

Elegant Choices

Post by “Pacatus” of July 3, 2023 at 4:06 PM

Years ago, I read a book by meditation teacher Jon Kabat-Zinn, who taught mindfulness meditation to patients plagued by chronic pain. Because they all had different physical abilities (and disabilities), he struggled with questions of meditative posture. In the end, he gave up and just said: **“Just sit with dignity.”**

He was amazed as he saw them all simply and naturally adjust their postures – within their diverse physical limitations – in a way that expressed that concept. He didn’t define the word for them or draw pictures. They just seemed to feel it.

The philosopher/psychologist Eugene Gendlin developed and taught a simple, effective therapy based on what he called a **“felt sense,”** in which one inquires of their body what’s going on with them, and noticing how that changes in response to various insights (what he called a “felt-shift”). He wrote a well-received – both among professionals and a popular audience – book about it titled *Focusing* (available from Amazon.) I have been, over the past few months, refamiliarizing myself with the practice.*

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Years ago (again) my wife and I read a book called *Elegant Choices, Healing Choices* by Marsha Sinetar – which I just recently recalled.

And so I am experimenting with just asking the question (in the sense of Epicurean hedonic choice and avoidance): **“Where is the elegant choice?”** And noticing what kind of “felt sense” (πᾶθος-αἰσθησις perhaps? [Don?](#)) comes in response. This far, it seems fruitful (without attempting any further definition of that word “elegant” – ala Jon Kabat-Zinn above). So I thought I would share it ...

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* Here is a (very) simplified description of the basic focusing process – but it was enough to help me get started again, till I could reacquire the book: <https://focusing.org/sixsteps>. It really is subject to multiple variations, which one can develop personally for themselves.

Post by “Don” of July 3, 2023 at 4:46 PM

[Quote from Pacatus](#)

πάθος-αίσθηση perhaps? Don?

I would probably say αἴσθησις since that has more of the sensation/perception connotation:

[Henry George Liddell, Robert Scott, A Greek-English Lexicon, αἴσθησις](#)

Post by “Godfrey” of July 3, 2023 at 5:38 PM

This sounds like an interesting practice which may apply for adding sensitivity to one's choices and avoidances. The Epicurean process, I think, is much less specific than the Six Steps and probably more "rational" as well. But, at least for me, there's a point where I rely on my "intuition" in the decision making process and I think that this might be considered the elegant choice.

Tasty food for thought!

Post by “Pacatus” of July 3, 2023 at 6:34 PM

Thank you, [Godfrey](#).

I will add that, in his book, Gendlin really loosens up the specificity of the “six steps” – in order to encourage people to develop more variety in their personal style. But I don't think you need the book to play around with it: the basis is really consulting the body and the “felt sense.”

Also, I can get lost in my head working a more rationalistic approach (thinking, thinking, thinking ... !) – and this is one way (for me!) to get out of that “hedonic calculus” concept that a number of us were recently grousing about.

Also (how many “alsos can I play? 😊) it seems to get back to the ground of the senses ([αἰσθήσεις](#), following Don).