

We Need A Game Show With A Lightning Round Question: "Happiness or Pleasure? - Why?"

Post by "Cassius" of February 2, 2023 at 8:16 PM

This is a joking warning for anyone who attends our zoom sessions in the future. At no fixed time, and no fixed place, someone may ask you without warning:

"Happiness? Or Pleasure? - Why?"

Maybe we could reduce it to three words: Happiness? Pleasure? Why? But if so, the tone of voice would need to imply the -or - that would be missing, because the "or" is an important part of making the person think about the answer.

I think those of us who have been here a while will understand why the question arises, what are the implications, and why the answer calls for explanation beyond just "both."

Shall we see if we have any volunteers to help us all formulate the "best" answers? I am sure that there will be many options to choose from depending on the larger context of any conversation where that would come up. But taking it totally alone and out of any context will be stimulating too.

The number one goal ought to be clarity rather than worrying about how many words are needed, but in the end, the most pithy answers will no doubt win the prize of emulation as we go forward. And the reward of hearing your answer used in the future by others ought to be well worth the entry fee.

So: Happiness or pleasure? - Why? *What would Epicurus say?*

Post by "Charles" of February 3, 2023 at 9:07 AM

Maybe instead of "both" we ought to equate them with each other with "is".

Post by "Cassius" of February 3, 2023 at 10:33 AM

Yep that is one direction Charles. I think the point of the exercise would be to differentiate between the terms and to be able to articulate when each term is applicable. I doubt that saying "they are the same" is sufficient; something else is needed to explain their relationship.

Post by “Cassius” of February 3, 2023 at 11:11 AM

I think this question has come to my mind in this way because of the quote from Seneca we discussed in the [last episode of the podcast](#) as to the definition of "friend" and to the word-splitting game of "mice" and "syllables" and "cheese."

Taking this completely out of context of all our past discussions, it's tempting to equate happiness = pleasure, because both words can be considered to be concepts, and they are concepts that are certainly related. But they can also be considered to be feelings, although the -ness on happiness implies more of a "state" than a discrete sensation.

If this were not a question of some relevance, we probably would not see all the arguments we see which some insisting that one or the other is the real definition of the goal, which the other is a subsidiary concept. We see Epicurus using different words, so we see him use both "happiness" and "pleasure" in varying contexts. But we also see important texts which seem to make a point of considering "pleasure" as the goal, which other texts can be read to point to "happiness."

Seneca is clearly right to be concerned about logical hair-splitting, and it is easy to drop back and say that logical hair-splitting is what the debate between "happiness" (or ataraxia or eudaemonia or whatever) vs pleasure is all about.

But nevertheless there seems to continue to be a sharp debate as to which word is appropriate.

Is the answer to "Happiness? or Pleasure? Why?" simply:

"It doesn't matter - you're just wasting time splitting hairs."

Or for the sake of clarity in talking with people about these issues do we need a concise and clear statement of why two words are being used instead of one?

If so, what is that concise and clear statement?

Post by “Charles” of February 3, 2023 at 1:00 PM

Perhaps we're looking at it the wrong way. Pleasure by most people will either be the virtue of swine or cite Nozick's pleasure machine when confronted with the goal of pleasure as a defining force and factor in life. Regardless, I don't there is a concise and clear statement, at least not yet.

Post by “Adrian” of February 3, 2023 at 3:20 PM

Pleasure and happiness are very different. Pleasure can be obtained by an action, however happiness is more like a gift that is passively received.

And so I can do something that (I know) gives me pleasure - such as sitting in the sunshine drinking tea with my wife - and then after a time (and possibly after a particular action or an event has passed) I can realise that I was/am happy. Happiness cannot be forced. I cannot act so as to force happiness, yet I can do something which will certainly give pleasure. Certain actions may be difficult or stressful (and not necessarily pleasurable) and yet when looking back I can see that I was happy during that time. Certain acts may be difficult at the time and yet retrospectively I may realise that I was experiencing a deep kind of pleasure.

So we want true pleasure and happiness will follow.

Post by “Godfrey” of February 3, 2023 at 3:40 PM

A: Pleasure

Why: Happiness is a type of pleasure, whereas pleasure isn't necessarily a type of happiness. It seems to me that pleasure has a pretty specific definition in EP, but happiness is less well defined.

