the woo-woo. Although the ancients did get quite some things right, most of those connections seem to be arbitrary and based on superstition.

Post by “Don” of March 6, 2022 at 10:16 AM

[Quote from Kalosyni](#)

Instead of a Buddhist wheel of Samsara, my next idea for a drawing is an Epicurean wheel of Pleasure!

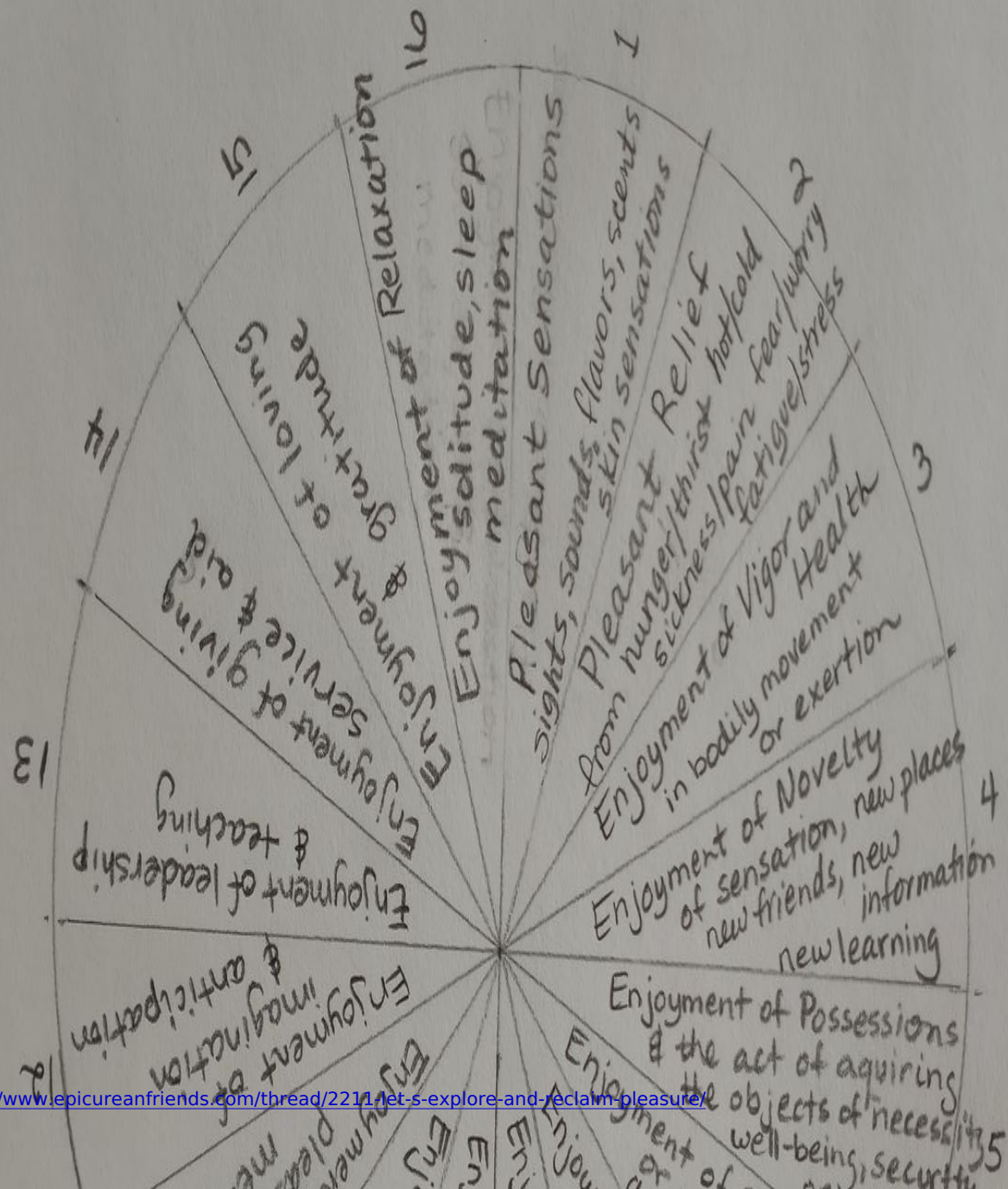


There seems to be Epicurean precedent for personal reinterpretation of established religious practices and symbols (per that paper recently re-posted by [Cassius](#)). Look forward to seeing your work 😊

