

Emily Austin Seems To Think That Sex Is An Extravagant Pleasure aka natural but unnecessary. Do you agree?

Post by “Eoghan Gardiner” of November 8, 2023 at 10:46 AM

When I talk to my friends about it, my friends here in Ireland would agree that's it's great to have but isn't strictly necessary for a "happy" life. It seems Epicurus would agree somewhat. Yet my friends from Asian countries think sex is undoubtedly necessary for happiness placing it in the natural and necessary category. Is it simply a case that we are more influenced by Catholicism here in Europe and N.A.?

I wanted to make a new topic about another question as well. It seems so many young people (18-50) are just not having sex. Men but also women increasingly as well. I couldn't find the exact quote but it's something like "I can't distinguish the Good without sex, food etc.." Why do you think young people are leaving sex behind despite increasing secularization?

Post by “Kalosyni” of November 8, 2023 at 11:24 AM

[Quote from Eoghan Gardiner](#)

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I found this very good article about the trend of less sex (in California), which brings up lots of reasons why (and also briefly mentions an increase in depression).

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[A 'failure to launch': Why young people are having less sex](#)

Nearly 40% of young adults surveyed in California in 2021 had no sexual partners in the prior year. Millennials and Gen Zers are having less sex than earlier...

www.latimes.com

There are other reasons which the article doesn't fully address: perhaps modern sex-education (which likely occurs in California) increases the fear of sexually transmitted diseases...The awareness of disease is so prevalent and the fear of disease is so great that no one wants to risk it. And perhaps there is a higher incidence of sexually transmitted diseases going around.

<https://www.epicureanfriends.com/thread/3480-emily-austin-seems-to-think-that-sex-is-an-extravagant-pleasure-aka-natural-but/>

Also, maybe technology (cellphones/internet) is subduing the mind-body connection so that people are less aware of sensations of the body.

Epicurus didn't know about the bodily chemicals of dopamine and serotonin, but yet he was referring to the good feelings that arise with food, sex, etc. One can only determine for themselves if they don't need sex -- so this is a subjective feeling that is up to each individual. If it is too difficult to find a romantic partner and to do so safely, then one must find other physical enjoyments.

Post by “Eoghan Gardiner” of November 8, 2023 at 11:43 AM

[Quote from Kalosyni](#)

[Quote from Eoghan Gardiner](#)

Also, maybe technology (cellphones/internet) is subduing the mind-body connection so that people are less aware of sensations of the body.

Yeah in my discussions with friends this is one of the main causes. The other is lack of financial freedom, most of us are house sharing at least with 2 other strangers here so it makes things difficult outside of one night stands which as you move from early 20s to early 30s become less desirably it seems for most.

Post by “Cassius” of November 8, 2023 at 1:04 PM

I don't have anything specific to contribute at the moment but I think this is an important issue. It's not "necessary" in the sense that a certain individual can live quite a while without it, but it is "necessary" for the "preservation of the species," and Lucretius cites it repeatedly as an important aspect of life. Ebbs and flows of population seems to have many causes but I doubt it's a healthy phenomena.

Post by “Kalosyni” of November 8, 2023 at 1:46 PM

<https://www.epicureanfriends.com/thread/3480-emily-austin-seems-to-think-that-sex-is-an-extravagant-pleasure-aka-natural-but/>

[Quote from Eoghan Gardiner](#)

it makes things difficult outside of one night stands which as you move from early 20s to early 30s become less desirably it seems for most.

Just want to mention that "one night stands" -- may or many not bring more pain then pleasure, it depends on both parties fully understanding the terms of the encounter. And before considering a "one night stand" one should contemplate this guidance:

PD5: "It is not possible to live joyously without also living wisely and beautifully and rightly, nor to live wisely and beautifully and rightly without living joyously; and whoever lacks this cannot live joyously."

Post by "Eoghan Gardiner" of November 8, 2023 at 1:50 PM

[Quote from Kalosyni](#)

[Quote from Eoghan Gardiner](#)

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Just want to mention that "one night stands" -- may or many not bring more pain then pleasure, it depends on both parties fully understanding the terms of the encounter. And before considering a "one night stand" one should contemplate this guidance:

PD5: "It is not possible to live joyously without also living wisely and beautifully and rightly, nor to live wisely and beautifully and rightly without living joyously; and whoever lacks this cannot live joyously."

Yes I agree, I find in early 20s they are far more pleasurable than now in my 30s for both parties. Not because of the act but because of the pain after it e.g. one party wanting more than a one night stand etc... where as in early 20s it's expected that it is just for the mutual singular night pleasure.

Post by "Cassius" of November 8, 2023 at 1:57 PM

The other issue intertwined in this is that of having children, which we talk about little, but which has traditionally been a critical part of human life. We wouldn't be here otherwise, and Epicurus showed that he himself was concerned about the welfare of children within his philosophical community (at least the children of Metrodorus). Setting out a productive and philosophical view of "family life" would appear to me to be an important part of life in general, even though we talk about it little. I can see the Stoics and those who want to detach from everything downplaying it, but I would not expect that from the ancient Epicureans. Especially if you identify all normal activities of life which are not painful to be a part of pleasure, then you would expect Epicureans probably had a lot to say about this subject too.

