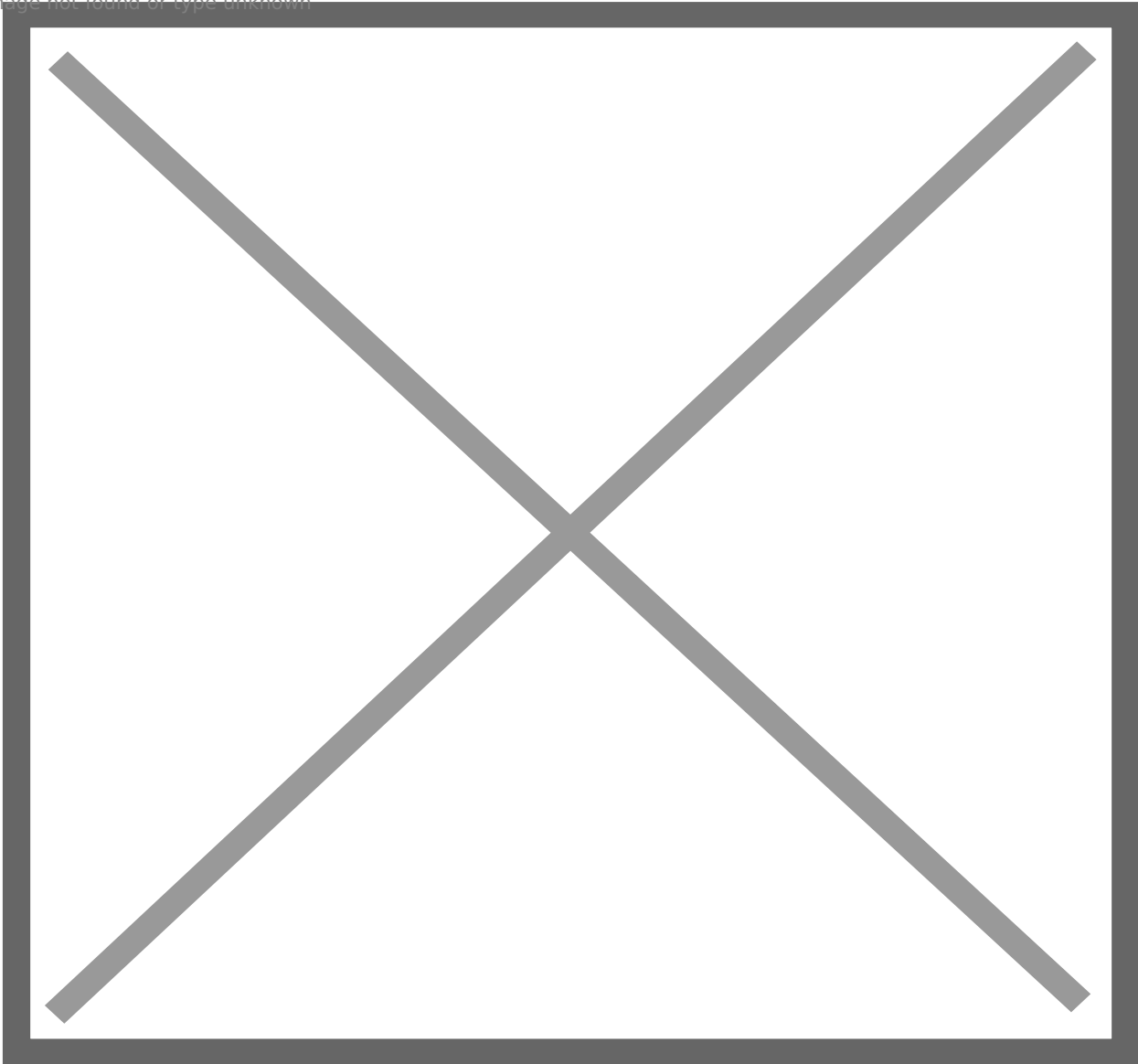


New Audio Presentation By Emily Austin - Prepared for The "Next Big Idea" Podcast

Post by "Cassius" of January 5, 2023 at 4:17 PM

Here at this link is a new presentation by Emily Austin of several major points from her "Living for Pleasure" book.

