

# Toronto Canada Meetup Group (Discussion on Implementation)

Post by "AxA" of February 11, 2025 at 12:52 PM

Admin Edit: For a link to the Meetup group, you can find it [here](#).

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## [Quote from Cassius](#)

AxA check this thread for some past discussion on Meetup group possibilities:

Thread

## [Planning And Execution of A Local Group](#)

### **Epicurean Meetings and Conventions**

New: [Meetup Handouts](#)

Update: As of 2/10/25 as I am writing this, it is my understanding that the Sydney Australia Epicurean meetup group is no longer operational. I have left the links below in case you want to look for prior versions of the page, but at present i am not aware of any operational Epicurean Meetup groups.

In most parts of the world, there are at present very few opportunities for regular people who are interested in Epicurus to get together to...



Cassius

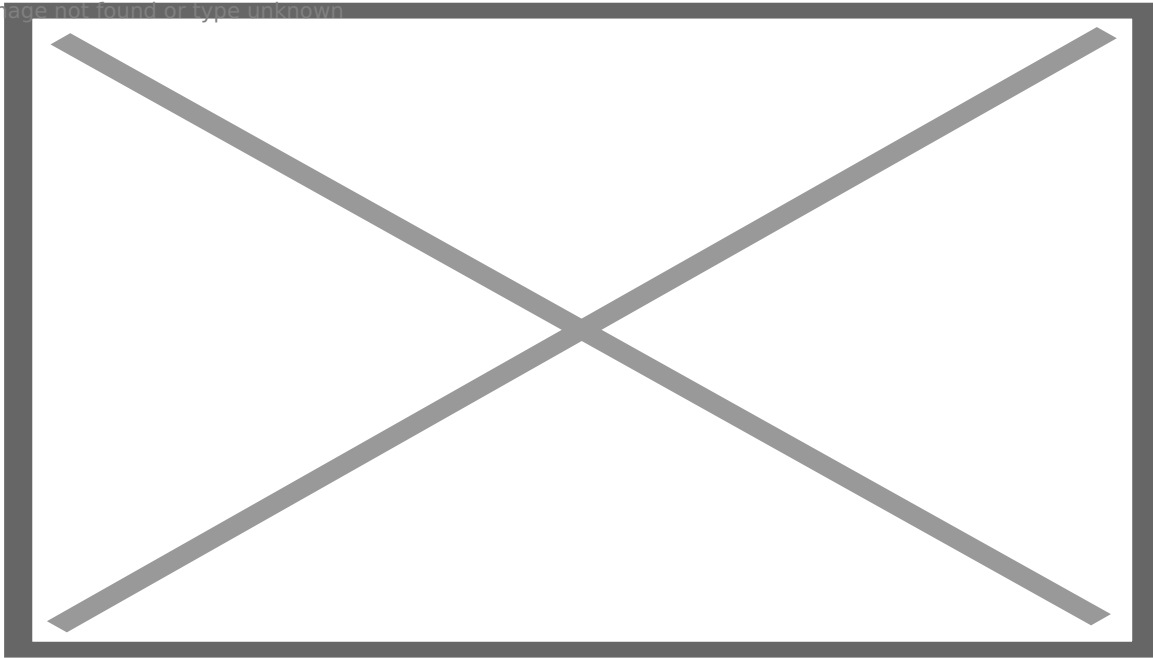
January 8, 2018 at 6:58 AM

Great discussion. Exactly the kind of experience I want to learn from.

The links to the DokuWiki pages seem to be broken.

The latest internet archive I can find for the Sydney meetup is 2021, and its recent events appear to have been in a "virtual garden":

Image not found or type unknown



### [Sydney Epicurus Philosophy Garden \(Sydney, Australia\)](#)

The purpose of this Group is to explore the philosophy of Epicurus through discussion and the enjoyment of the simple pleasures of life such as friendship, as...

[web.archive.org](http://web.archive.org)

I like this statement: "it is probable that almost any metropolitan area of any size would support a Sydney-style meetup group if even one or two people act with determination to keep the meetings on track and recognize that attendance will likely remain small for an extended period."

This is what I'm going on. The minimum is 2 people per metropolis willing to meet once a month to talk Epicurean philosophy. That seems doable.

