

A Happy Life: the Emotional Feeling Tone of the Epicurean Lifestyle

Post by “Kalosyni” of March 24, 2023 at 10:34 AM

I've just posted this new entry on my "21st Century Epicurean" blog...

Here is an excerpt from the opening:

Quote

Does the Epicurean lifestyle lead to a happier life?

I would like to present the idea that happiness is a practice that can be learned. So it is possible to enhance one's happiness by doing and thinking certain things.

In several of the Epicurean verses we see indications of the feeling tone present in an Epicurean lifestyle:

"One must laugh and seek wisdom and tend to one's home life and use one's other goods, and always recount the pronouncements of true philosophy." (VS 41)

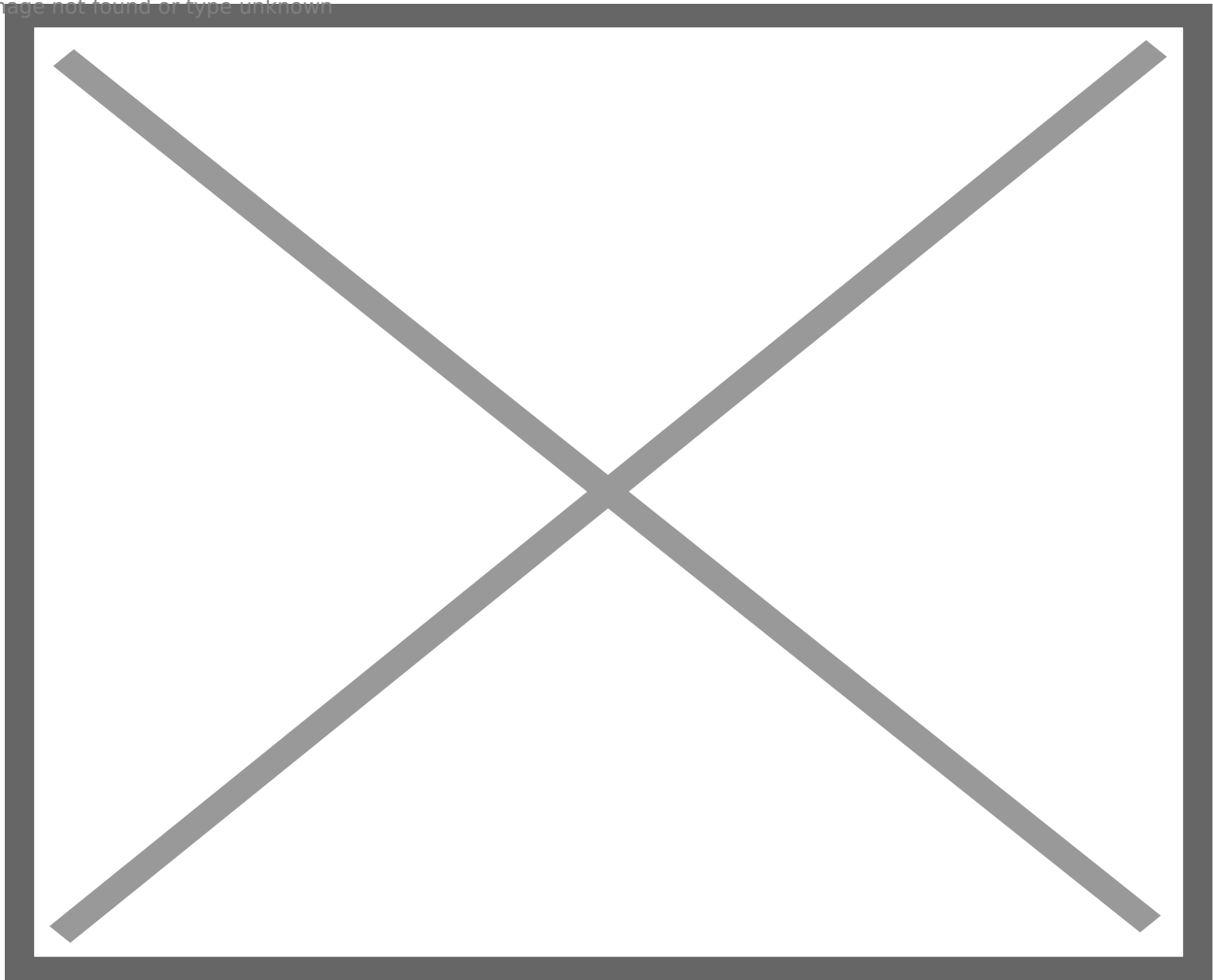
"Friendship dances around the world, announcing to each of us that we must awaken to happiness." (VS 52)

"It is not the young man who is most happy, but the old man who has lived beautifully; for despite being at his very peak the young man stumbles around as if he were of many minds, whereas the old man has settled into old age as if in a harbor, secure in his gratitude for the good things he was once unsure of." (VS 17)

Consider the feeling tone of your last three days. What kinds of feelings predominated?

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Does the Epicurean lifestyle lead to a happier life? I would like to present the idea that happiness is a practice that can be learned. ...
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Post by “Pacatus” of March 29, 2023 at 2:40 PM

[Kalosyni](#)

Great stuff!

My many-years-ago therapist (who also later became a friend) thought that happiness was definitely a choice that one could practice. (I doubt that he ever read Epicurus.)

His formula was that what he called joy was when his mind, body and environment were in harmony. If your relationship to your environment is out of whack, you can use your mind and body to correct (e.g., change your environment). If your body is the issue (e.g. an injury or illness), you can seek relief via your environment (e.g. restful quiet or seeking healthcare) - and/or via the mind (e.g., meditation or contemplation of something enjoyable). If both the body and environment are at issue, you still have the power of your mind - and techniques to practice. Etc., etc.

For example, when I was once compelled to put my body in a very stressful environment, he said: "Remember, the only thing you need to place there is your body. Beyond that no one can compel you to participate. You can go anywhere you want in your mind - maybe imagine and visualize an island vacation." Something like that.

But practice is required - preferably before those situations arise - just like any other activity (like a sport): he gave me the belief, taught me some techniques, and encouraged me to practice. And practice that was enjoyable in itself (no Stoic teeth-gritting). I have many times allowed myself to get out of practice - and then I have to remind myself.

Thanks for this thread, Kalosyni. It is such a reminder. ☐☐

EDIT: I also thought of your reference to the possibility of a "therapy of pleasure." 😎