Image not found or type unknown



[Living for Pleasure: An Epicurean Guide to Life](#)

Emily Austin shares 5 key insights from her new book, *Living for Pleasure: An Epicurean Guide to Life*.

nextbigideaclub.com

As I think most of you here at the forum know, Dr. Austin has agreed to sit for an interview with our "Lucretius Today" podcast, and we hope to set that up and record in over the next couple of weeks. In the meantime, I think you'll agree with me that this is a very good presentation not only of points from her book but good food for thought that those of us who are Epicurus enthusiasts would give to an audience that's not already pretty familiar with Epicurean philosophy.

So with the knowledge that we'll probably have Dr. Austin herself reading this thread at some point in the future, let's talk about our thoughts on what she picked out as significant about Epicurus, how she presents the topics, perhaps in what order they are presented, and any other thoughts you have on how to give a "first impression" of Epicurean philosophy to others.

I know myself that every time I start out talking to someone new I approach the subject in a different way, not only because my thoughts change but because I want to fine-tune what I say to the person who is listening. It's really interesting to think about how to make presentations as persuasive as possible. Do we start out with "hooks" to draw people in on terms they recognize? Do we start with the most controversial issues, or do we save those for later? One thing I noticed in this presentation is that there's not a specific item devoted clearly to "epistemology / canonicity"? Is that an advanced topic that isn't best as part of a first impression, or is it something that should be addressed earlier in a talk. Should that be incorporated with the physics like the ancient Epicureans are reputed to have done? How much of an issue should be made in a first talk, and when in the presentation, is it best to bring the issues of supernatural gods and life after death into these discussions.

Let's think about here, but I want to repeat that I sense that even where I might quibble with certain choices she makes, I get a real sense that Dr. Austin's viewpoint is much superior to most other modern writers. Even in this presentation she doesn't shy away from negative remarks about the Stoics, and that's one of the best indications to me that she's on the kind of quest we are on - to get to the heart of Epicurean philosophy without adulteration from viewpoints that undercut the conclusions.

Post by "Don" of January 5, 2023 at 11:04 PM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

<https://www.epicureanfriends.com/thread/2815-new-audio-presentation-by-emily-austin-prepared-for-the-next-big-idea-podcast/>

a new presentation by Emily Austin of several major points from her "Living for Pleasure" book

I just finished listening to The Next Big Idea audio, and 👍👍 Yes! Yes! Yes!

The format only allows literally for "5 Big Ideas" and Dr. Austin nailed the presentation with a friendly tone, approachable language, and the best defense I think I've ever heard in a mainstream forum for the Epicurean position. Kudos!

Some may quibble with her use of responses to the COVID pandemic as "too political" but I disagree. She couches those within a "respect for science" framework which is spot on. There are charlatans peddling ignorance and there are scientists and experts.

She gives tranquility its proper place in the philosophy but not to the exclusion of "extravagant" pleasures. She never endorses a minimalist Epicureanism! I fully embrace and endorse her perspective on tranquility (i.e., "ataraxia" I'm assuming).

She gets in some good, well-deserved digs at the Stoics! It's about time in my opinion.

First rate... Now that I've heard her voice, I'd like her to do her own narration of an audiobook version 😊

Thank you for being an eloquent, down to earth spokesperson for Epicurus!

Post by "Cassius" of January 6, 2023 at 6:05 AM

Yes I agree Don, and especially I want to pick out your comment on her tone of voice. She sounds friendly but firm, and I think the firmness is what we find often to be lacking. I am reminding of Charleton Griffin's Audible version of Lucretius, which was very influential on my own thinking about Epicurus. Griffin also uses a very firm voice, and while sometimes he probably goes over-the-top with sarcasm in conveying the times when Lucretius attacks other positions, I do think that firmness of tone goes right along with taking firm positions on so many controversial topics. It's even appropriate to be firm, and double down even, on firmly presenting how important it is to "wait" when the evidence doesn't support a single conclusion.

Almost as much as I appreciate what I think is her proper perspective the relationship of "pleasure" to "tranquility" without descending into minimalism or asceticism, I look forward to her at some point in the future specifically diving into the canonic/epistemology issue. None of us are comfortable with endorsing words like "dogmatism" given the baggage those words carry, and yet getting comfortable with the idea that there is a legitimate line between radical skepticism and "knowing" anything at all is not territory with which most of us are familiar in

dealing with. The firmness of her tone of voice encourages me to think that she's going to be able to tackle that issue successfully too.