I also like this statement: "the academic world ... has labeled Epicurus as a philosophy for losers, misfits, loners, and recluses." I can work with that. Sounds like labels for anyone who doesn't place high enough value in social approval and honours. I have no interest in directly fighting that narrative. I'd rather embrace it with a laugh, and live the way I want to among my friends without regard for mainstream approval. The happier we live, the more hollow anyone else's disapproval becomes.

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**Post by "Don" of February 11, 2025 at 1:04 PM**

[Quote from AxA](#)

"the academic world ... has labeled Epicurus as a philosophy for losers, misfits, loners, and recluses."

I would add "**\*mistakenly\*** labeled" in there just to be clear to people.

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**Post by "Cassius" of February 11, 2025 at 1:27 PM**

I must have started and not finished an earlier email. Yes the docuwiki link is broken, but most all of the information that was in it is in the thread you saw.

Apologies if I said this already, but I think one of the most important things to do is to "manage expectations." The more clear you are about what Epicurus is about and what you're trying to do with the meetup the better off you are, especially as to cross-currents with such things as Buddhism, Stoicism, and religion - especially religion. Lots of people simply associate Epicurus with happiness, and people can get turned off pretty quickly once they find that Epicurus had strong positions on supernatural religion and life after death. Diplomacy pays off, but a lot of awkwardness can be avoided if you diplomatically make it clear that Epicurus had those positions.

And of course how you handle "politics" is up to you, but I think we've benefited a lot from keeping modern politics away from our philosophical discussions. While religion and life after death have some of the same pitfalls as politics, I think we've drawn the line correctly. Non-supernaturalism and no-life-after death are so intrinsically bound up in everything Epicurus discussed that you can't really omit them and still be recognizably Epicurean. Day-to-day politics, however, is not very much discussed in the texts at all, so it's much easier to make the point "let's see if we can't be friends and discuss the eternal issues first; you guys can discuss politics at another time and place."

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**Post by "Kalosyni" of February 11, 2025 at 7:37 PM**

[AxA](#) you may want to check out this section of the forum (if you haven't already):

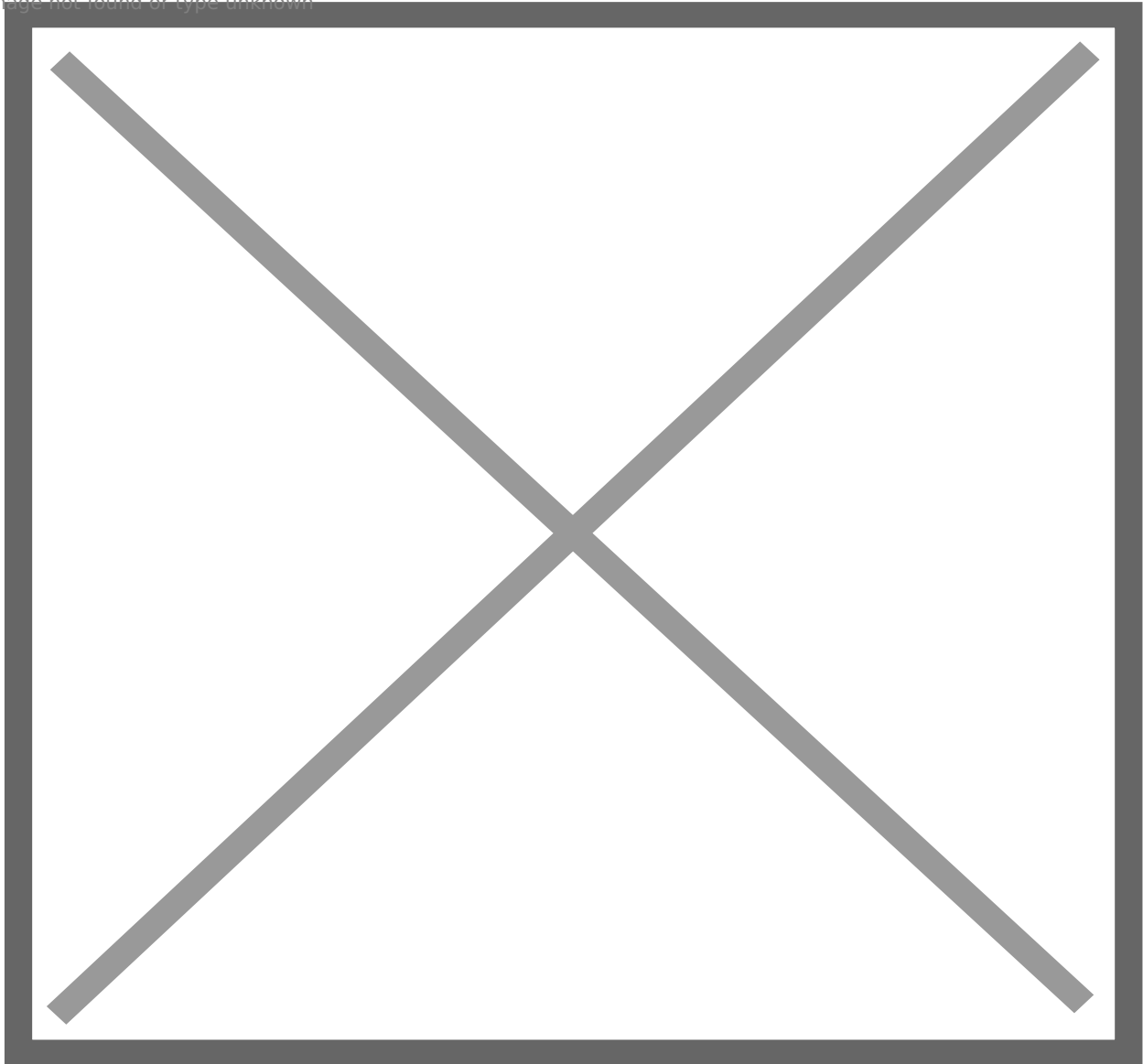
[Outlines, Guides, And Maps](#)

