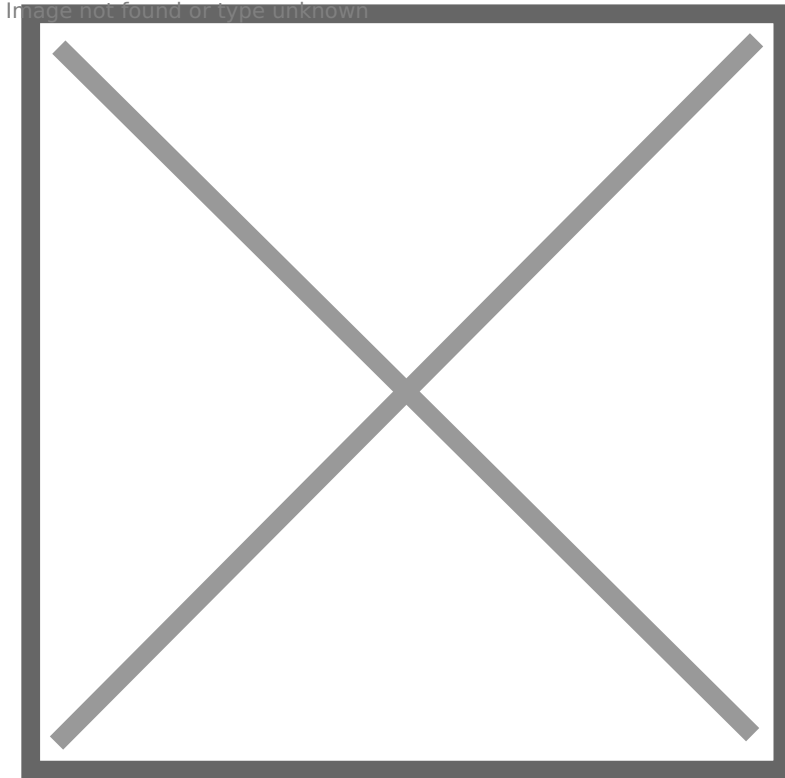
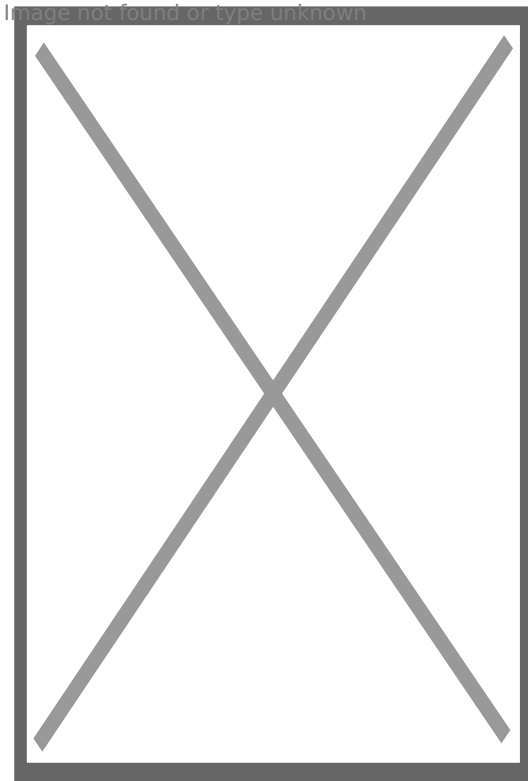


The Fun Habit by Mike Rucker

Post by "Don" of February 15, 2023 at 9:37 AM



[A counterintuitive method to ensure 2023 is your most fun year ever.](https://www.michaelrucker.com)
michaelrucker.com



[The Fun Habit](#)

Discover the latest compelling scientific evidence for the potent and revitalizing value of fun and how to make having fun a habitual and authentic...

www.simonandschuster.com

Just started listening to the audiobook and it strikes me as eminently Epicurean!!

Starting this thread to record thoughts of mine or others as my listening continues...

Post by “Don” of February 16, 2023 at 12:45 AM

The basic premise of Rucker's book is that focusing on happiness (as it is often discussed in relation to the popular conversation in light of positive psychology) is that it emphasizes the gap between how we feel now and how we're *supposed* to feel. Why aren't we happy? Why are they happier than me? We try to - are encouraged to - quantify our level of happiness, then *work* on being happier.

What Rucker recommends is prioritizing "fun" - I'd paraphrase him by saying "prioritize taking pleasure in your life and your experiences." Of we prioritize "fun" , happiness becomes a

welcome by-product. I'd rephrase saying "if we prioritize finding the pleasure in both our everyday experience and in the extravagant pleasures we occasionally experience, well-being / eudaimonia / happiness will be a welcome by-product of living that way."

Research shows that fun, play, pleasure-filled activities have real benefits to our physical and mental well-being.

Also: Dopamine is more important to anticipation (anticipatory pleasure) than the pleasurable act itself. Dopamine is possibly evolutionarily beneficial as a motivator to action than as a reward, so to speak. (Anna Lembke talked about this in Dopamine Nation, too)

Post by "Don" of February 16, 2023 at 1:33 PM

Only on chapter 3 listening, but lots of good stuff. I have yet to hear anything un-Epicurean from my perspective.