Post by “Cassius” of November 8, 2023 at 2:14 PM

Also worth commenting is that everyone (including I think Emily Austin too) struggles with finding the right word for "not natural and not necessary." I think we all -- including Emily -- agree that the real issue is whether the activity produces more pleasure than pain. That's a question that is so fact specific to circumstances that it becomes very difficult to determine what "natural" and "necessary" really means except by setting out a specific set of facts.

And for the sake of appreciating that complexity we should all take a second to revel in the appropriateness of Don's hostility to hypotheticals! 😊😊 How do you set out a hypothetical "natural" and "necessary" that is actually useful without referring to the facts of a particular situation?

"Necessary" to whom and for what? "Natural" for whom and for what? I think there are common sense answers that most of us would agree on, but common sense also probably is what warns us about trying to be too legalistic with what natural and necessary means.

Post by “Eoghan Gardiner” of November 8, 2023 at 2:26 PM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

And for the sake of appreciating that complexity we should all take a second to revel in the appropriateness of Don's hostility to hypotheticals! 😊😊 How do you set out a hypothetical "natural" and "necessary" that is actually useful without referring to the

facts of a particular situation?

Yes this is what I like to see!! But generally I think for some reason, western people generally see sex as something nice but not needed for a happy life and my eastern/asian/middle eastern friends see it as 100% necessary. So I have people in mind when I ask these questions but I wonder what's everyone here perspective, for you is it necessary?

Also as you indicated the broader humanity it is necessary, [death is nothing to us](#), so life is everything. So being born is everything to us, before birth shares the same regard as death - no sensation/consciousness - therefore also nothing to us.

Also what just came to my mind is how would I would respond to an antinatalist who says "life is too much pain, so don't reproduce" anyway just thinking out loud maybe someone has an answer.

Post by “Joshua” of November 8, 2023 at 2:28 PM

Lucretius is supportive of sex as a way to satisfy the claims of the body, but he is critical of romantic love. I'll be at more liberty to comment when I get home from work.

Post by “Cassius” of November 8, 2023 at 2:44 PM

Ok to be more specific for the record, I am much closer to your "Asian" friends on this question. I consider it to be part of a normal healthy human life. I personally have an extremely dim view of anti-natalist positions, and I consider both to be examples of an unfortunate sickness in Western civilization deriving at least in part from the rise of monotheism. None of this is to be critical of those who for whatever reason choose otherwise, but as a "general" observation about the way nature has led humanity to evolve, that's the way I would see the standard default position.

There are real questions about overpopulation and other social aspects of reproduction, but my personal preference to deal with those issues would be to get the rocket ships ready for extraterrestrial colonization so we can go look for those "gods!". 😊

I realize sex and reproduction are not the same question but I would analyze them largely together.

Post by “Kalosyni” of November 8, 2023 at 2:53 PM

[Quote from Joshua](#)

Lucretius is supportive of sex as a way to satisfy the claims of the body, but he is critical of romantic love. I'll be at more liberty to comment when I get home from work.

The mores of the time of ancient Greece were such that prostitutes were legal and were taxed. So if a man developed a romantic attachment to a prostitute it would lead to problems, since he could never be assured of her love (as she would have other clients, and perhaps was pitting him to try to make him jealous).

Post by “Eoghan Gardiner” of November 8, 2023 at 3:03 PM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

Ok to be more specific for the record, I am much closer to your "Asian" friends on this question.

~As am I. I think a large reason my Irish friends aren't is left over guilt from catholicism, outside of Italy and Poland no other country has been as impacted by it.

Post by “Kalosyni” of November 8, 2023 at 3:12 PM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