Post by “Kalosyni” of February 3, 2023 at 5:34 PM

Riffing on some ideas coming up after reading previous comments.

Happiness can be an internal story you are using to explain the meaning of the pleasures you are experiencing.

Yet, happiness is also considered a feeling -- when it is vicerally felt in the the body as an extention of relief or pleasure.

A happy life is assumed to be a life full of good experiences, and we would assume that there is a great number of pleasurable experiences (both physical and mental) that happen in a happy life.

Consider the following questions and any likely situations when these questions are asked:

"Are you happy?"

"Are you enjoying yourself?"

"Does this feel good?"

A happy life can still feel happy even when immediate pleasure isn't occuring, and I think that it really points to "happiness" being mostly an internal story about whether or not we are feeling pleased about the way our life is currently unfolding.

Is it true that: You can't have a happy life without pleasure, but you could can have pleasure even if you aren't having a happy life?

It seems that we need both pleasure and happiness.

We have this from Epicurean Philosophy:

"Friendship dances around the world, announcing to each of us that we must awaken to happiness." PD 52

And this PD can work as a visual definition of happiness.

(visual as in before the internal eyes)

I dance therefore I am.

Post by "Godfrey" of February 3, 2023 at 6:25 PM

[Quote from Kalosyni](#)

A happy life can still feel happy even when immediate pleasure isn't occurring, and I think that it really points to "happiness" being mostly an internal story about whether or not we are feeling pleased about the way our life is currently unfolding.

This sounds right, although I would tend to use "state" instead of "story." And this of course leads to the discussion of *ataraxia* and *eudaimonia*, and whether they are fancy pleasures which are more important than pleasure, or whether they are subsets of pleasure.

If I understand correctly, [Kalosyni](#) 's quote above is related to [Don](#) 's description of a background state of happy homeostasis. I think that that's necessary, but not sufficient, for the fullness of pleasure. Dabbling in prudent extravagance can fill the tank in that regard (referring to one of [Cassius](#) 's former illustrations.

Post by “Kalosyni” of February 3, 2023 at 7:37 PM

[Quote from Godfrey](#)

If I understand correctly, Kalosyni 's quote above is related to Don 's description of a background state of happy homeostasis.

Hmmm...I wasn't thinking about homeostasis when I wrote my post earlier (and need to go back to see what Don said about that).

Is there a "recipe" for how to make happiness? (the following things are needed for happiness):

- Both physical and mental pleasures
- Assurance of security in the future (basic necessities and safety)
- Freedom from fear of death and God(s)
- Physical health

So...this means that pleasure is easier to get than happiness.

In fact, I was thinking that the Tetrpharmakos should be this:

Don't fear God

Don't worry about death

Pleasure in life is easy to experience

Pain in life can be endured through the addition of pleasure

Post by “Little Rocker” of February 3, 2023 at 7:47 PM

Me: Pleasure (artfully chosen)

Host: So, you think the answer is 'pleasure (artfully chosen).' Interesting, and is that your final answer?

[silence, silence, audience squirms because so much is at stake]

Me: Yes, that's my best and final answer, at least for today.

Post by “Cassius” of February 3, 2023 at 7:55 PM

[Quote from Kalosyni](#)

Is it true that: You can't have a happy life without pleasure, but you could can have pleasure even if you aren't having a happy life?

I think that is a very interesting way of moving the conversation forward.

[Quote from Little Rocker](#)

Me: Pleasure (artfully chosen)

Host: So, you think the answer is 'pleasure (artfully chosen).' Interesting, and is that your final answer?

[silence, silence, audience squirms because so much is at stake]

Me: Yes, that's my best and final answer, at least for today.

I sense a spirit of rebelliousness in Little Rocker, the reasons for which I think most all of us feel and share, but which we are still struggling to articulate. 😊

I don't think this is just a "mouse is a syllable so syllables eat cheese" kind of game. There's something much more significant at stake. It's almost as though over the last two thousand years a "book" has in fact devoured our "cheese," and we're mad (or ought to be) and need to act to get it back!

