

# Welcome Patrick!

## Post by “Patrick” of September 28, 2021 at 3:00 PM

Hi, I will probably be more of a lurker because I am not academically inclined, nor am I a philosopher. But I was reading the DeWitt book, and I found the paragraphs where he criticized the Platonic forms to be convincing. I liked the passage where he mentioned critics of Platonism who wrote that actual horses are not real but there is the idea of "horseness" that is the real deal. I laughed out loud at that passage.

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## Post by “Cassius” of September 28, 2021 at 3:21 PM

The understanding that Epicurus was strongly anti-Platonic is a key insight that will help you as you study Epicurus. That's one of the real advantages of approaching Epicurus through DeWitt, because he talks a lot about that and prepares you for the implications of it, while many of the other general books about Epicurus hardly mention it at all.

Thanks for writing in with the comment and I hope you'll make many more. It's very helpful to hear peoples' reactions as they start the study of Epicurus.

And as far as I am concerned, the fact that you are not academic or a philosopher makes it much more likely that you'll be able to see where Epicurus was going more so than otherwise!

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## Post by “Cassius” of September 28, 2021 at 3:22 PM

Welcome [Patrick](#) !

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. **["Epicurus and His Philosophy"](#)** by Norman DeWitt
2. **[The Biography of Epicurus by Diogenes Laertius.](#)** This includes the surviving letters of Epicurus, including those to [Herodotus](#), [Pythocles](#), and [Menoceus](#).
3. **["On The Nature of Things"](#)** - by Lucretius (a poetic abridgement of Epicurus' "On Nature")
4. **["Epicurus on Pleasure"](#)** - By Boris [Nikolsky](#)
5. The chapters on Epicurus in **[Gosling and Taylor's "The Greeks On Pleasure."](#)**
6. **[Cicero's "On Ends" - Torquatus Section](#)**
7. **[Cicero's "On The Nature of the Gods" - Velleius Section](#)**
8. The Inscription of Diogenes of Oinoanda - **[Martin Ferguson Smith translation](#)**
9. **[A Few Days In Athens" - Frances Wright](#)**
10. Lucian Core Texts on Epicurus: (1) **[Alexander the Oracle-Monger](#)**, (2) **[Hermotimus](#)**
11. **[Philodemus "On Methods of Inference"](#)** (De Lacy version, including his appendix on relationship of Epicurean canon to Aristotle and other Greeks)
12. "The Greeks on Pleasure" -Gosling & Taylor Sections on Epicurus, especially the **[section on katastematic and kinetic pleasure](#)** which explains why ultimately this distinction was

not of great significance to Epicurus.

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!***

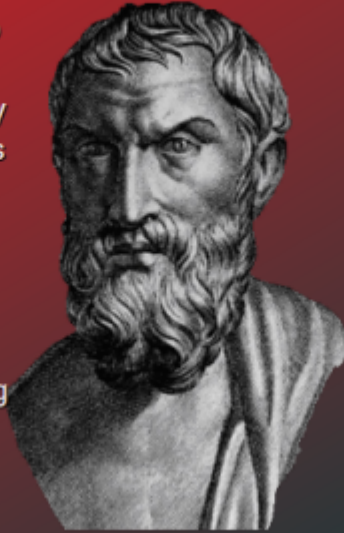
## Not Neo-Epicurean, But Epicurean

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 "Cassius" of September 28, 2021 at 3:25 PM

Sorry that your welcome post is put of sequence Patrick - the system doesn't let me adjust the times of posts so since you posted first your official "welcome" comes after the first two posts in this thread.

Thanks again for posting - welcome again - and let us know in any way we can be of help.

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### Post by "Joshua" of September 28, 2021 at 6:20 PM

Welcome, Patrick! DeWitt is an excellent start. If you want a few more good laughs, try Lucian's *Alexander the Oracle-Monger*.

[Lucian of Samosata : Alexander the False Prophet](#)

## **Post by “Cassius” of September 28, 2021 at 7:48 PM**

Yes! Many of Lucian's works are good for laughs in addition to sound Epicurean philosophy. I have to put in a word for my favorite of his dialogues -- HERMOTIMUS.

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## **Post by “Martin” of September 29, 2021 at 2:00 AM**

Welcome Patrick!

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## **Post by “Don” of September 29, 2021 at 6:42 AM**

### [Quote from Patrick](#)

Hi, I will probably be more of a lurker because I am not academically inclined, nor am I a philosopher

Welcome, Patrick! I, too, originally expected to be a lurker... Now, I've ended up on the podcast 😊 The forum participants are a welcoming bunch. Feel free to participate as actively as you are comfortable doing. And as far as being a "philosopher" I don't \*think\* anyone here is an academically-trained Philosopher. But by expressing an interest in studying or practicing wisdom, you've already taken a step to being a philosopher. 😊 Epicurus claimed to be self-taught, too.