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**Post by “Cassius” of February 12, 2025 at 11:55 AM**

For those who come across this thread because of its reference to Meetup groups, there is a discussion going on over at Facebook on this topic where Elli Pensa is also participating.

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[Epicurean Philosophy | I'm starting an in-person Epicurean philosophy meetup group in Toronto | Facebook](#)

I'm starting an in-person Epicurean philosophy meetup group in Toronto. Welcome all!  
[www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com)

## **Post by “AxA” of February 12, 2025 at 2:58 PM**

My idea for the first meeting is to present some of the major teachings of Epicurus and otherwise have a free discussion. If it strays too far into unhelpful and irrelevant topics, I'll have to bring it back, and if there are participants who insist on sidetracking the discussion I'll have to control them. This will certainly be a challenge, the same any discussion moderator faces.

I don't feel a need to strictly enforce Epicurean positions. I see this as a free exchange of ideas and discussion of them on their own merits. I find that Epicurus has many excellent ideas and I want to share them and discuss them with others, including those who disagree with some or even all of them.

I wonder if the strict doctrinal enforcement here is a consequence of being an internet forum. There are just so many trolls and discussion hijackers that it takes strong policing to keep a good online discussion going. It may turn out to be this way in person as well, but I see the default state as being a free discussion with Epicurean philosophy as a "home base" to keep returning to. Policing of positions is something I only wish to do to the minimum necessary to keep the discussion fruitful for all.

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## **Post by “AxA” of February 12, 2025 at 3:00 PM**

[Quote from Kalosyni](#)

[AxA](#) you may want to check out this section of the forum (if you haven't already):

[Outlines, Guides, And Maps](#)

I missed that page. Thanks. I'll use this to help assemble my handout for the first meeting.

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## **Post by “AxA” of February 12, 2025 at 3:06 PM**

I can imagine a possible consequence of my permissive approach, that it ends up with a bunch of people arguing against everything Epicurus said, and these arguments end up taking up the whole conversation. I imagine that might be what's happening online, and what led to the strict

enforcement you recommend.

If this happens, I believe what I will have to do is divide into two groups, this one open to the public, and another one a more personal gathering of friends who agree at least enough to not be arguing all the time about basic positions. But I think the way to that is through this more open approach. I won't be able to assemble my Garden of Friends until I meet them.

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### **Post by “Cassius” of February 12, 2025 at 4:09 PM**

Right. There's a major difference between this internet forum and a Meetup. I personally see the Meetup platform as much more informal, and you'll necessarily have to be more loose in the way you do things. Depending on your own interests, you can decide how rigorous you want to be to accomplish your own personal goals.

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### **Post by “Bryan” of February 18, 2025 at 11:16 PM**

#### [Quote from AxA](#)

Here's my draft brochure for the in-person Eikas this weekend.

Hello, and welcome to the website. Your brochure looks great! Thank you for sharing.