Post by “Cassius” of February 3, 2023 at 7:57 PM

Future article: *"How I came to see 'happiness' as a cheese-eating monster."*

Post by “Godfrey” of February 3, 2023 at 8:04 PM

Quote

- Both physical and mental pleasures
- Assurance of security in the future (basic necessities and safety)
- Freedom from fear of death and God(s)
- Physical health

Looking at this, I'd say physical health and pleasure aren't necessarily necessary for happiness, but mental pleasures are. Now, that would imply that there's a ranking of pleasures involved in happiness. However, I don't subscribe to a ranking of pleasures but to classifications of desires. This leads me to the thought that happiness is, perhaps, a static mental pleasure.

Post by “Cassius” of February 3, 2023 at 8:15 PM

I "feel" like it would be easy for this thread to go off in all sorts of ways that would make it sound like we are really doing nothing but spinning our wheels for the 1000th time. And I think all of us in this thread have in our minds at least a tentative balance where we find both words to be fully desirable.

So I "feel" like it would be good to say: Rather than just think about all the possible ways this issue could be taken, we should probably focus on our experiences in dealing with people who have only a superficial knowledge of Epicurus. Sort of the people that Diogenes of Oinanda and Torquatus thought they were talking to when they ended up emphasizing almost the exact words of "a life of happiness is a life of pleasure." I think we all believe that we ourselves can balance these terms, but why is there an issue with other people not understanding that they go hand in hand and are not in conflict? Why do people see a conflict between happiness and pleasure? And what's the most direct way to get them to see that they are mistaken in presuming that there is a conflict? What's the key to unwinding that perceived discomfort?

I think I remember Torquatus implying that the issue was that people who don't know how to pursue pleasure end up getting burned with lots of pain? But is the issue deeper, and that people think that "pleasure" is sinful or wrong? And that they somehow find "happiness" more socially acceptable?

Post by "Kalosyni" of February 3, 2023 at 8:24 PM

[Quote from Godfrey](#)

This leads me to the thought that happiness is, perhaps, a static mental pleasure.

It does seem that everyone has their own subjective idea about what happiness is.

[Quote from Godfrey](#)

I'd say physical health and pleasure aren't necessarily necessary for happiness,

Chronic pain can lead to depression. Pleasure is a natural by-product of activities such as eating food, regardless of feeling "happy". So happiness is something else beyond pleasure.

[Quote from Cassius](#)

and Torqatus thought there were talking to when they ended up emphasizing almost the exact words of "a life of happiness is a life of pleasure."

I was just thinking about how there is something in that "On Ends" which says that Epicurus was the masterbuilder of the life of happiness.

[Quote from Cassius](#)

There's an answer for us to how to balance these terms, but why is there an issue with other people not understanding that they go hand in hand and are not in conflict? Why do people see a conflict between happiness and pleasure? And what's the most direct way to get them to see that they are mistaken in presuming that there is a conflict? What's the key to unwinding that perceived discomfort?

The conflict is about what does the word "pleasure" mean, and what does the word "happiness" mean. It may not be possible to have everyone agree about what these words mean.

Post by "Godfrey" of February 3, 2023 at 11:14 PM

[Quote from Kalosyni](#)

So happiness is something else beyond pleasure.

This seems problematic to me. And it's also the crux of the issue: *is* happiness something beyond pleasure?

Post by "Cassius" of February 4, 2023 at 7:34 AM

[Quote from Godfrey](#)

This seems problematic to me. And it's also the crux of the issue: is happiness something beyond pleasure?

That's a great way of getting at this question too. And asked that way, it seems to me to be precisely why Diogenes of Oinoanda decided to shout about it. I know his context was defeating the setting of "virtue" as higher, but wouldn't his argument apply not only to virtue but to "happiness?" Wasn't he pitting "virtue" against "pleasure" for exactly the reason so many people try to pit "happiness" against "pleasure?"

Have we quoted him lately? 😊

Quote

Fr. 32

... [the latter] being as malicious as the former.

I shall discuss folly shortly, the virtues and pleasure now.

If, gentlemen, the point at issue between these people and us involved inquiry into «what is the means of happiness?» and they wanted to say «the virtues» (which would actually be true), it would be unnecessary to take any other step than to agree with them about this, without more ado. But since, as I say, the issue is not «what is the means of happiness?» but «what is happiness and what is the ultimate goal of our nature?», I say both now and always, shouting out loudly to all Greeks and non-Greeks, that pleasure is the end of the best mode of life, while the virtues, which are inopportunistly messed about by these people (being transferred from the place of the means to that of the end), are in no way an end, but the means to the end. Let us therefore now state that this is true, making it our starting-point.