Post by “Kalosyni” of March 6, 2022 at 5:44 PM

As a starting point, I looked at Bentham's list of pleasures, but greatly modified the elements. This is just one conception. Not all of these will apply to everyone (nor appeal to everyone) and this is still a work in progress. Will appreciate any feedback.

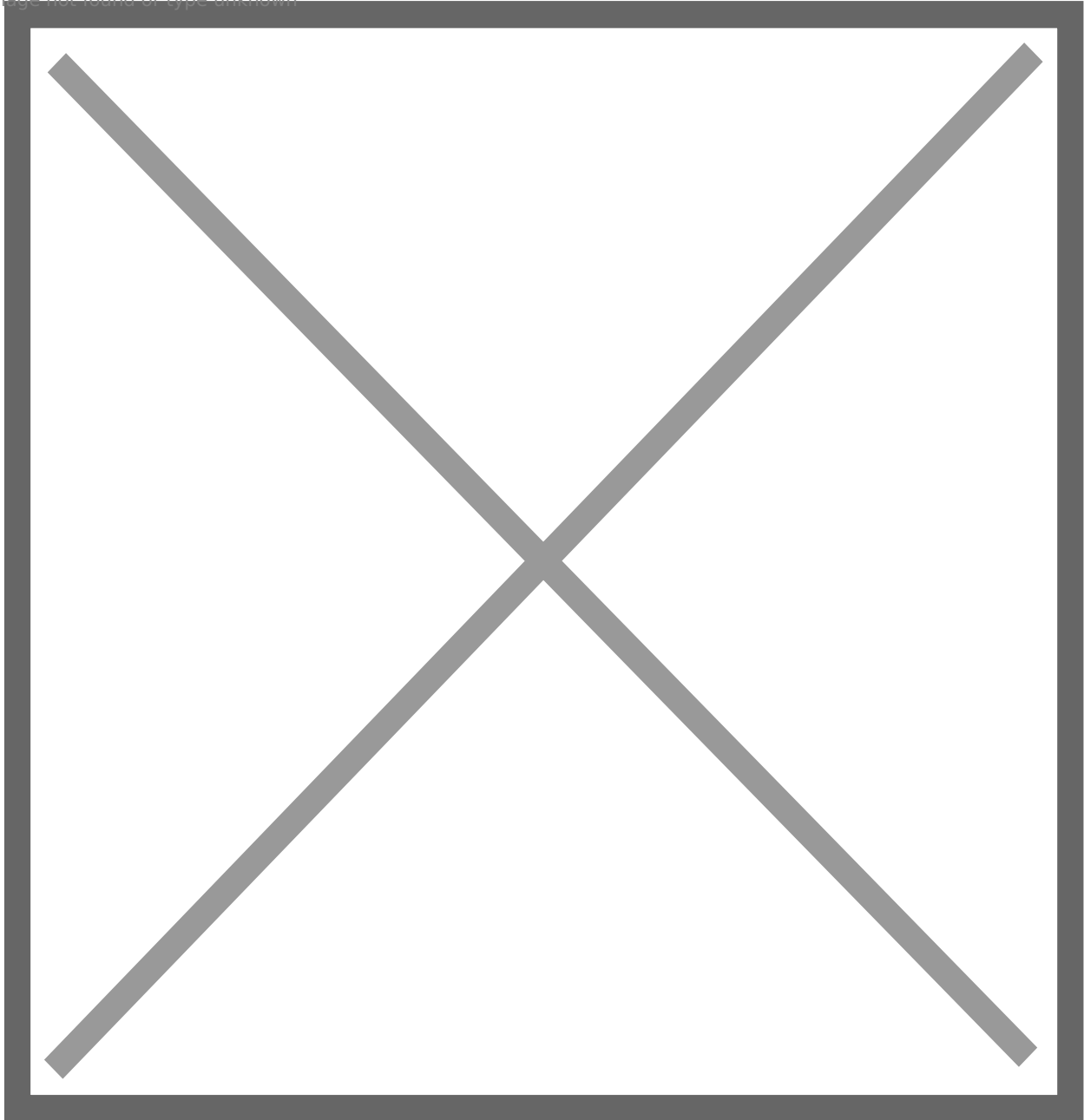
The Epicurean Wheel of Pleasure



Post by “Kalosyni” of March 6, 2022 at 5:50 PM

My list of pleasures is very different than Bentham's, and in case anyone is curious about Bentham's list, you can find it here:

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[An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation - Econlib](#)

The First Edition of this work was printed in the year 1780; and first published in 1789. The present Edition is a careful reprint of 'A New Edition, corrected...

www.econlib.org

Post by "Cassius" of March 6, 2022 at 5:53 PM

I did not know Bentham had attempted such a list!

Post by "Kalosyni" of March 6, 2022 at 6:09 PM

For easier reading, here is my list in simple text format:

1. Pleasant sensations - sights, sounds, flavors, scents, skin sensations
2. Pleasant relief - from hunger/thirst; hot/cold; sickness/pain; fear/worry; fatigue/stress
3. Enjoyment of vigor and health - in bodily movement or exertion
4. Enjoyment of novelty - of sensation, new places, new friends, new information, new learning
5. Enjoyment of possessions and the act of acquiring the objects of necessity, well-being, security, or enjoyment
6. Enjoyment of skill, craft, or work - competence of control of tools, technology, or knowledge
7. Enjoyment of friendship - conversation, commonality, emotional intimacy and support, and mutual fun
8. Enjoyment of community - participation, acceptance, and belonging
9. Enjoyment of sports and games
10. Enjoyment of aesthetics - art, music, theater, world culture
11. Enjoyment of pleasant memories
12. Enjoyment of imagination and anticipation

13. Enjoyment of leadership and teaching
 14. Enjoyment of giving - service and aid
 15. Enjoyment of loving and gratitude
 16. Enjoyment of relaxation - solitude, meditation, sleep
-

Post by “Mathitis Kipouros” of April 4, 2022 at 10:31 AM

So interesting thank you.

What do you think about Maslow's hierarchy of needs?

All of these seem to fall on some of those categories.

Post by “Kalosyni” of April 5, 2022 at 9:49 PM

[Mathitis Kipouros](#) regarding Maslow's hierarchy of needs, I found this article which gave some interesting points, as well as a revised pyramid which replaced self-actualization with parenting