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## **Post by “Patrick” of September 29, 2021 at 10:37 PM**

I suffer from schizophrenia. I am not sure if I am an epicurean, but I see and hear things that are not there. My mind also constructs elaborate conspiracy theories, and I have to constantly test the things my mind is telling me, asking myself if the thing I am fearing is logical or not. Most of the time it is not. As far as hearing voices and hallucinations, I just ignore them. I was suffering from this illness in my youth, and it was untreated, which means at the time I should

have been launching my career, I was researching conspiracy theories on the Internet. Consequently, my income will always be below average. My therapist just retired, and I really can't afford therapy every week, which is why I started looking into philosophy.

There are things that I enjoy. Simple pleasures. I enjoy hiking, reading, sex, eating inexpensive gourmet meals. Epicurus was against involvement in politics. I am not sure if all modern Epicureans share that opinion, but for me, since I am prone to conspiracy theories, I don't even watch the news. For a while, I was a practicing neopagan, but I don't believe in gods, so that really is not going to work out for me. I wish I had more friends, but I scared a lot of people away when I was having my psychotic episodes. When I was a neopagan, I would do these complex rituals every morning, but since I am not doing that anymore, I have time to study math and science instead. That might seem like work to some people but I actually enjoy it. An equation is like a number puzzle and I enjoy finding out the answers. I will never have that advanced degree, but at least I can help my young nephew with his math and science homework.

I am not a doctor, but I think all of this helps my brain repair itself. I do not have as many delusions or hallucinations as I did in the past. And I find that I am better able to understand the plot of books and movies better than I did when my illness was untreated. I am no longer looking for hidden messages in films, but am instead focusing on the plot. Maybe this means I miss out on some of the actual symbology that is in the films, but I just tell myself for my peace of mind, I'm not going there. I don't watch as many horror movies and books either.

I am working on getting government benefits so I don't have to work so much. I don't know what your opinion on that is, but I don't care. I am sick of working so much, and my disability could qualify me for social security benefits. I would still have to work, but not so many hours. Maybe then, I could focus more on the things I enjoy, and actually better myself.

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**Post by “Cassius” of September 29, 2021 at 11:11 PM**

Best wishes to you in dealing with all that Patrick, and welcome to the forum where we will try to be as much help philosophically as possible.

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**Post by “Don” of September 29, 2021 at 11:18 PM**

Thank you for sharing your personal history and present situation with us. That can't be easy to do on a forum.

You question whether you might be an Epicurean, but Epicurus endorsed finding the way for one to lead a pleasurable life and having health of the body and serenity of the mind. It sounds like you are striving for that.

It also sounds like you have benefited from therapy in the past, so finding a new mental health professional may serve you well in your pursuit of a pleasant life. If you're interested, here is a page with some resources and additional contacts if you're searching for a new therapist: <https://www.samhsa.gov/serious-mental-illness>

All that being said, it does sound like you are doing your best to appreciate the pleasures available to you. That's important, and something many people don't take time to appreciate.

You may be right that government benefits would allow you a little more freedom, self-sufficiency, and security. Also, qualities of a pleasurable life. Hopefully, that will work out.

Don't take your treatment solely into your own hands. Epicurus taught the importance of a supportive community but also frank speech. Don't hesitate to seek out the professional care you think you need. Philosophy can be a powerful complement but not necessarily a replacement for modern medicine and therapies. Take good care of your body and your mind with the best methods available.

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## Post by “Joshua” of September 29, 2021 at 11:42 PM

Quote

since I am prone to conspiracy theories, I don't even watch the news.

A mature and responsible decision!

Quote

I am working on getting government benefits so I don't have to work so much.

I don't have an opinion on government benefits.

Covid *has* given me some reservations about abundant free-time. Not everyone I know has handled it well. It may be helpful to explore the Roman concept of [Otium](#)—constructive leisure

(which you've already hinted at). Come to think of it, we should have a thread on Otium. 🤔

Lurker or participant; either way, I wish you well!

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### **Post by “Cassius” of September 30, 2021 at 4:45 AM**

After reading these comments the only other thing I can think to add is that one thing about Epicurus that really stands out is the concept of limits. I think Epicurus would be among the first to remind you that you should not attempt to stretch philosophy beyond its own limits. Conditions that are essentially medical rather than philosophical need medical treatment.

This is an area where I would especially fault the Stoics:. They seem to argue that everything is subject to "mind over matter" and that if you simply "will" it hard enough any issue can be overcome mentally. That is simply not true and is a very damaging approach. Epicurus always points to using your senses and "true reasoning" to get to the bottom of all issues to confront them.

Many issues cannot be dealt with "alone" and require help from others, whether they be friends or doctors or people of many other specialties - including, but not limited to, philosophy.

Medical issues must be treated medically, so please be sure you get all the help you need from all the appropriate places.

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### **Post by “Patrick” of October 3, 2021 at 10:45 AM**

The office is going to find another psychologist for me, so if I do nothing, I will get another one. I'll be fine.