Suppose, then, someone were to ask someone, though it is a naive question, «who is it whom these virtues benefit?», obviously the answer will be «man.» The virtues certainly do not make provision for these birds flying past, enabling them to fly well, or for each of the other animals: they do not desert the nature with which they live and by which they have been engendered; rather it is for the sake of this nature that the virtues do everything and exist.

Each (virtue?) therefore means of (?) ... just as if a mother for whatever reasons sees that the possessing nature has been summoned there, it then being necessary to allow the court to asked what each (virtue?) is doing and for whom [We must show] both which of the desires are natural and which are not; and in general all things that [are included] in the [former category are easily attained]

Display More

Post by “Kalosyni” of February 4, 2023 at 9:30 AM

Diogenes of Oinoanda doesn't help to clear up things for me, because it doesn't saying what it means by happiness.

Thinking further on this, off the top of my head:

-- "happiness" is a feeling of enjoyment that comes when we experience pleasure, and this feeling comes and goes depending on the situation.

-- "happiness" can also be thought of as something encompassing a longer period of time (for example looking back over the past year and also projecting onto future months) -- when you feel pleased and when things are going well in your life. (And so I still stick with the idea of it being an internal story (basically if you tell yourself if you are satisfied and generally enjoying how your life is unfolding).

According to Diogenes of Oinoanda, the virtues are the means to find happiness in life:

If, gentlemen, the point at issue between these people and us involved inquiry into «what is the means of happiness?» and they wanted to say «the virtues» (which would actually be true), it would be unnecessary to take any other step than to agree with them about this, without more ado.

----So now, I would say that this actually isn't the whole picture and is missing things which are in the [Principal Doctrines](#) -- a happy life (which entails more pleasure than pain), requires prudence in choices, and also other factors (a secure future, freedom from fears of death/God, supportive friendships, and self-sufficiency (which I would apply now in modern times as being having a good job in which you are free to make the needed choices to do what you need to do. I have read that not having freedom to make decisions in the workplace can be very frustrating).

Post by “Cassius” of February 4, 2023 at 12:02 PM

[Quote from Kalosyni](#)

Diogenes of Oinoanda doesn't help to clear up things for me, because it doesn't saying what it means by happiness.

Yep it is too bad we don't have more context at the beginning. But my expectation would be that if we had more of the "point in issue" we would see that this is a very abstract debate being stated in very philosophical, rather than practical, terms.

It seems to me in day to day life we consider "living pleurably" and "living happily" to be totally interchangeable. But the reason we are having this discussion is that philosophers see a need to plant a flag and reduce everything down to a single word-concept that they can rally and organize around. I think that's a legitimate perspective too.

One way of looking at all this seems to me to be: Everything at the philosophic level seems to revolve around war-games between "Virtue" and "Piety" and "Reason" (or "Logic" or "Idealism"). Epicurus rejected those and decided it made the most sense to designate his flag as "Pleasure." He might well have called his flag "Happiness" but it's not a very good strategy to choose the same flag everyone else is carrying, and "Happiness" and similar words are claimed by everyone from every camp. If you're going to fight a war or make your point clear in philosophy you need a very clear and understandable flag. The choice of the word "Pleasure" both makes the correct point and throws the issue in the face of those who disapprove of it.

A lot of people tend to want to blur all these issues because they want to be polite and diplomatic. That's understandable too, and when the situation calls for that then "happiness" may make sense. But if you forget what context you're talking in, and use the word "Happiness" when you in a philosophical debate, then you don't do much but guarantee that the real point in issue will never be examined and decided.

It's one thing to choose to blur the issues when you think you are trying to lead someone along gradually to understand the point in issue. But I feel sure it is not lost on those who disapprove of Epicurus that as long as they keep the discussion solely about "Happiness" then no serious philosopher will ever take the Epicurean position seriously.

A book title like "Living for Pleasure" makes a point that a title like "Living for Happiness" never could.

Post by "Kalosyni" of February 4, 2023 at 2:38 PM

Some very good ideas from [an article on fun](#):

Quote

psychologist [Mike Rucker](#) makes the case that pursuit of fun experiences may be even more valuable than seeking the sometimes abstract goal of happiness.

"Happiness is a state of mind," Rucker writes. "But fun is something you can do. It doesn't require education, money or power. All it requires is intentionality. If happiness is a mirage, fun is your backyard oasis."