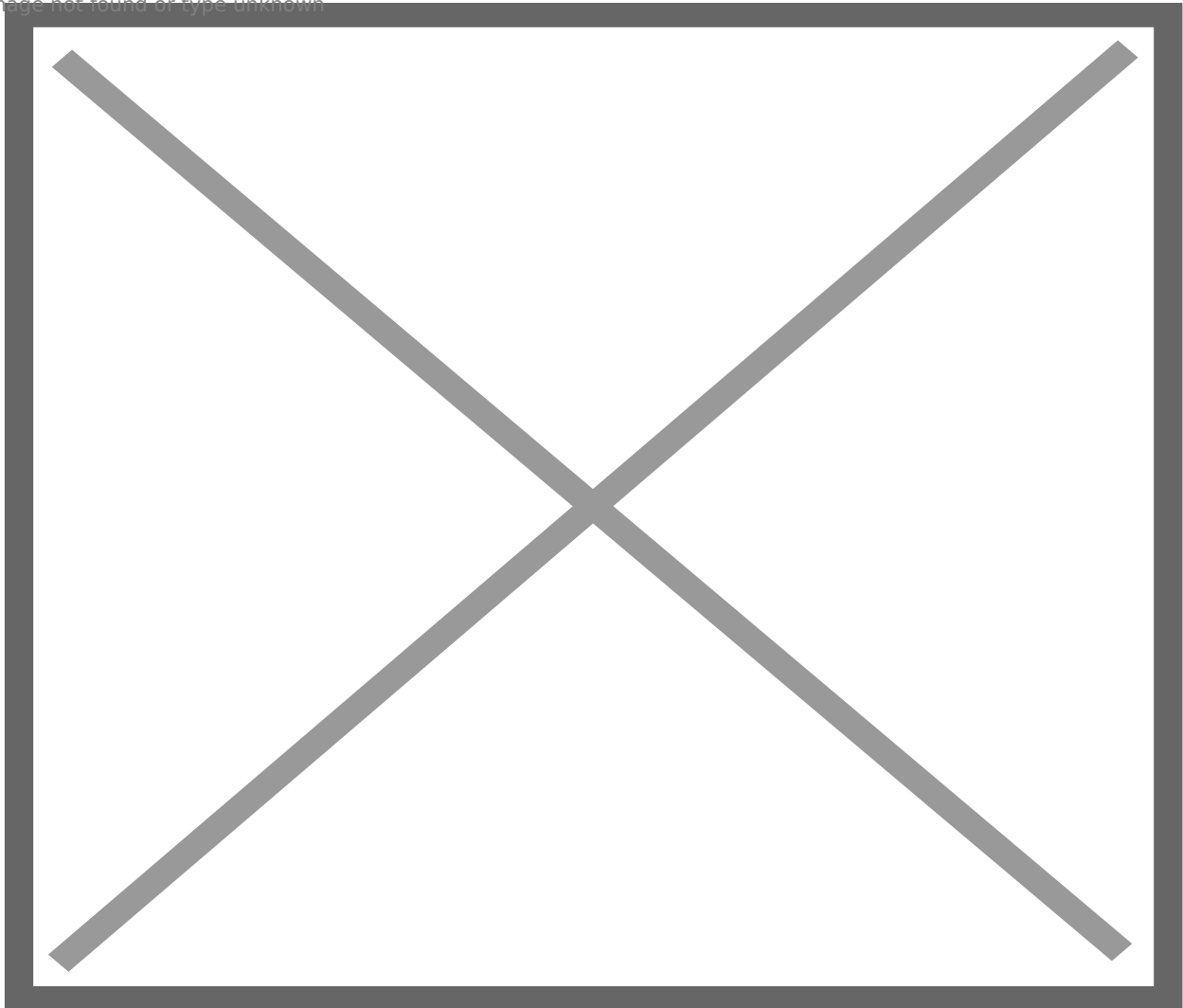
I realize sex and reproduction are not the same question but I would analyze them largely together.

There were birth control methods back in time, [read about them here](#) -- but ease and availability of the modern use of birth control (and for a time there was legal abortion in the USA -- Roe vs. Wade passed in 1973 but was overturned June 2022) -- the pill created the

freedom to enjoy sex without concern for pregnancy.

Here is a good article on enjoying the sensual quality of sex through tantra:

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[What is tantric sex? Definition and how to practice](#)

What is tantric sex? Read on discover the definition, processes, breathing techniques, and positions of tantric sex, as well as how to prepare for it.

www.medicalnewstoday.com

Post by “Pacatus” of November 8, 2023 at 5:22 PM

From the article linked by [Kalosyni](#) above:

<https://www.epicureanfriends.com/thread/3480-emily-austin-seems-to-think-that-sex-is-an-extravagant-pleasure-aka-natural-but/>

"I've been really preoccupied with my studies, and I'm always stressed because of all the things I have going on," she said. "My libido is always shot, and I don't really ever think about sex."

This seems certainly unhealthy - the stress, that is; not just substituting one good (study/education) for another (immediate sexual gratification). Sexual release might well have a beneficial effect, not just vis-à-vis the stress but also on the mental activity of studying. [No judgmentalism here: I tended to be stressed when I was a student, largely because I was older than most of the others - and the fact that I had to work fulltime while going to school. But. Looking back, I recognize that the stress (anxiety) was toxic.]

On the other hand (from the same article): "Maybe you don't have to have sex all the time," Rhodes said. "Maybe if you're doing other things in your life, and you've got other priorities, or you just don't feel like it, that can be a good enough answer."

I just want to add that sexual stimulation and release are generally believed to be contributive to good health (for example, prostate health in men "of a certain age"). And there are non-relational means.

At bottom, though, [Kalosyni](#) is sure right: "One can only determine for themselves if they don't need sex -- so this is a subjective feeling that is up to each individual."

Post by "Pacatus" of November 8, 2023 at 5:32 PM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

I personally have an extremely dim view of anti-natalist positions

I had to look up anti-natalism: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Antinatalism>.

That strikes me as extreme to the point of silliness. (While affirming the right of couples to choose not to have children -- I know a couple of wonderful couples who so choose. No one should feel ethically obligated to procreate -- which seems to be the position of some evangelical Christians I've come across.)