It's hard to take notes from the audiobook while driving so I'll try to go back and relisten at some point.

So far, 👍 👍

Post by "Don" of February 17, 2023 at 3:12 PM

I am really thinking I need to get my own copy of this book.

As I'm listening to the library's audiobook in my car, I keep thinking "yep, yep, that's good, oh, that's straight out of Epicurus... Good..." and so on. I can't take notes and I don't really want to go through the aggravation of doing it with the audiobook.

I'm currently 27% of the way through and really haven't heard anything off-putting or even much if anything outside what Epicurus would be writing in the 21st century. Granted, Rucker doesn't get into epistemology or physics, but the book isn't designed that way.

So, review so far continues to be 👍 👍

Post by “Don” of February 17, 2023 at 10:23 PM

Okay, I cheated and was finally able to download the ebook from my library. Epicurus is not mentioned in Rucker's book, although I find his text even more Epicurean than "The Art of Frugal Hedonism." I'll give Rucker the benefit of the doubt and say he wasn't aware of the parallels.

Should we make him aware (after more of us read it... All the way through)?

Post by “Pacatus” of February 18, 2023 at 7:11 PM

[Quote from Don](#)

Epicurus is not mentioned in Rucker's book, although I find his text even more Epicurean than "The Art of Frugal Hedonism."

Am reminded of the early post-apostolic Christian Justin Martyr: "Those, therefore, who lived according to reason (logos) were really Christians, even though they were thought to be atheists, such as, among the Greeks, Socrates, Heraclitus and others like them."

Well, I wouldn't want to push that too far, but still:

“What’s in a name? [That which we call a rose](#)

By any other name would smell as sweet.”

(William Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*)

Post by “Eikadistes” of February 18, 2023 at 9:32 PM

[Quote from Pacatus](#)

[Quote from Don](#)

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Speaking of Shakespeare, in a recent dive into *DRN*, I discovered quite a few occasions where Shakespeare shamelessly appropriates Lucretian imagery. Also, the same for Chaucer, Spenser, and Wordsworth.

Outside of Shakespeare, I'm finding explicit instances of *DRN* being a source of inspiration (or the target of theft) from, at least, Rousseau, Deleuze, Nietzsche, Bergson, Santayana, Gassendi, Machiavelli, Holbach, Descartes, Galileo, Locke, Hobbes, Spinoza, Freud, Horace, Dryden, Diderot, Voltaire, Frederick II, La Mettrie, Marx, Pope, Botticelli, Virgil, Jefferson, Erasmus Darwin, Shelley, Lord Byron, Newton, Halley, Tennyson, Hume, Kant, Milton, Goethe, and Bacon. (*I'm currently getting high on the idea that Lucretius is the most significant individual poet of all.*)

Post by "Kalosyni" of August 15, 2025 at 8:50 AM

[Quote from Don](#)

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I happened to find this book at my library, and I am skimming through it now. Lots of thoughts coming up.

An interesting idea that Rucker presents is the PLAY model - where you have four quadrants (four categories) that all of your activities fit into: pleasing (high fun, and easy); living (high fun; and challenging); yielding (low fun, but easy); agonizing (low fun, and hard). I've only read the first few chapters of the book so far.

I feel like I need more categories than those four, so made up my own:

- "mundane fun" - provides a lower level of enjoyment, but still more pleasure than pain - things like reading the news online, or any repetitive old fun habit that lacks a sense of novelty.
- "easy fun" - provides relaxation, exercise, mental stimulation, or bodily enjoyment together, and requires a low level of effort while still providing an overall sense of enjoyment.
- "novelty of exploring and travel fun" - requires driving or travel (and money to pay for gas or airplane ticket, restaurant, hotel, or camping gear and campsite fee) and which provides more pleasure than pain
- "meaningful fun" - engagement with people (friendship, teaching, giving aid) and which provides more pleasure than pain
- "researching, learning, studying" - intellectual fun and philosophy!
- "challenging fun" - requires time, effort, money, or skill development and may or may not come with some level of risk or uncertainty regarding the outcome, and it may not end up providing more pleasure than pain
- "not really fun" - pleasure and pain are equal (50/50) and doesn't seem worth the effort
- "very boring" - you'd rather be doing something else
- "very-not-fun" - physically exhausting or painful, or mentally disturbing or agitating

The thing is that sometimes we need to do things that are in the last three categories, because it may be necessary in order to prevent greater pain from arising in the future, or for the sake of procuring basic necessities, or sometimes as a basis that leads to greater pleasure in the future.

Post by “Kalosyni” of August 15, 2025 at 9:24 AM

After reading some of this book, thinking...

Does fun equal novelty? Do you need to have a certain level of reoccurring novelty in life in order to feel happy? ...and I think that this could set you up for feeling unhappy if you feel like you aren't getting enough novelty. The concept of pursuing novelty could be a modern invention, created by the travel industry (big hotel corporations, big restaurant chains, and not too long ago there were travel agencies)...and it is not part of our evolution. Perhaps the idea of pursuing novelty continues to be popular because it can ease the "pains" of modern civilization (indoor desk jobs) as well as a lack of close social interactions.