The Tetrphármakos can be a good jumping-off point, but I wanted to point out that Cassius' reservations regarding it seem to be shared by Philodemus -- who, just before he quotes the Tetrphármakos (and this is the only source for it) says:

"...of those who are called Epicureans. While someone known or even described in detail by us, who also claims to be **'the authentic reader'** on select writings and on a multitude of compositions - even if he performs poorly, he has selected many passages, but in individual thoughts he is the most inexperienced! In fact, for what he must do, he looks only at the main points - just like [someone] whom they say is **'a helmsman [navigating] from the book.'**"

(Philódēmos, [Ad Contubernales], P.Herc. 1005, col. 3/4)

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## Post by "AxA" of February 23, 2025 at 3:49 PM

Report on yesterday's in-person Eikas gathering in Toronto

The group was formed and event announced on the meetup.com platform 2 weeks ago.

We had 20 people show up at an alternative new age cafe called Alternity, sitting on cushions around a table. (Picture attached.)

4 of them knew me personally, including one friend who was very supportive in joining the group first and sharing with her friends.

2 people said they were familiar with Epicurus. One had read Lucretius and The Swerve. The others almost entirely found the group through general interest in philosophy, although there was one who said she had no interest in philosophy and was interested in the simple living aspect.

We started by going around the circle and each person saying name and why they came or any other comment. Then I introduced some of the main points of the philosophy as shown in the brochure I printed. The rest of the 2 hours was open discussion. I was ready to bring up new points when the conversation stopped, but it continued all the way through.

The group generally responded favourably to these ideas. One guy even said afterwards that this was exactly the philosophy he's been looking for.

Some of the objections that came up:

- Pain as a source of meaning vs boring bland state of continuous pleasure (I did not even get into the whole "pleasure as absence of pain" definitional issue, and this came up at the end and was never really addressed)
- The necessity of dealing with violent external enemies raised on hate who will be "harder" than you chill garden people (I had to reassure this guy I'm not a pacifist, but it remains an issue how much to compromise in the name of defence)
- The value of spiritual beliefs and practices in comforting the afflicted (one participant gave an impassioned speech about the beauty of Aphrodite's grief over the death of Adonis and how oppressed women could find comfort in this. I had no response)
- A sense that this philosophy is "for individuals" (or friend groups) and is somehow disconnected from wider politics, something that only the privileged can do, and that does not address world issues (my usual response to this is instead of trying to influence how people vote, which is "downstream" of their beliefs and values, I see more potential in going "upstream" to these beliefs and values themselves - imagine how a world of Epicureans would

vote)

By the end, there was enthusiasm to have another meetup next month, which I will be holding as a pot luck feast, and I will start a second monthly event to be a cafe discussion like this one.

I encourage all Epicureans to arrange in-person gatherings anywhere in the world. As long as at least one other person shows up, it's worth it. No need to wait for other Epicureans to present themselves. The general philosophically curious public is ready for these ideas!

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### **Post by “Don” of February 23, 2025 at 4:21 PM**

Congratulations!! That looks like a great success! Thanks for the debrief of the event. That really sounds like an inspiration for others. Well done! Keep us updated on future meetings.

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### **Post by “Cassius” of February 23, 2025 at 5:47 PM**

Yes it sounds like you handled everything beautifully. i will split this off into a thread where it will be easier to find for people looking for this topic in the future.

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### **Post by “Cassius” of February 24, 2025 at 5:03 AM**

As to these, here are some personal comments. Not everyone will respond the same, and everyone has to do what they think is right with their own local group. With that caveat, here are some thoughts as to "some of the objections that came up:"

#### Quote

- Pain as a source of meaning vs boring bland state of continuous pleasure (I did not even get into the whole "pleasure as absence of pain" definitional issue, and this came up at the end and was never really addressed)

Yes, this is why it is necessary ultimately to get into this issue of what "pleasure" really is, and how it encompasses everything we find desirable in life, mentally and physically. There is literally no activity that anyone will find desirable for them to pursue that is not to them pleasure, and there is absolutely no reason for them not to be willing to pursue whatever activities that bring them pleasure, so long as they in fact bring them more pleasure than pain. It is a killer problem to be boxed into pleasure as being ONLY sipping wine and eating cheese, and I would avoid that like the plague by taking it head on. Epicureans like Cassius Longinus and his friends certainly did not live that way, nor did those who engaged in spreading the philosophy through writing, and you can cite the examples given by Torquatus in On Ends Book One as to his ancestors who were military leaders being totally reconcilable to Epicurean philosophy.