Post by "Eoghan Gardiner" of November 8, 2023 at 5:41 PM

The whole anti natalist thing reminds me of the greek hedonist who tried to convince people to self-delete, think he was a Cyrenaic..

Post by “Pacatus” of November 8, 2023 at 5:51 PM

[Quote from Eoghan Gardiner](#)

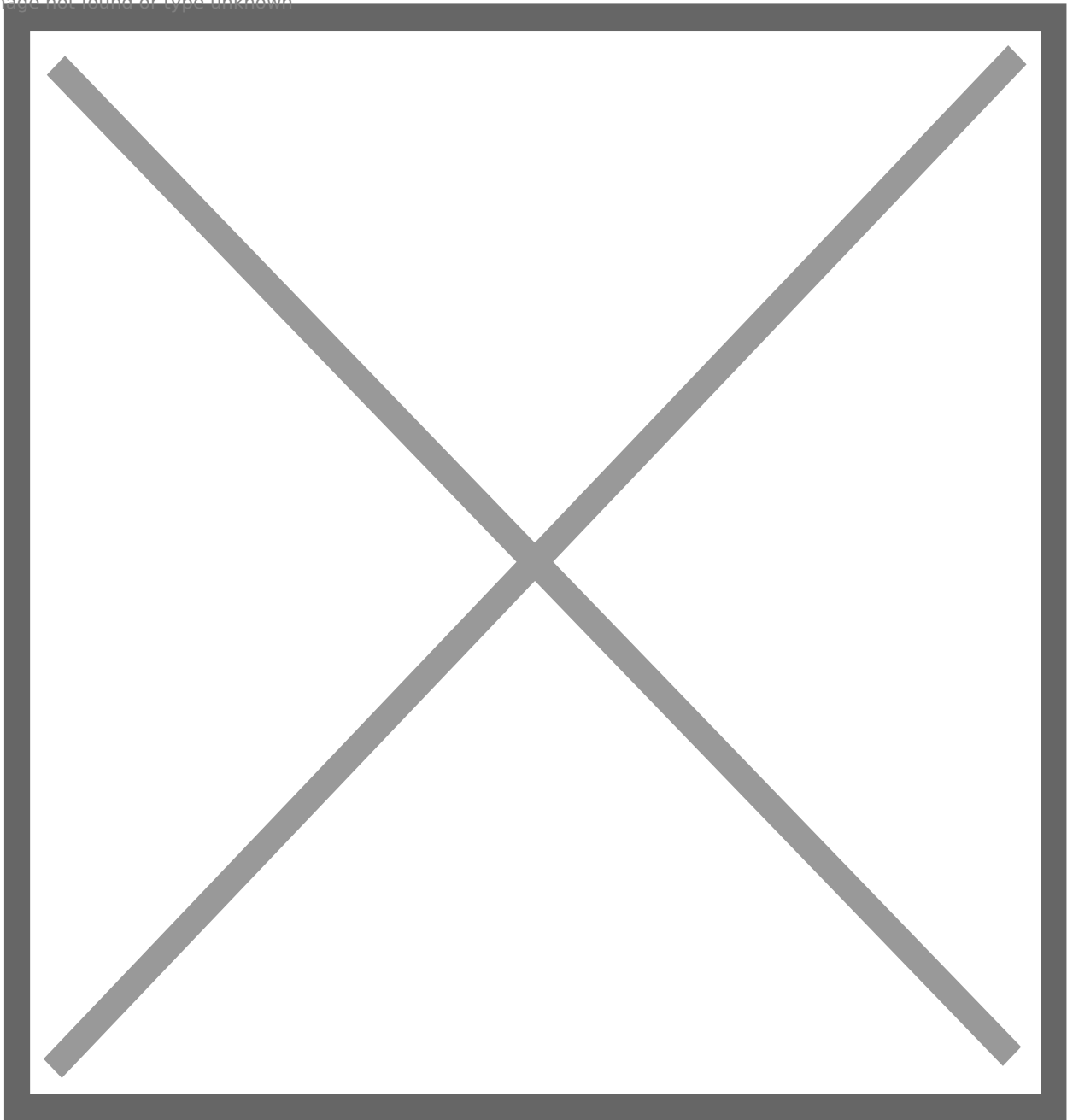
The whole anti natalist thing reminds me of the greek hedonist who tried to convince people to self-delete, think he was a Cyrenaic..

Yes, Hegesias, a later Cyrenaic (at least he was so accused by Cicero).

Post by “Kalosyni” of November 9, 2023 at 12:37 PM

Here is a good article, about happiness and sex, "It's not sex that makes you heathier and happier--it's what you do before and after":

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[It's not sex that makes you healthier and happier—it's what you do before and after](#)

The secret to happy people and happy couples isn't weekly sex—it's something far simpler, and sweeter.

qz.com

Post by “Eikadistes” of November 9, 2023 at 3:14 PM

<https://www.epicureanfriends.com/thread/3480-emily-austin-seems-to-think-that-sex-is-an-extravagant-pleasure-aka-natural-but/>

I think that sex cannot be necessary, because many people are not healthy enough to have sex, and Epicurus reminds us that one is never too young, nor too old, nor too impotent to tend to the health of one's soul.