"Happiness is really an evaluation," ... You are constantly asking yourself what is going right and what is going wrong. It can become a trap,..."

Post by "Cassius" of February 4, 2023 at 4:27 PM

I like that too. Words are tricky though - so I guess we can't really use "Living For Fun!" 😊

Post by "Little Rocker" of February 4, 2023 at 9:07 PM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

But my expectation would be that if we had more of the "point in issue" we would see that this is a very abstract debate being stated in very philosophical, rather than practical, terms.

I agree that for practical intents and purposes we can set the question aside. Epicurus inherited a debate and he definitely intends to situate himself within that debate using (roughly) the established terminology, but it seems to me that the most important thing to know is: 'we say pleasure is the goal.' That doesn't settle other important questions, like whether pursuing pleasure is far more about removing anxiety than walks on the beach at sunset, but it's pretty clear that pleasure is the goal.

For all their fussiness about making pleasure the goal, the anti-hedonists insisted that you weren't living well unless your life was a source of pleasure and that virtuous people have the best, most durable pleasure. For Aristotle, 'pleasure completes the activity,' and happiness is a life of excellent activity. They're all just a hop, skip, and jump from hedonism. Sometimes I think it just makes them uncomfortable to share a goal with animals.

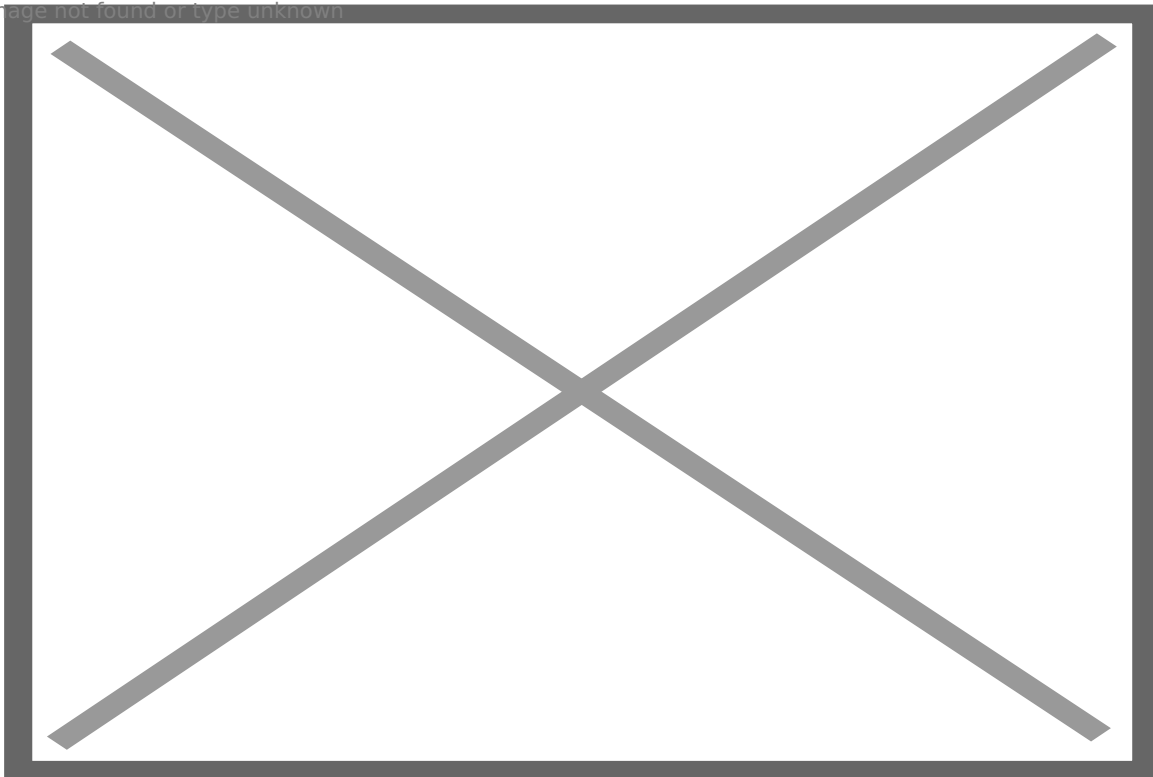
Post by “Little Rucker” of February 4, 2023 at 9:11 PM

I heard an interview with Rucker last week and bought the book, but I haven't started it yet.