Pain is not meaning in itself, it's just pain, and Epicureans are fully willing to embrace pain when the result is more pleasure (desirable living) than pain.

There is much that can and should be done to develop this point, and I would push back hard at it any time it raises its head. And it will raise its head, regularly, anytime a group gets started or new people come in, because this attitude is entrenched in the Stoicized view of Epicurus that has prevailed in the academic world for many years. Modern histories and commentaries on Epicurus are mostly written by people who disagree with large aspects of the philosophy, and who want to pick bits and pieces of it just to pursue their own agendas (primarily based on virtue-based ethics). Everyone is going to want to deal with this issues in their own way, but this is the reason for the part of our website which states that it is devoted to "[Classical Epicurean Philosophy](#)" and not "neo-Epicureanism"

[About Us: Classical Epicurean Philosophy Unadulterated by Humanism, Platonism, Stoicism, Buddhism, or Other Eclecticism](#)

#### Quote

- The necessity of dealing with violent external enemies raised on hate who will be "harder" than you chill garden people (I had to reassure this guy I'm not a pacifist, but it remains an issue how much to compromise in the name of defence)

Again this objection would be a killer if true, but there is no reason to accept it. There is every reason to believe that Epicurus and his friends complied with their military service. No one ever accused them of refusing to serve when their time came, and you can be sure that would have been charged had it happened. As in the first answer, you can cite Torquatus, Cassius Longinus, and even Julius Caesar himself as people who were either explicit or implicit Epicureans. "Passivism" as a goal makes no more sense than "virtue," as a goal. Sometimes it is a good idea, sometimes a terrible idea. "Turning the other cheek" is Christianity, not Epicureanism.

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At a deep level you have to come to terms with whether a person is so afraid of pain that they want to adopt fantasy answers, or whether they want the truth. Not everyone wants the truth and those who don't are not going to be at home with Epicurean philosophy. Epicurus appeals mostly to those who see life as intrinsically pleasurable, rather than intrinsically suffering (such as Buddhism or the like) or those who would have preferred never to have been born, or who are in revolt against nature because they themselves think they are superior to nature. You could go on and on with this answer but this is a part of the reason that Epicurus advised not giving in to "the crowd" and to their false beliefs, and Diogenes of Oinoanda pointed out how the crowd catches the disease of false beliefs like sheep. You do your best to help everyone who wants to be helped, but there are lots who don't and you can't let them hold you and your friends back from living happily yourselves.

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- A sense that this philosophy is "for individuals" (or friend groups) and is somehow disconnected from wider politics, something that only the privileged can do, and that does not address world issues (my usual response to this is instead of trying to influence how people vote, which is "downstream" of their beliefs and values, I see more potential in going "upstream" to these beliefs and values themselves - imagine how a world of Epicureans would vote)

As to the philosophy being only for the privileged, that too comes from the false definition of pleasure as ONLY consisting of luxury and sensual stimulation. As for Epicureans being aloof from politics, that is a false idea in large part. Epicurus advised against pursuing a political CAREER, as that places you at the mercy of the mob, but he did not advise against action when action is appropriate. This is developed very well in the Boeri book referenced here on the cite (podcast interview with the author is here):

The Lucretius Today Podcast Interviews:

**Dr. Marcelo Boeri**

co-author of

**THEORY AND PRACTICE IN**

**EPICUREAN POLITICAL**

**PHILOSOPHY:**

**Security, Justice, And Tranquility**



Blog Article

**[Lucretius Today Interviews Dr. Marcelo Boeri - co-author of "Theory and Practice of Epicurean Political Philosophy: Security, Justice, and Tranquility"](https://www.epicureanfriends.com/thread/4302-toronto-canada-meetup-group-discussion-on-implementation/)**

In Episode 197 of the Lucretius Today Podcast, on October 19, 2023, we were privileged to speak with Dr. Marcelo Boeri, co-author with Javier Aoiz of **Theory and Practice In Epicurean Political Philosophy - Security, Justice, and Tranquility**. Professor of Ancient Philosophy at the Pontifical Catholic University of Chile. Dr. Boeri is originally from Buenos Aires, and after receiving his Ph.D. from the University of Salvador in 1995, he has worked extensively in the field of Ancient Greek...