(We also might be thinking about this in terms of celibate adults, but let's keep in mind that most children are not having sex, and they can still enjoy the natural pleasure of wisdom; and even then, the natural pleasure that is sex does not become available until a certain point in a person's life, so we might even say it is unnatural below a certain age).

Also, not that anyone was making this point, but just to share this perspective: we have no obligation to the species to reproduce. It is no *one* person's duty to perpetuate the genes of ancient creatures just because one shares their DNA.

Post by "Titus" of November 9, 2023 at 5:04 PM

I remember Hegel's quick run through Epicureanism.

In one of his lectures on the history of philosophy he interprets the natural but not necessary category of Epicurus as simply dealing with sexual desire and forgets about what I (and Diogenes in his scholion, probably) would define instead: The amplification and variation of a necessary need. For example, tasty drinks instead of water or especial sexual experiences instead of simple ways of getting satisfaction.

I also know that in law it is called proportionality. It means to look whether something is adequate in comparison to another good or more simple: The pleasure-pain calculus.

Apart from that, the introductory post made me laugh, because I always hear the opposite about Asia, especially the Eastern part.

Post by "Pacatus" of November 9, 2023 at 6:00 PM

On the notion that sex carries no benefits

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Dr. Austin quotes Vatican Saying 51:

"I hear from you that the movement of your flesh is abundantly disposed toward sexual intercourse. As long as you do not break the laws or disturb noble and settled customs or vex any of your neighbors or wear out your body or use up the things necessary for life, indulge yourself in any way you prefer. However, it is impossible not be constrained by some one of these things. **For sex never profits, and one must be content if it does not harm.**" [Translation by Kelly E. Arenson in Austin, Emily A.. Living for Pleasure: An Epicurean Guide to Life (Guides to the Good Life) (p. 175). Oxford University Press. Kindle Edition.]

Two possible translations from Diogenes Laertius

In the below-cited paper, the author examines two translations of Diogenes Laertius 10.118 on the subject:

"In D.L. 10.118 we read: [Greek text would not copy-paste] There is also a version of this text in the Vatican Sayings (VS 51), differing only by the omission of the Kai. Translators have traditionally rendered the version with Kai along the lines of: **They say that sex is never beneficial, and you are very lucky (or, "it is surprising," or "it is marvelous") if it does not do harm as well.**"

And an alternative by Jeffrey Purington: **"[They] say that sex never benefits, but it is desirable, provided that it does not harm."**

After examining other texts, the author concludes: "Until very weighty evidence is brought forward to the contrary, it seems to me that we should feel confident that the traditional translation is the right one: sex is never beneficial, and you are lucky if it doesn't actually harm you-by implication, it usually does."

<https://philarchive.org/archive/BREEOS>

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Now we know that sex does carry positive health benefits, provided it is enacted in ways that also cause no harm. So the claim that sex is never beneficial is just wrong.

I tried to do some research on what ancient physicians thought about the benefits/dangers of sex, and found little - most resources dealt with gender roles (with the strong androcentric biases that were prevalent) and what ancient physicians thought about the differences between male and female bodies (and procreation). The following sparse quotes might be indicative (and I vouch not at all for the sources):

"The ancient Greek physicians have not failed in their studies to indicate the beneficial role of sexual activity in human health. They acknowledged that sex helps to maintain mental balance. Very interesting is their observation that sex may help mental patients to recover. Nevertheless they stressed emphatically that sex is beneficial only when there is a measure in it, so they believed that sexual abstinence or excessive sexual activity affect negatively the mental and physical health of man. ... Therefore they believed that the loss and the exchange of bodily

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fluids during sex help body's humors to maintain their equilibrium which in turn will form the basis for the physical and mental health.” [<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/26480224/>]

“People who worked as doctors in [Ancient Greece](#) suggested sex as a way to combat diseases such as: depression, dyspepsia, icterus, lower back pain, weak vision etc. Hippocrates, the father of Western medicine, supported that unrestrained intercourse could cure dysentery.” [<https://greekreporter.com/2013/11/16/sex...ancient-greeks/>]

A bit later:

“Galen knew that sex, perhaps even more than bathing, was pleasurable, but he argued that balance was necessary with this activity too. He believed that sexual release was healthful (and the retention of semen deleterious), and that intercourse was necessary for the continuity of humanity. However, he also warned that it was bestial to be preoccupied by sex.” [<https://exploregalen.com/project/activity>]

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The above is not much, I know – but my eyes were starting to cross. 😞

Post by “Godfrey” of November 9, 2023 at 6:32 PM

[Quote from Pacatus](#)

Hippocrates, the father of Western medicine, supported that unrestrained intercourse could cure dysentery.”

