

# Welcome Ben!

**Post by “Cassius” of October 3, 2022 at 9:19 AM**

Welcome [Ben](#) ! **Note:** In order to minimize spam registrations, all new registrants must respond in this thread to this welcome message within 72 hours of its posting, or their account is subject to deletion. All that is required is a "Hello!" but of course we hope you will introduce yourself further and join one or more of our conversations.

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 “Ben” of October 4, 2022 at 1:47 PM**

Great to have tracked you down. I am really interested in how the communities functioned on a day to day level. Were they isolated, with no money used (barter economies) or drop-in places etc. I believe the children were communally cared for but little more. How did it work in practice in other words?

I am seriously into joining/founding a living "garden" community heavily directed by Epicurus, but to date I have had no joy in locating a community that implements his amazing insights or others serious about this. Oh to be able to teleport to be part of one of the (hopefully) flourishing communities. To think of all we miss due to his lack of influence today.

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**Post by “Cassius” of October 4, 2022 at 1:49 PM**

Glad to have you with us, and the topics you raise are frequent issues of discussion. Can't point to any real life communities at the moment but maybe and hopefully the regular communication of like-minded people over the internet will be a start.

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**Post by “Martin” of October 4, 2022 at 2:39 PM**

Welcome Ben!

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**Post by “Don” of October 4, 2022 at 3:29 PM**

[Quote from Ben](#)

Great to have tracked you down. I am really interested in how the communities functioned on a day to day level. Were they isolated, with no money used (barter economies) or drop-in places etc. I believe the children were communally cared for but

little more. How did it work in practice in other words?

I, too, am very interested in the day-to-day workings of the Gardens, both Epicurus's original one in Athens and subsequent ones that grew up later in cities across the ancient world. There is most likely a good chance that they all did not work the same as well.

I see no evidence that they were isolated. Even though Epicurus situated the original Garden "outside the city walls of Athens" it was literally \*right outside\* the city walls and also on the same road that led to Plato's Academy. It's situation near/in the Kerameikos section of the city means it was near the potter's shops/homes as well as the tombs of the city. The Garden was on one of the busiest roads leading into the city right outside one of the busiest gates (the Dipylon Gate) leading into the city itself. Those who want to make the Garden to be some sort of walled-off exclusive commune isolated from the rest of society are barking up the wrong tree.

I certainly don't see a "barter economy" taking place "within the Garden" unless within certain parameters given the ancient setting. It's also important to remember that the Garden was neither a "commune" in the colloquial nor in the literal sense. Epicurus specifically decided that resources should not be shared in common among his students.

I've always seen the Garden as more of a drop-in/"commuter school" than a residential school. It's important to remember (and I have problems remembering this myself) that the Garden as as much a philosophical school as Plato's Academy, Aristotle's Lyceum, Chryssipus' Stoa, etc. I would conjecture that all the schools worked similarly administratively. The BIG difference between all those and the Garden was that the Garden was private property! All the others were founded on public grounds (near the gymnasiums for Plato and Aristotle, near the public agora for the "Stoics"). The fact that Epicurus also welcomed enslaved people into the Garden also tells me that it was not primarily residential. Those who were enslaved by others would only have been able to visit on their days of liberty, they'd need to go back to their master's house at night. Same way with women and especially hetairai. And there must have been enough enslaved people and women attending classes in the Garden for people to make a big deal out of it and be scandalized by it.

Those are some thoughts off the top of my head, but Norman DeWitt wrote a paper entitled "[Organization and Procedure in Epicurean Groups](#)" (*Classical Philology*. Volume 31, Number 3. Jul., 1936) which may interest you. It's definitely an intriguing topic!! Thanks for raising it!

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**Post by "Kalosyni" of October 4, 2022 at 8:18 PM**

Welcome to the forum Ben!

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**Post by “Root304” of October 10, 2022 at 4:07 PM**

Hello Ben! Welcome.

I have some interest in intentional communities and have lived in housing co-ops in the past. Most of that interest is spent on my household culture with close family and friends these days. We celebrate Eikas together from time to time.

Intentional community is quite an endeavor to embark on, and requires building a lot of different skill sets and cultural frameworks that are pretty foreign to run of the mill, Western nuclear families. And to multiply the complexity, you have to bring the group along with you. I am open to discussion, perhaps in DM as it would probably involve a lot of non-Epicurean sources of info.