Cassius

October 22, 2023 at 8:20 PM

As mentioned before, we have a rule against pursuing politics here at the forum, and I would advise something similar in any local group, especially in getting off the ground. But that is not a policy against individuals pursuing political issues outside the group, and in fact I personally advise engagement and participation in anything you think will truly lead to greater pleasure for you. The problem with allowing those discussions within the groups is that they are too divisive, and they will lead to the false perception that Epicurean philosophy is necessarily capitalist or communist or left or right or any other necessary grouping. There are clearly some things (primarily supernatural religion) which are off limits due to the philosophy itself, but like-minded friends can organize themselves in many different ways and still be entirely consistent with core Epicurean views. For those who want to debate, it's the aloofness and asceticism of Stoicism that would by nature lead to inactivity. David Sedley has a good article on "The Ethics of Brutus and Cassius" which mentions how -- if you want to talk about resistance to 'tyranny' for example - it's the Stoics who generally postured rather than acted when action was deemed appropriate.

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## Post by “Kalosyni” of February 24, 2025 at 7:14 AM

### [Quote from AxA](#)

One guy even said afterwards that this was exactly the philosophy he's been looking for.

Are you offering (or planning to offer) anything for those individuals? ....those who may want more resources, such as books to read: "Living for Pleasure" by Emily Austin (for someone who is not wanting a deep dive but it generally explains it well) and "Epicurus and His Philosophy" by DeWitt (for someone who enjoys detailed deep dives). I myself would hesitate to recommend the forum itself, because it is a very time consuming endeavor, so only good for those who have tremendous concentration and time to sift through things (I really need to finish working

on some basic introductory materials). Cassius has produced some introductory videos, many which are very detailed and which may be good for some folks to check out. This early one is a good one to start with, as it is not too long, but yet covers 5 important aspects:

<https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=fobzlg-x6s0>

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## Post by “Kalosyni” of February 24, 2025 at 7:53 AM

And also, "Congratulations" (just as Don said above) because it's pretty awesome, and I've thought about starting a group myself, but I'm feeling that where I live may make it a bit difficult. (Also, to come up with answers to people's questions right off the cuff, could prove challenging...the forum gives space and time for answering 😊)

### [Quote from AxA](#)

Some of the objections that came up:

- Pain as a source of meaning vs boring bland state of continuous pleasure (I did not even get into the whole "pleasure as absence of pain" definitional issue, and this came up at the end and was never really addressed)

Perhaps this was a reaction to a phrase such as "living a life of simple pleasures" ? (...would need to know what exactly they were reacting to)... or simply the idea of "continuous pleasure" which comes up in Cicero's Torquatus section as a goal for an Epicurean. I could see the idea of continuous pleasure as being just a kind of idealized goal, or perhaps it would be said of the wise elder or Epicurean teacher).

As for pleasures, all pleasures...both ones which are sensory, vary with intensity, location, and duration, as well as those of good health, good internal feeling, and satisfaction with one's life. The sensory pleasures are always in flux, and pain will come because of the natural state of living.

Also, I think that there are two (or more) flavors of Epicurean philosophy (and Epicureans). 1) the early time when Epicurus was alive (or early Garden, and generations close to the time of Epicurus) and would include the lifestyle of Epicurean philosophy students. 2) later Roman times which were removed from the core studies and included wealthy Romans.

We see in Diogenese Laertius Book 10, that Metrodorus (who was Epicurus' closest student) left for 6 months to journey across the Aegean Sea to visit his family in his home town of Lampsacus. This of course would have likely had some level of risk, but the Epicurean would

wisely minimize risk by making the journey at the safest time of year for crossing.

Regarding "pain as a source of meaning" - that possibly could be a remnant left over from Christianity: If God is all powerful then why does he allow suffering to exist in the world? Their answer: because he wants to test you and teach you important lessons. (No wonder the world is so screwed up, because the "perfect love" of God is itself evil. As humans (human animals) we inherently dislike pain and suffering, so then to try to extract some meaning from it seems twisted.(for [more on the Trilemma you can check out this](#))

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### **Post by “Eikadistes” of February 24, 2025 at 12:29 PM**

Out of curiosity, do you know what the general, demographic spread is of religious involvement in your area? I am so pleased with the response to your invitation, and surprised. I am mired in (as I think is the case with a few of us) a Southern Christian swamp (*literally*) near the genitals of the Bible Belt, and the ideological bubble in which I find myself is thick with criticism toward the Other.