That one's news to me! 🤔

I've been taking a qigong course this year. At one point, in answer to somebody's query, the instructor posted a chart with guidelines for sexual release. I don't remember the details; something like every day when in one's 20s, every thirty days after one turns 60 (don't quote me on those!), and a sliding scale in the decades between. Apparently one or more students had been instructed by others to retain their semen and were having various ailments. So, at least for some schools of Chinese medicine, sex is considered to be healthy. (I personally don't have much understanding of Chinese medicine: just passing along an anecdote.)

Post by “Eric” of September 13, 2024 at 10:03 AM

<https://www.epicureanfriends.com/thread/3480-emily-austin-seems-to-think-that-sex-is-an-extravagant-pleasure-aka-natural-but/>

I would like to give my thoughts on the subject of the necessity of sex as this has been a topic of major interest, experimentation and research for the past 6 years for me.

I actually would provide an alternate viewpoint:

The removal of the desire for sex is very difficult (for many reasons) and there often exist **withdrawal symptoms** from quitting - thus making getting rid of the desire painful. These withdrawal pains need to be endured for a long time (your mileage may vary) until they go away. Yet, once the withdrawals are over, the desire for sex gets weaker and people report that they experience long-term benefits such as more enjoyment from other things, increased mental/physical fortitude and most importantly, their lives become more pleasurable (I've been there many times). I am talking about brain/body alterations here, not simply about the pleasure coming indirectly from having more time for other things though those are also significant (but a bit too obvious to mention).

Essentially, a great pain is endured for an even greater long-term pleasure.

Another reason I believe sex to be divisive is that sex (particularly the release) is also a potent physical pain killer and stress reliever. I personally experience the pain-killing effects for up to two weeks after release. Many people deal with bodily pain daily and having sex can be an effective way to deal with that. On the other hand, if you are aware of your pain, you can maybe figure out the underlying issues better.

However, if you can manage your pain without sex, I think abstinence is worth experimenting on.

Warning: Sometimes the pleasure get's too high and things get a little psychotic. The Epicurean should be prepared and watch out for this and manage this properly to keep their peace of mind.

I think I'll stop here for now. Hope this brings up some good discussion or is useful to someone



Post by “Cassius” of September 13, 2024 at 10:13 AM

[Quote from Eric](#)

Warning: Sometimes the pleasure get's too high and things get a little psychotic. The Epicurean should be prepared and watch out for this and manage this properly to keep their peace of mind.

Yes I've always thought that the major reason for Epicurus' concern was the damaging things that might result from doing things without thinking about the results, much as with alcohol or other drugs.

"Yet, once the withdrawals are over, the desire for sex gets weaker and people report that they experience long-term benefits such as more enjoyment from other things, increased mental/physical fortitude and most importantly, their lives become more pleasurable (I've been there many times)."

- In that context I would also think that "age" is a big factor to consider. All sorts of changes take place with age.

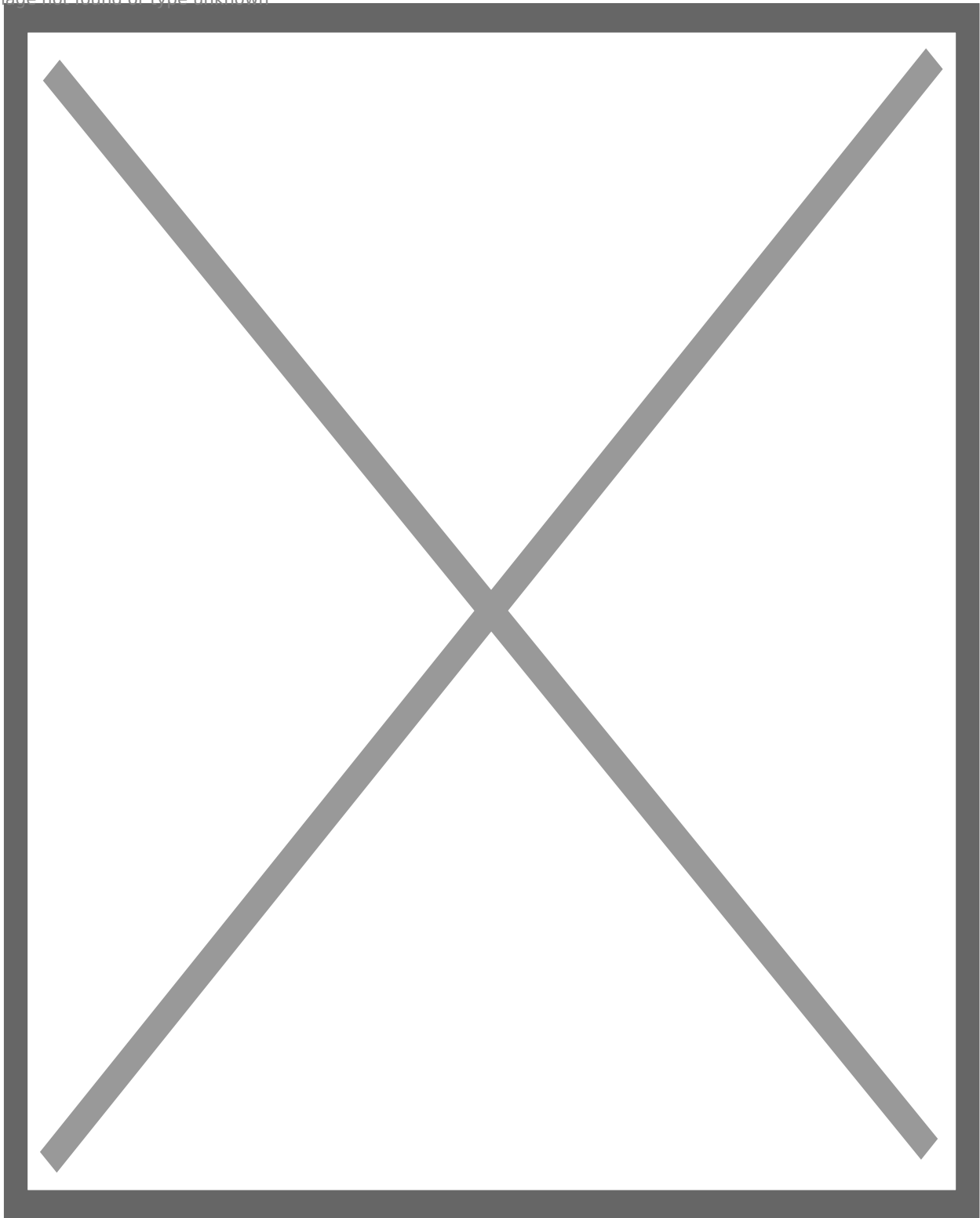
Post by “Kalosyni” of September 13, 2024 at 12:01 PM