Post by “Don” of February 4, 2023 at 9:27 PM

FYI

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[The Fun Type Calculator: What's Your Type?](#)

What type of activities do you enjoy? It depends on your fun type. Curious about what type you are? Try the Fun Type Calculator to find out.

michaelrucker.com

While the "Fun Calculator" is a little goofy, the author's website as a whole has some interesting content. I found this quote from his Start Here page interesting...

[Quote from Mike Rucker](#)

I realized trying to be "happy" only drew my attention to what was missing. Fixating on my lack of happiness made me label myself as unhappy, and I came to realize that maladaptive label was bleeding into my identity. This left me with the question: If deliberately chasing happiness leaves me miserable, what's the alternative? Then, after years of research and trial and error, a second crucial insight clicked into place: We can't always make ourselves happy, but we all possess the agency to find ways to be more joyful and have more fun.

...

We can't always make ourselves happy, but we all possess the agency to find ways to be more joyful and have more fun.

...

Having fun is an action anyone can take here and now practically anywhere, anytime.

I realize I'm late to this thread but Dr. Rucker has me intrigued. I haven't read his book or delved too far into his work in the last hour 😊 but I like where he's going. I like that he says "We all possess the agency to find ways to be more joyful and have more fun." From my perspective, we could easily rephrase that to "We all possess the agency to find ways to be more joyful and have more *pleasure*." I like that he uses "joy" which is, in fact, one of the kinetic pleasures (εὐφροσύνη euphrosyne) AND he talks about our having agency to bring about that particular kind of pleasure. Hmm... yep, I'm intrigued.

Post by "Don" of February 4, 2023 at 11:27 PM

I've also read back over the thread, and there are some interesting takes on the "happiness or pleasure" topic. For what it's worth, here are my two drachmas worth. Everything from here on should be read as if prefaced by "From my perspective..." Your results may vary:

- Pleasure (and pain) are biological sensations present in all life ([including plants it seems after a fashion](#)).
- As such, all life appears to pursue "pleasure" (brooadly defined as those stimuli conducive to existence) and retreat from "pain" (again, brooadly defined as those

stimuli unfavorable to existence).

- As forms of life become more complex, pleasure begins to be experienced as a positive "emotional" response to both external and internal stimuli.
- Homeostasis within the body can be experienced as a pleasurable state in which to be.
- As forms of life become even more complex (i.e., brains get bigger and more complex) as in humans, memories can also elicit pleasure in addition to coming from external stimuli ... as in having fun.
- Eudaimonia - the slippery ancient Greek word translated haphazardly IMO often as "happiness" - results from a body in homeostasis - all the bodily functions working in a balanced way - and a mind free from anxiety. If Happiness is standing in for eudaimonia, to me it is a *description* of a pleasurable life overall.
- "Happiness" is different than saying "I'm happy about X" or "I'm feeling happy (now)" or "What a happy day." Being happy in the moment is different than happiness, the state of living a happy life overall. And I'm primarily getting this from using eudaimonia (which I prefer to translate as "well-being") as the stand-in for "happiness" in my mind.
- I must say I also like Dr. Rucker's statement that "Fixating on my lack of happiness made me label myself as unhappy."
- Personally, I think I like to think of living my life in eudaimonia/well-being by pursuing individual pleasures, both from internal and external stimuli (e.g., pleasant memories and engaging in fun activities, respectively) which I interpret myself as katastemic and kinetic pleasures. Yeah, I went there!
- So, it's not happiness/eudaimonia vs pleasure; or pleasure; and pleasure. Happiness/eudaimonia are two different things describing two different spheres. Pleasure describes a feeling experienced in the moment. I can *anticipate* future pleasure and even plan for it, and take pleasure in the anticipation now, but I can't *experience* future pleasure. I can only experience pleasure now.
- Happiness/eudaimonia is a description of how I perceive my life as a whole. "Are you happy?" almost needs more than those three words to make sense.
 - "Are you happy (now)?" basically means "Are you experiencing a pleasurable feeling right now."
 - "Are you happy (with your life)?" basically means "How would you assess the level of pleasure overall in your life?"
 - "Are you happy (with that sandwich)?" basically means "Are you experiencing pleasure in eating that sandwich?"
 - "Are you happy?" asked by your partner is completely different from the waiter in a restaurant pointing at your meal and asking "Are you happy (with that)?"
- Looked at it this way, "happy" is a mushy, ill-defined word that can take on any number of meanings in context. It's like the English word "love"... "I love you" to "I love ice cream." At least Greek had different words for different forms of "love."

