

Welcome Ayraj!

Post by "Cassius" of December 17, 2021 at 5:11 AM

Welcome [ayraj](#) !

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) [Hermetimus](#)
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.

Post by "ayraj" of December 17, 2021 at 7:39 PM

Thanks for the welcome and the helpful links to source materials!

[Quote from Cassius](#)

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.

My background is actually a bit eclectic and unfocused prior to meeting with a philosophical counselor and watching some of their content on YouTube (Dr. Gregory Sadler).

Basically I grew up with a Stoic father (although he approved of Epicurus' teachings, he was preferential to Stoics - he just couldn't stand Cynic philosophy, however) and a liberal ELCA Lutheran mom. As I grew up I began questioning my religious and philosophical underpinnings, and decided that there was actually not much difference between religion/philosophy, and that what I wanted more than anything was a way of living and a practical, applied, and reasonable philosophy to ground my life to.

I began looking at the philosophers I knew (the Stoics my dad favored) and thought "okay this is good enough, but still want to know more..." and looked into Cynicism, Academic Skepticism, Pyrrhonic Skepticism, Platonism, etc. (admittedly superficially - I have a basic understanding from summaries and proponents' perspectives, but not a deep primary document perspective) and found them all somewhat good, or having interesting thoughts.

But then, oooooo boy. I found the Vatican Sayings online! It was just a few quotes but it ignited my curiosity for Epicurus, Lucretius, and whatever I could find. Admittedly, I read half the sayings and decided I wanted to know more. Unfortunately work got in the way and for the last 4 months I've not done much with it.

Then I found a YouTube video by Dr. Gregory Sadler on Epicurus and it reminded me that above all, I wanted *to be* an Epicurean, and to feel confident in that identity, that mentality, and to develop the mindset and philosophical underpinnings to be successful with it in applying and knowing it for my own life, and to understand it in the original context and in the classical sense. I got philosophical counseling from Dr. Greg, and he recommended I try to find online communities of Epicureans - I did a quick Ecosia search (sorry, Google) and boom! This website popped up. The thing that also interests me a lot about Epicureanism is it seems a little bit like the Hobbit worldview from Lord of the Rings, and I've always been really drawn to it. A cup of tea, a nice conversation, and a good day's work, seem like a great life to me (not sure if that is in line with Classical Epicureanism, so apologies if not!).

My goal is to learn more from the primary writings, to read posts from others, and to learn to be an Epicurean. Because I've left a faith tradition, I'm also interested in any rituals or "best practices" anyone has for making Epicureanism a part of everyday life - kind of like how Christians pray, Buddhists meditate, or there are holidays to commemorate important holy days, etc., or even something simple like a home altar to reflect at. Not sure how much is in the purview of the Classical Epicurean perspective, but I truly am interested in being a student of Epicurus, Epicureanism, and in becoming a "devout" so-to-speak Epicurean.

I have already ordered a collection of Epicurus' extant writings from Amazon, as well as On the Nature of Things.

Post by “Kalosyni” of December 17, 2021 at 9:37 PM

Welcome ayraj and thanks for sharing!

[Quote from ayraj](#)

I'm also interested in any rituals or "best practices" anyone has for making Epicureanism a part of everyday life

My own practice is when I wake up (or in the early part of the morning) I think about what I will do that day to bring in joyful, pleasant experiences...actions or activities that bring cheer, pleasure, and well-being.

Also, I see my study of Epicureanism as an enjoyable practice. I feel that there are many layers to understanding the philosophy, and it takes time for it to develop.

I am sure others might have more to say about personal rituals.

Post by “Cassius” of December 17, 2021 at 11:13 PM

I make no claim that listening to me on the Lucretius podcasts is tolerable, but over the last two years we have had a number of good panelists, and I am satisfied and even proud to think that while the podcasts may not be as academically deep as would be desired, we have succeeded in maintaining a friendly and supportive and respectful tone, and I think the tone that comes across is very reflective of the kind of friendly and supportive community we would like to grow

here.

Yes it its it's portent that we adhere to the core principles, but everyone goes through a process of learning over time, and I think listening to the podcasts as we go through Lucretius should be a good way to pick up the core orientation and atmosphere of something well worth participating in.

Thank you for the background information. I have watched a video or two of his and while I am sure he would recognize that his approach is a little more eclectic than would be consistent with the goal here, he does seem to be a good natured and very good teacher.

And I have never heard of Ecosia but I am glad we are listed there!

Post by “Don” of December 18, 2021 at 6:55 AM

[Quote from ayraj](#)

My goal is to learn more from the primary writings, to read posts from others, and to learn to be an Epicurean. Because I've left a faith tradition, I'm also interested in any rituals or "best practices" anyone has for making Epicureanism a part of everyday life - kind of like how Christians pray, Buddhists meditate, or there are holidays to commemorate important holy days, etc., or even something simple like a home altar to reflect at. Not sure how much is in the purview of the Classical Epicurean perspective, but I truly am interested in being a student of Epicurus, Epicureanism, and in becoming a "devout" so-to-speak Epicurean.

Greetings, [ayraj](#) ! Thank you for sharing your background. I, too, find it an interesting exercise to look for "any rituals or "best practices" anyone has for making Epicureanism a part of everyday life." I need to go back and re-read (it's been awhile) The Ethics of Philodemus by Dr. Voula Tsouna, but there are some interesting practices that she talks about including "setting-before-the-eyes" to counteract or address one's anger (or other negative or harmful emotions). To me, the practice sounds like a vivid visualization in one's mind to really "see" the results of that emotion before one engages in it. That's a Cliffs Notes version.

The closest I've come to any daily or regular practice is to recite the Tetrpharmakos in ancient Greek to myself to try to keep the "basics" in mind. And made myself a keychain with SFOTSE (Sic fac omnia tamquam spectet Epicurus) which is (from Seneca's letters XXV.5) and means "Do all things as if Epicurus were watching." Sort of an Epicurean "WWJD: What would Jesus do."



As far as a home "altar," there is every precedent for having a bust of Epicurus. There are numerous files online for printing a small 3-D bust. I keep meaning to do this. Or maybe just a picture.

So, welcome to this little corner of the Epicurean internet! I look forward to reading any discoveries you make and questions you might have.

Post by "Marco" of December 19, 2021 at 7:31 AM

Welcome. My daily practice is listening to the Lucretius podcasts and taking some notes. I learned a lot.

Post by "Martin" of December 19, 2021 at 8:40 AM

Welcome Ayraj!

Post by "Cassius" of January 26, 2022 at 10:49 AM

Ayraj I definitely wanted to be sure you saw this link. Please join us if you can: ["A Few Days In Athens" Zoom Book Club Meeting #1: Who Was Frances Wright, Introduction, and Chapter One \(Jan 30 8:00 PM EST\)](#)

Post by "Scott" of January 26, 2022 at 6:10 PM

Welcome, [ayraj](#)!

Post by "stevia81" of January 27, 2022 at 4:16 AM

Welcome:D