Here is a fun article which recommends "quality over quantity":

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/psymon...really-have-sex?>

And here is one on voluntary celibacy:

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[Is Voluntary Celibacy on the Rise?](#)

<https://www.epicureanfriends.com/thread/3480-emily-austin-seems-to-think-that-sex-is-an-extravagant-pleasure-aka-natural-but/>

How common is it for people to take a break from sex and dating? Why do so many people today seem to be doing it? And are they happy with their decision to...

www.psychologytoday.com

I personally would use the phrase "natural but unnecessary" (rather than "extravagant pleasure") and what falls into that category depends on the given situation - and every situation is unique depending on the circumstances - so I wouldn't assign sex as being "natural and unnecessary" all across the board. I would label something as unnecessary if only if it causes (or results in) pain or disturbance, or it is very difficult to acquire -- and this would reflect an Epicurean method of "choice and avoidance".

Post by “Eric” of September 18, 2024 at 8:53 AM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

[Quote from Eric](#)

Warning: Sometimes the pleasure gets too high and things get a little psychotic. The Epicurean should be prepared and watch out for this and manage this properly to keep their peace of mind.

Yes I've always thought that the major reason for Epicurus' concern was the damaging things that might result from doing things without thinking about the results, much as with alcohol or other drugs.

I suspect that you may have misunderstood what I was saying, so I will clarify. I think I worded what I said poorly. I meant that the differing neurotransmitter/hormonal states (that produce pleasure and joy) received from **abstaining** from sex and lust, can get too high and cause psychotic symptoms (bliss, overconfidence, mania/hypomania) which often precede doing things without thinking about the results (and can muddle thinking in general).

Such examples can be seen in these significant books referenced in the celibate/anti-sex communities:

Bliss of the Celibate - By Julian Lee

The Coiled Serpent: A philosophy of Conservation and Transmutation of Reproductive Energy -
By C.J Van Vliet

What I see in these books and their authors, is an emphasis of extreme **bliss or joy** (pleasure) and vigor but I can also see significant delusional and magical thinking. Particularly combined with significant amount of meditation and other spiritual practice (as a method of obtaining self-control), abstinence seems to produce this kind of long-term state of mind.

The latter book, Coiled Serpent, although in my opinion false and kind of repulsive to read, is interesting in the sense, that it contains quotes from philosophers from all cultures throughout time - including Greek and Roman philosophers (including Epicurus - however, no new quotes). Though physicians seemed to value sex for medicinal reasons as stated in the post by Pacatus, there were philosophers close to Epicurus' time who said it is harmful and may have influenced him. Such as

"Of sexual indulgence Pythagoras said that "it is always harmful and not conducive to health."¹⁴ "And once when he was asked when one might indulge in sex he replied, 'whenever you want to be weaker than yourself.'"

and

[Section on Aristotle] *"sexual intercourse involves the destruction of our bodies, the shortening of life."*

Though he came after Epicurus,

"Cicero, the eclectic, "culled from every accessible philosophy those elements which were regarded as most helpful for the higher life." He found that "nothing is more hostile to this . . . than sensual pleasure."⁴⁸ "Such pleasure . . . extinguishes completely the light of the soul."

Also in DeWitt's book, he mentions that Augustine of Hippo (a Catholic) approved of Epicurus apart from his denial of god.