That's probably enough rambling now. To answer the original question: Happiness or Pleasure? I'm not sure the question is answerable in any specific way since both words - to me - describe

two different things. One or the other? It seems it's both to me because I want pleasures so my life tends toward happiness/eudaimonia.

Post by “Cassius” of February 5, 2023 at 7:36 AM

I agree with Godfrey's "heart" on Don's post. Thinking it through in such detail like that really brings out the differences in the words.

[Quote from Don](#)

Being happy in the moment is different than happiness, the state of living a happy life overall.

And when said like that it jumps out even more that "being happy" is a specific type of feeling of pleasure, while "the state of living a happy life overall" is a definition suitable for use by Merriam Webster but not a specific feeling at all. What I want is my life is feeling, not to be of assistance to Merriam Webster.

[Quote from Don](#)

Looked at it this way, "happy" is a mushy, ill-defined word that can take on any number of meanings in context. It's like the English word "love"... "I love you" to "I love ice cream." At least Greek had different words for different forms of "love."

And yes I think that's one of the real take-aways of the discussion too.

My current thoughts bouncing of Don't post include:

Pleasure is a feeling of which one aspect is time over which pleasure is experienced. If you are alive you can immediately identify with what is being discussed, and although there are many types of pleasures, you know confidently whether you are feeling it or not, and whether you are feeling it or not is almost an "automatic" function of your being a living being. The definition we give in our minds is assigned mostly by nature.

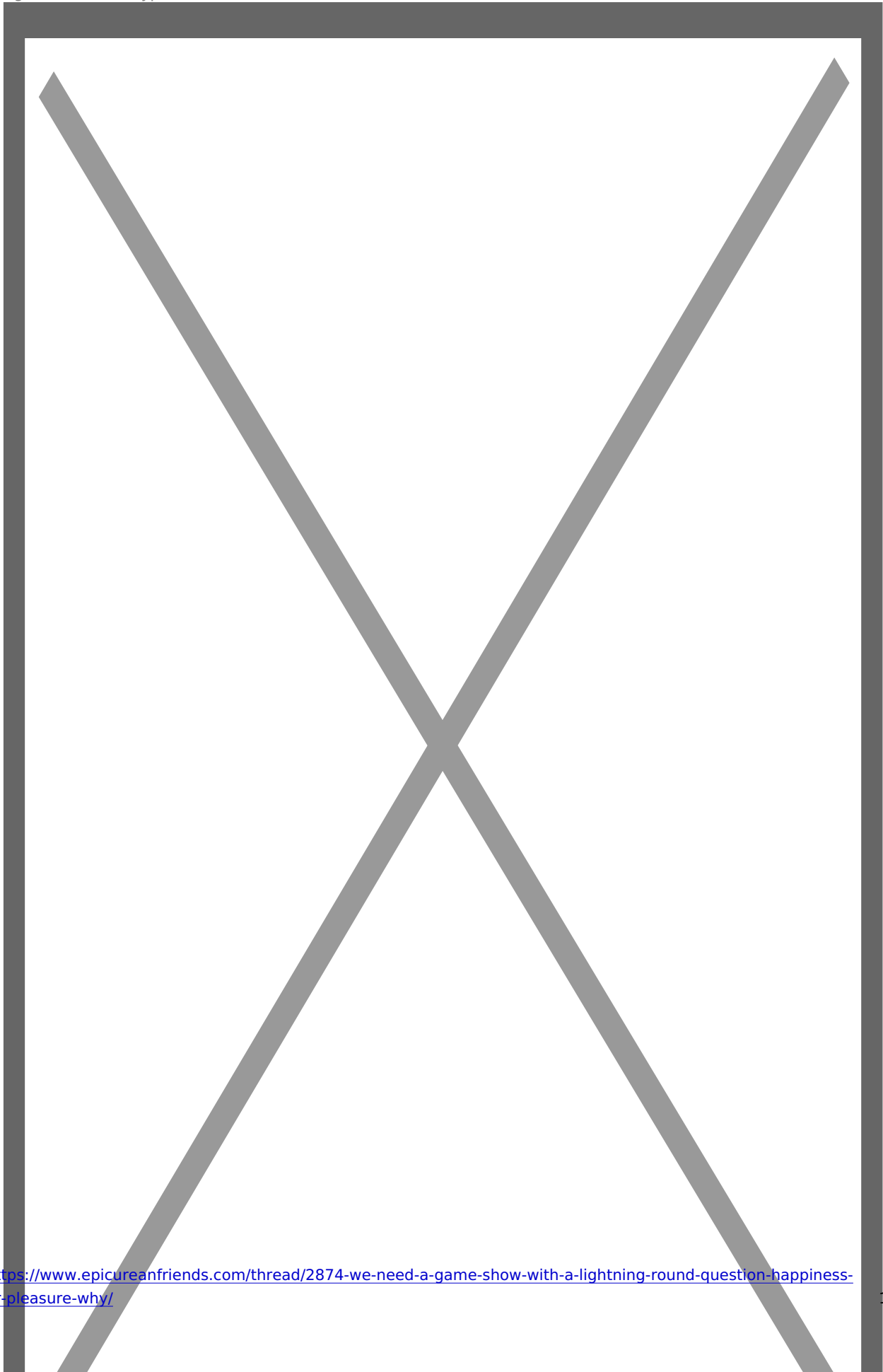
"Happy" can be viewed as a type of pleasure, but it's more general use is more like the word "American." A useful word, but very slippery, and with a very amorphous and changing definition that is highly subjective and not nearly as automatic. The definition we give it in our minds is assigned almost totally by conceptual thinking.

