

Overcome Suicidal Ideation and Find Greater Meaning in Life

Post by “Kalosyni” of October 14, 2022 at 10:19 AM

Occasionally on this forum and on the podcasts the topic of suicide, and also choosing to end one's own life when terminally ill, etc. has come up. And I feel the need to bring up and share some "therapeutics".

Given that we believe that we only have this one life to live (no-rebirth, no second chance) this means that ending one's life is rarely ever chosen unless out of great necessity ([Cassius](#) I know there are sources for this in Epicurean writings but can't remember off hand).

Ideally I would recommend someone should [seek out the professional help of a therapist](#), to effectively remedy repeated or on going suicidal thoughts.

For those who may occasionally have milder moments of considering the meaning of life and only briefly encounter suicidal ideation, I would recommend this very good article, which also brings up good points to bring more meaning and fulfillment:

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[If You Wonder Why You Should Stay Alive, This Is for You](#)

Why do we need to live life? There are many possible answers to that question, and here are 22 of them, together with an exercise to find your own reasons.

psychcentral.com

Post by “Cassius” of October 14, 2022 at 11:32 AM

It would be good to use this as a thread for references on this issue. Here are some of the main cites that I recall:

<https://www.epicureanfriends.com/thread/2706-overcome-suicidal-ideation-and-find-greater-meaning-in-life/>

1 - Vatican Sayings of Epicurus:

Quote from Vatican Sayings

VS38. He is a little man in all respects who has many good reasons for quitting life.

2 - Letter to Menoeceus:

Quote from Letter to Menoeceus

125] For there is nothing terrible in life for the man who has truly comprehended that there is nothing terrible in not living. So that the man speaks but idly who says that he fears death not because it will be painful when it comes, but because it is painful in anticipation. For that which gives no trouble when it comes is but an empty pain in anticipation. So death, the most terrifying of ills, is nothing to us, since so long as we exist, death is not with us; but when death comes, then we do not exist. It does not then concern either the living or the dead, since for the former it is not, and the latter are no more. [126] But the many at one moment shun death as the greatest of evils, at another (yearn for it) as a respite from the (evils) in life. (But the wise man neither seeks to escape life) nor fears the cessation of life, for neither does life offend him nor does the absence of life seem to be any evil. And just as with food he does not seek simply the larger share and nothing else, but rather the most pleasant, so he seeks to enjoy not the longest period of time, but the most pleasant. And he who counsels the young man to live well, but the old man to make a good end, is foolish, not merely because of the desirability of life, but also because it is the same training which teaches to live well and to die well. Yet much worse still is the man who says it is good not to be born but *'once born make haste to pass the gates of Death'*. [127] For if he says this from conviction why does he not pass away out of life? For it is open to him to do so, if he had firmly made up his mind to this. But if he speaks in jest, his words are idle among men who cannot receive them.

We must then bear in mind that the future is neither ours, nor yet wholly not ours, so that we may not altogether expect it as sure to come, nor abandon hope of it, as if it will certainly not come.

3 - Diogenes Laertius:

Quote from Diogenes Laertius

And he will gather together a school, but never so as to become a popular leader. He will give lectures in public, but never unless asked; he will give definite teaching and not profess doubt. In his sleep he will be as he is awake, and on occasion he will even die for a friend.

4 - Torquatus In "On Ends":

Quote from Torquatus in "On Ends"

So on the other hand a strong and lofty spirit is entirely free from anxiety and sorrow. It makes light of death, for the dead are only as they were before they were born. It is schooled to encounter pain by recollecting that pains of great severity are ended by death, and slight ones have frequent intervals of respite; while those of medium intensity lie within our own control: we can bear them if they are endurable, or if they are not, we may serenely quit life's theater, when the play has ceased to please us. These considerations prove that timidity and cowardice are not blamed, nor courage and endurance praised, on their own account; the former are rejected because they beget pain, the latter coveted because they beget pleasure.

5 - Lucretius:

There's a lot in Lucretius about death and there may be more about suicide but this is the first that comes to mind:

Lucretius Book 3 (Humphries):

Quote

It goes so far, sometimes, that fear of death
Induces hate of life and light, and men
Are so depressed that they destroy themselves
Having forgotten that this very fear
Was the first source and cause of all their woe.
As children tremble and fear everything
In the dark shadows, we, in the full light,
Fear things that really are not one bit more awful
That what poor babies shudder at in darkness,
The horrors they imagine to be coming.
Our terrors and our darkneses of mind
Must be dispelled then, not by sunshine's rays, -
Not by those shining arrows of the light,

But by insight into nature, and a scheme
of systematic contemplation.

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