

Modern Books on "Practical Advice" On Applying Epicurean Philosophy

Post by "Cassius" of October 18, 2021 at 9:25 AM

Let's see if we can prepare a list of "modern" books to mention in a list of those for people to consider on the "practical side." We can edit and update this list as more are added. Links are to the book's location at Amazon.com:

Please included in the thread below any you would like to add to this list, plus give your comment on it. Thanks!

1. Haris Dimitriadis ([Epicurus and the Pleasant Life - A Philosophy of Nature](#)" and "[Death is Nothing To Fear](#)")
2. Catherine Wilson ([How To Be An Epicurean](#) / [Pleasure Principle](#) note: these two are the same with different titles for different markets)
3. Hiram Crespo ([Tending the Epicurean Garden](#))
4. Pierre Hadot ([Philosophy As A Way of Life](#))

Post by "Cassius" of October 18, 2021 at 9:26 AM

Don offers this suggestion (already now added to the list above)

Pierre Hadot. Philosophy as a Way of Life.

This covers a number of Hellenistic philosophies, but includes a lot of consideration of Epicurean "spiritual exercises" as Hadot calls them. For example:

Quote

Meditation, however, be it simple or erudite, is not the only Epicurean spiritual exercise. To cure the soul, it is not necessary, as the Stoics would have it, to train it to stretch itself tight, but rather to train it to relax. Instead of picturing misfortunes in advance, so as to be prepared to bear them, we must rather, say the Epicureans, detach our thought from the vision of painful things, and fix our eyes on pleasurable ones. We arc to relive memories of past pleasures, and enjoy the pleasures of the

present, recognizing how intense and agreeable these present pleasures are.⁷⁰ We have here a quite distinctive spiritual exercise, different from the constant vigilance of the Stoic, with his constant readiness to safeguard his moral liberty at each instant. Instead, Epicureanism preaches the deliberate, continually renewed choice of relaxation and serenity, combined with a profound gratitude⁷¹ toward nature and life,⁷² which constantly offer us joy and pleasure, if only we know how to find them. By the same token, the spiritual exercise of trying to live in the present moment is very different for Stoics and Epicureans. For the former, it means mental tension and constant wakefulness of the moral conscience; for the latter, it is, as we have seen, an invitation to relaxation and serenity. Worry, which tears us in the direction of the future, hides from us the incomparable value of the simple fact of existing: "We are born once, and cannot be born twice, but for all time must be no more. But you, who are not master of tomorrow, postpone your happiness: life is wasted in procrastination and each one of us dies overwhelmed with cares." This is the doctrine contained in Horace's famous saying: *carpe diem*.

Post by "Godfrey" of October 18, 2021 at 11:57 AM

The link to Hadot appears to be to a book of the same title but by different authors. I've never heard of the linked book or it's authors. Is anybody familiar with it/them as being useful?

Post by "Joshua" of October 18, 2021 at 2:03 PM

I haven't read any of these yet...

Post by "Don" of October 18, 2021 at 2:07 PM

[Quote from Godfrey](#)

The link to Hadot appears to be to a book of the same title but by different authors. I've never heard of the linked book or it's authors. Is anybody familiar with it/them as being useful?

I changed the link to the correct book on AbeBooks. Thanks!

Post by “Don” of October 18, 2021 at 2:12 PM

[Quote from JJElbert](#)

I haven't read any of these yet...

I've read Wilson's and the relevant passages in Hadot. Haven't read Crespo or Dimitriadis in full.

Frankly, I wanted to read the ancient texts first, get some opinion of my own from them, then read modern commentators. I haven't always stuck to that but that was my strategy.