My purpose in my writing is to bring attention to the joy and bliss that abstinence can bring **for some people**, yet being mindful that this is but a consequence of neurochemical/hormonal changes - not some supernatural gift; and that measures should be taken practicing this to avoid delusions.

[Quote from Cassius](#)

- In that context I would also think that "age" is a big factor to consider. All sorts of changes take place with age.

I'm sure that's true. Could you elaborate what you mean?

Post by “Cassius” of September 18, 2024 at 9:31 AM

[Quote from Eric](#)

I'm sure that's true. Could you elaborate what you mean?

Well mostly what I was referring to is just the way people typically "slow down" or develop chronic disease conditions with age. I'm personally at the point now (over 60!) that I just don't have the energy to do the things I used to do in whole range of areas. That makes diet and exercise even more important over time, I guess!

Post by “Eoghan Gardiner” of September 18, 2024 at 10:02 AM

I don't know, as a teenager I was told sex is this amazing thing. Yes it's very pleasurable but it's never as good as the desire and sex drive make it out to be. In a lot of ways, it's very disappointing.

People seem to make sex their lifestyle, however how many deal with self disgust and distress at lack of self control? How many people these days, who in a non religious context talk about "no fap" aka no masturbation or sex..

Now obviously some people experience sex that they claim is very pleasurable, I'm not prescribing anything but it seems to me for a lot of people, men and women, sex is a lot of the time disappointing and leads to more pain in the end.

This is in no way a recommendation of continence. As Cassius said, a 18 year old is going to have a very different experience of sex and sex drive then a 30 year old (me) or 60+(Cassius) etc..

Post by “Eric” of September 18, 2024 at 2:04 PM

[Quote from Eoghan Gardiner](#)

I don't know, as a teenager I was told sex is this amazing thing. Yes it's very pleasurable but it's never as good as the desire and sex drive make it out to be. In a lot of ways, it's very disappointing.

Yeah, I can relate to that. The drive is stronger than the actual pleasure. Seems that regarding sex, we are wired to seek and want it more than be satisfied by it.

[Quote from Eoghan Gardiner](#)

This is in no way a recommendation of continence. As Cassius said, a 18 year old is going to have a very different experience of sex and sex drive then a 30 year old (me) or 60+(Cassius) etc.

Makes sense. I still feel the same drive and enthusiasm as I did when I was 18 or younger, but I have ADHD (diagnosed as a child), so that surely explains why. Sometimes I wish age would tone it down a little, but I have my methods

Post by “Kalosyni” of September 19, 2024 at 11:53 AM

[Quote from Eric](#)

The drive is stronger than the actual pleasure. Seems that regarding sex, we are wired to seek and want it more than be satisfied by it.

This perhaps depends on one's attitude and practice with regard to observing sensory experience.

A comparison can be made to eating food. There is hunger, but if the food is eaten too quickly then that can result in less satisfaction. If the meal is carefully planned and savored, and eaten slowly with an attitude of observation of every sensation, then that can result in greater satisfaction.

Post by “Eric” of September 19, 2024 at 2:36 PM

[Quote from Kalosyni](#)

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This perhaps depends on one's attitude and practice with regard to observing sensory experience.

A comparison can be made to eating food. There is hunger, but if the food is eaten too quickly then that can result in less satisfaction. If the meal is carefully planned and savored, and eaten slowly with an attitude of observation of every sensation, then that can result in greater satisfaction.

Yes I agree a 100 %. Slowing down and being present during sex does in my experience increase the pleasure and satisfaction. However, this is not common practice most likely because of the unfortunate limitation that sustaining presence, being more sensitive and being able to slow down without massive amounts of control (which is not relaxing), for many, require effort and structuring one's life in such a way that one is mostly not overstimulated by life and/or stuck thinking all the time. Sometimes we are simply too busy because of our life situation/choices to sufficiently de-stimulate, and regain sensitivity and presence. Practice of course plays a part.

What I was talking about was the common experience of just doing what the lusts drive us to do and that is where sex is often disappointing or becomes disappointing over time (your mileage may vary on how fast). Tantra/Karezza are in my mind advanced practices and I personally am kind of on the fence on whether these practices are what I should do compared to just abstinence. I know from experience that I definitely need to de-stimulate (meditate/sensory deprive myself) a lot and avoid other worldly stimulation to be able to satisfactorily enjoy these. If I worked full time instead of part-time at my brainy job, I personally would have a very difficult time making this happen.

Still experimenting with these with my girlfriend. We both agree on the above and we do have satisfying experiences when I succeed in keeping myself present and not overstimulated.

Post by “Eric” of September 19, 2024 at 2:58 PM

What I have been having at the back of my mind is since, for me, making sex worth it takes so much resources and often in practise sacrifices from and distracts me from securing the fulfillment of more important desires, it might be better to be abstinent.

Or maybe I just need to try harder 😁

Post by “Cassius” of September 19, 2024 at 3:03 PM

[Quote from Eric](#)

since, *for me*, making sex worth

I think that's always the framework. People are different and always at different points in their lives and have different priorities. The best choices are always a matter of evaluating your own personal circumstances.