

# **Episode 181 - "Epicurus And His Philosophy" Part 33 - Chapter 14 - The New Virtues 01**

**Post by "Cassius" of July 1, 2023 at 5:51 PM**

Welcome to Episode 181 of Lucretius Today. This is a podcast dedicated to the poet Lucretius, who wrote "On The Nature of Things," the only complete presentation of Epicurean philosophy left to us from the ancient world. Each week we walk you through the Epicurean texts, and we discuss how Epicurean philosophy can apply to you today. If you find the Epicurean worldview attractive, we invite you to join us in the study of Epicurus at EpicureanFriends.com, where you will find a discussion thread for each of our podcast episodes and many other topics. We are now in the process of a series of podcasts intended to provide a general overview of Epicurean philosophy based on the organizational structure employed by Norman DeWitt in his book "Epicurus and His Philosophy."

This week we begin our discussion of Chapter 14, entitled "The New Virtues."

## **Chapter XIV - The New Virtues**

- Wisdom
- Temperance
- Courage
- Justice
- Honesty
- Faith
- Love of Mankind
- Friendship
- Suavity
- Considerateness
- Hope
- Attitude Toward the Present
- Gratitude
- Gratitude to Teachers
- Gratitude to Nature
- Gratitude To Friends
- Fruits Of Gratitude

<https://www.spreaker.com/episode/56013596>

## Post by “Cassius” of July 2, 2023 at 6:59 AM

The reference in the "Temperance" section of Cicero's Pro Caelio apparently refers to this ([from Perseus](#)). I gather DeWitt starts out at 18 to provide more context but 40 seems to be the precise reference:

### [Quote from Cicero - Pro Caelio](#)

[40] The very records which used to contain accounts of that old fashioned strictness of morals, are worn out and that not only among us, who have adopted this school and system of life in reality more than in words, but also among the Greeks most learned men, who, though they could not act in such a manner were nevertheless at liberty to speak and write honourably and magnificently; when the habits of Greece became changed other precepts arose and prevailed. Therefore some of their wise men said that they did everything for the sake of pleasure; and even learned men were not ashamed of the degradation of uttering such a sentiment.

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## Post by “Cassius” of July 4, 2023 at 10:25 PM

As a note while editing this week's podcast, in the first ten minutes Don gives an excellent quote from Aristotle about how one becomes just by doing such things. My attention was distracted until the middle and by the time I realized what a good quote it was I was no longer sure where it came from, and I didn't follow up on it like I should have - it's an excellent example of how circular the standard non-Epicurean view of virtue really is.

Don said it was from Nichomachean ethics so I hope we can get a direct cite for the show notes.

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## Post by “Don” of July 4, 2023 at 10:28 PM

### [Quote from Aristotle](#)

“We become just (δίκαια) by doing just acts, temperate (σώφρων) by doing temperate acts, brave by doing brave acts. 1. [5] This truth is attested by the experience of states:

lawgivers make the citizens good by training them in habits of right action—this is the aim of all legislation, and if it fails to do this it is a failure; this is what distinguishes a good form of constitution from a bad one.” (1103b)

Is that the one you're thinking of?

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### **Post by “Cassius” of July 6, 2023 at 9:40 AM**

Episode 181 of the Lucretius Today Podcast is now available!

<https://www.spreaker.com/episode/56013596>

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### **Post by “Joshua” of July 6, 2023 at 6:26 PM**

Last words of Brutus:

[Note on the Last Words of Brutus - From Cassius Dio, Not Plutarch - NewEpicurean](#)

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### **Post by “Joshua” of July 6, 2023 at 6:44 PM**

My only (tongue-in-cheek) point of reference for Chakras:

<https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=cH-HT9WCtiQ>

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### **Post by “Onenski” of July 9, 2023 at 10:00 PM**

[Quote from Cassius](#)

<https://www.epicureanfriends.com/thread/3149-episode-181-epicurus-and-his-philosophy-part-33-chapter-14-the-new-virtues-01/>

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I have some comments (about aristotelian virtue) that I hope contribute something to discussion.

- Aristotle famously established a connection between habits (ἔθος) and character (ἦθος) [a, seemingly, fake etymological connection, but philosophically fruitful]. That's why it seems circular: you can only become just (as a character trait) by acting justly continuously (so that you get the habit to be just). In this way, it's established the way we have to take in order to be virtuous.

- When you ask what (kind of thing) a virtue is, in Aristotle's ethics it's a psychological trait. Aristotle thinks that there are three kind of psychological things: dispositions (ἔξις), passions (πάθη) and capacities (δύναμις), according to NE II.5, 1105b20-30. From them, virtue it's neither a passion nor a capacity, it's an excellent disposition about actions and feelings. (What is an excellent disposition? That which it's in the middle term between two extremes, as Don recalled).

- So, the point it's not only what actions you do, but how you do them. Two people can battle, but for one to be courageous or coward it's important which feelings or attitudes one has. As Don observed it, it matters: when we act, where, in what mood, with which people and so on. Excellence it's not easy, it's rare, but valious.

Now, did Epicurus have a conception similar to Aristotle's? I'd like to suggest (and see what happens) that for him virtue is, at least, a disposition too (about actions and about how we feel). So, someone temperate it's someone who usually, for example, doesn't eat or drink more than what she needs, and who feels reasonably good by restraining her desires.

While in Aristotle the virtuous reach excellence just because virtue it's noble, in epicureanism the person follows virtue according to a calculus of pleasures and pains ("I won't eat that cake because I have heart problems", "I won't smoke because I've felt lung pain", or whatever). Virtue is another way to talk about the most pleasant way to live.

Hope all this has some sense and it helps at least a little.

See you, guys! 😊