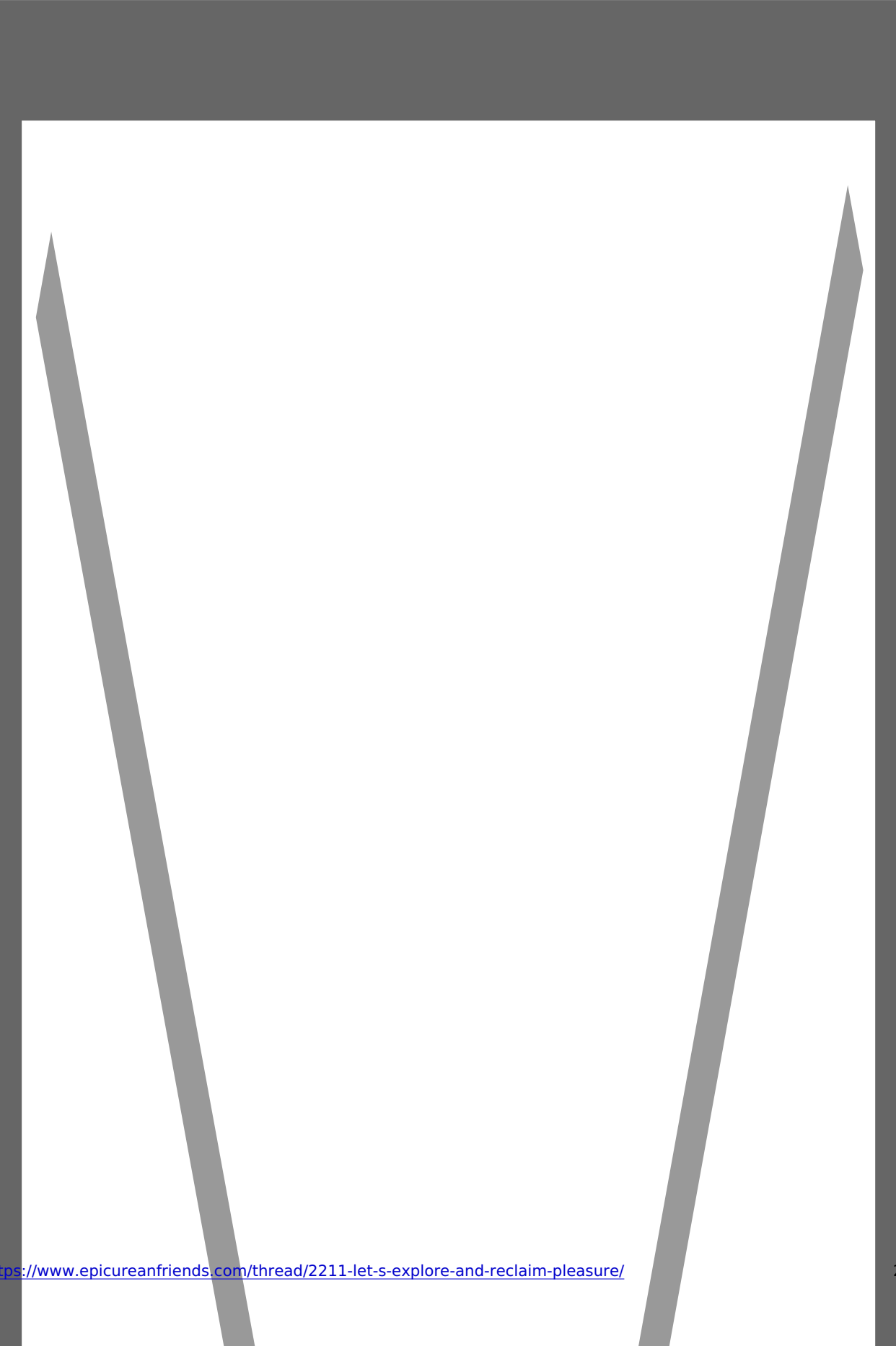
The article says regarding the original pyramid:

Quote

The needs described in Maslow's theory appear to be universal. However, research shows that the order in which these needs are met had little impact on people's satisfaction with life.

....The authors of the article suggested that while self-actualization is still significant and interesting, it is not an evolutionarily fundamental need.

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[Is Maslow's Famous Hierarchy of Needs Still Relevant Today?](#)

The hierarchy of needs has a history of wide acceptance despite little supporting evidence. Does the theory hold up or is it time for an update?

www.verywellmind.com

It seems to me that Epicureanism goes beyond needs to put a value judgment on finding enjoyment in life -- we are out in the garden of the world actively looking for flowers and not for weeds. And the Tetracharmakos says: "what is good is easy to get".

Post by "Pacatus" of April 10, 2022 at 1:01 PM

[Quote from Kalosyni](#)

Here is a quick sketch of something less "woo-woo" -- though it leaves a lot out and would be open to hearing feedback or additional ideas for labels, etc. And may need to show how to integrate of feelings, emotions, sensations, desires, etc.

Epicurean chakras! 👍

Post by "Kalosyni" of January 24, 2025 at 6:42 PM

Thinking about ways to bring more pleasure into my life, and found this list, which has an assortment of items (but many of these are a matter of personal taste, not all of these would work, and... there could be many more things besides just these 50)...