None of which really lends itself to a pithy reply to a quick challenge in a zoom meeting, but thinking it through begins to help to get there.

Post by “Don” of February 5, 2023 at 8:42 AM

This discussion reminds me of Brene Brown's new book [Atlas of the Heart](#). I initially dismissed her as another Oprah acolyte, but in listening to a few podcasts and interviews, I became intrigued by this book. The website is at

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<https://www.epicureanfriends.com/thread/2874-we-need-a-game-show-with-a-lightning-round-question-happiness-or-pleasure-why/>

[Atlas Hub - Brené Brown](#)

A portal to understanding the emotions and experiences that make us human.
brenebrown.com

But I've also attached the PDF you can download there that lists the 87 human emotions she discusses in the book. I've found it interesting to look through (in a cursory way not in depth) those 87 and trying to categorize each as pleasure or pain since as we know "the feelings are two."

She lists "happiness" but I'd be curious how she describes it. One reason being that I think she does a good job in providing insightful details for each and I don't think she'd be "sloppy" with a definition for happiness. I was especially intrigued by her distinctions between awe vs wonder and also overwhelm vs stress.

Full disclosure: I haven't read the book in full but skimmed parts and seen some of her HBO show.

PS. Okay, I downloaded the audiobook from my library but it's harder to take notes from that. Anyway, Brown contrasts joy vs happiness and quotes a theologian who gives the Greek for those two: makarios for joy, khairo for happiness (note: NOT eudaimonia!). Makarios μακάριος is the word Epicurus uses to describe the gods' happiness and is often translated as blessed. Khairo χαίρω is defined by LSJ as "to rejoice or take pleasure in a thing." Brown defines joy as a "sudden, unexpected, short lasting, high intensity emotion"; happiness is "stable, longer lasting, and normally the result of effort." I realize her decision to use joy and happiness to describe these feelings may be somewhat arbitrary, but I like her slicing and dicing the emotional spectrum. I also find it interesting to try to categorize each of the 87 like I said into pleasure or pain.

Post by "Little Rocker" of February 5, 2023 at 3:43 PM

[Quote from Don](#)

Looked at it this way, "happy" is a mushy, ill-defined word that can take on any number of meanings in context. It's like the English word "love"... "I love you" to "I love ice cream." At least Greek had different words for different forms of "love."

One thing that I think can get lost in this discussion is that the same is true of *eudaimonia* to the average Ancient Greek non-philosopher, the 'man on the street.' Philosophers have never had a particularly intuitive account of happiness.

I find Don's list of different ways of taking the question of 'Are you happy?' super helpful.

<https://www.epicureanfriends.com/thread/2874-we-need-a-game-show-with-a-lightning-round-question-happiness-or-pleasure-why/>