Quote

50 Enjoyable Activities:

1. Go for a walk
2. Listen to music
3. Take photographs
4. Read a newspaper or magazine
5. Take a bath
6. Sit in the sun

7. Watch a movie
8. Laugh
9. Write in a journal
10. Work on a puzzle
11. Recall a happy memory
12. Coloring
13. Gardening
14. Spend time with friends
15. Do yoga
16. Swimming
17. Singing
18. Dancing
19. Go to a flea market
20. Drawing or doodling
21. Painting
22. Buy fresh flowers
23. Join a book club
24. Go to a farmer's market
25. Be affectionate with a loved one
26. Play a musical instrument
27. Crafting (crochet, model building)
28. Get a manicure or pedicure
29. Cooking
30. Jogging or running
31. Play a sport
32. Go sightseeing in your own town
33. Read a book
34. Meditate
35. Watch a sunrise or sunset
36. Enjoy a cup of tea
37. Have a picnic
38. Visit a museum
39. Sudoku or a crossword puzzle
40. Play a board game
41. Look at old photos
42. Light a scented candle
43. Call a friend or family member
44. Hiking
45. Get a massage
46. Volunteer

47. Go to the library
48. Go to a park
49. Stargazing
50. Explore somewhere new

[Source](#)

And here is another list from another website:

Quote

List Of Pleasurable Activities On Your Own:

Spending time in your own company can be an easy way to increase pleasure – as long as your time is focused on some useful things. Here are some ‘you-time’ activity ideas...

- *Read a trashy book*
- *watch a favourite movie*
- *Eat something that you haven't tried for a while*
- *take a walk and really focus on what's around you, rather than what's in your mind*
- *Play a game or puzzle*
- *Doodle or draw a picture*
- *cook a favourite meal*
- *do an activity that will switch your body on such as a brisk walk or swim.*
- *Write a bucket list*
- *Find out more about something that makes you curious.*
- *dress up in your best clothes, just for the fun of it*
- *spend an hour spotting local wildlife*

List Of Pleasurable Activities To Do With Friends:

Connecting with people that are important to you can be pleasurable in itself, but sharing a common task or goal and keep your mind focused. If this focus is on something pleasurable then you can get two benefits in on!

- *Go for a walk together*
- *Cook a meal for them*
- *Write or call a friend you have lost touch with*
- *have a mini fun competition together*
- *play an old fashioned board game*
- *sign up to an evening class together*
- *have a spa day together*

List Of Pleasurable Activities To Do With Your Family and Partner :

Spending quality time with your family or partner is a key way to increase your psychological wellbeing. However it is also one of the things that tends to get forgotten about first. Here are some ideas that don't just mean you are together, but that you actually get to *enjoy* being together...

- *Talk about something you've never spoken about before*
- *Eat a meal together*
- *visit somewhere new*
- *plan a holiday together*
- *Ask or offer a massage*
- *Do an indoor camping trip in your front room*

Things To Keep In Mind About Increasing Opportunities For Feeling Enjoyment And Pleasure...

Remember that when you start increasing pleasurable activities in your life, that it is unlikely that you will experience a sudden and extreme change in emotion. Rather, by doing small and regular amounts of pleasurable activities intentionally, your mind will begin to learn to identify moment by moment times in which you get enjoyment. The big picture here is that you increase you mind's ability to experience pleasure - and whether you are happy with life, or are having difficulties currently, this can only be a positive change to make.

[Source](#)

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Post by "Bryan" of January 25, 2025 at 1:21 PM

Along these lines, I have been thinking that a "spa day" is mostly a mindset, and it can be most days!

An electric kettle heats up water to boiling in a minute, add the hot water into a little tub, and soak your feet wherever you are.

Automatic back and foot massagers are a cheap investment and feel great.

Applying body oil after the shower is good for the skin and makes it feel more comfortable to wear.