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### **Post by “Bryan” of February 24, 2025 at 5:42 PM**

#### [Quote from Cassius](#)

There is every reason to believe that Epicurus and his friends complied with their military service.

Yes, as we know Herodotus wrote a book (Περὶ Ἐπικούρου ἐφηβείας), Hicks translates this title *On the Training of Epicurus as a Cadet*. The new Oxford edition translates it very literally *On Epicurus' Ephebic Training*, and explains simply "in ancient Athens, young men of citizen status were required to undergo military training."

But of course he did not go as far as Plato, who "went on service three times, first to Tanagra, secondly to Corinth, and thirdly at Delium, where also he obtained the prize of valour." (DL 3.8)

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### **Post by “Cassius” of February 24, 2025 at 5:51 PM**

### [Quote from Bryan](#)

Yes, as we know Herodotus wrote a book (Περὶ Ἐπικούρου ἐφηβείας), Hicks translates this tile On the Training of Epicurus as a Cadet. The

Bryan - is this also in book 10?

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### **Post by “Bryan” of February 24, 2025 at 6:46 PM**

Yes, going to "Athens at the age of eighteen" is at the start and then we have *On the Training of Epicurus as a Cadet* mentioned at just 10.4.

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### **Post by “AxA” of February 25, 2025 at 12:30 PM**

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Blog Article

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## Justice, and Tranquility"

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I think I'm going to have to get into the definition of pleasure issue in the very next discussion.

The idea of life being "primarily suffering" vs "primarily pleasure" is interesting, and I might just say that if you see life as primarily suffering, you will probably find greater comfort in Christianity, Buddhism, and Stoicism, which seek to "revolt against" or "transcend" nature to escape from suffering or somehow give it meaning. I'm very fortunate to live a primarily pleasant life, and I want to spread that and be around others who also feel this or who are at least open to the possibility of a mostly pleasant life.

I sometimes start to get excited about the idea of spreading and expanding the movement, but I have to keep reminding myself that having 10 excellent friends is far better than having 10,000 followers.

I want to encourage this to spread, but I like the idea of a large number of microcommunities based around compatible groups of friends. No need for one unified organization that works for everyone. If groups of Christians, Buddhists and Stoics form friendly associations where they support each other as good friends then that's a net good for everyone. Some Epicurean ideas could be helpful for them even if they reject a lot of the others.

In fact, of all the Epicurean ideas we covered, I think the extreme high value placed on friendship is the most significant of all. Something that could be a benefit even to people who disagree with everything else in the philosophy.

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## Post by "AxA" of February 25, 2025 at 12:38 PM

[Quote from Kalosyni](#)

[Quote from AxA](#)

One guy even said afterwards that this was exactly the philosophy he's been looking for.

Are you offering (or planning to offer) anything for those individuals? ....those who may want more resources, such as books to read: "Living for Pleasure" by Emily Austin (for someone who is not wanting a deep dive but it generally explains it well) and "Epicurus and His Philosophy" by DeWitt (for someone who enjoys detailed deep dives). I myself would hesitate to recommend the forum itself, because it is a very time consuming endeavor, so only good for those who have tremendous concentration and time to sift through things (I really need to finish working on some basic introductory materials). Cassius has produced some introductory videos, many which are very detailed and which may be good for some folks to check out. This early one is a good one to start with, as it is not too long, but yet covers 5 important aspects:

<https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=fobzlg-x6s0>

This is a big open question that I see there has been much discussion about on this forum. How to introduce the philosophy? I watched a couple of videos on the Epicurean Friends youtube channel which have been good. Also one little presentation that I really like is this little play:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zw9QoJXliXg>

There's certainly room to more fully develop a program from total beginner through to solid understanding of the philosophy. Something with a link that could be shared with anyone with

an interest.

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### Post by “Cassius” of February 25, 2025 at 12:42 PM

#### [Quote from AxA](#)

I'm very fortunate to live a primarily pleasant life, and I want to spread that and be around others who also feel this or who are at least open to the possibility of a mostly pleasant life

Thomas Jefferson's "head and heart" letter has a very good line to the effect that "the greater part of life is sunshine" as is also very useful in general on the point that the feeling of pleasure / happiness is more important to us than logical analysis. He stages a debate between head and heart and the "head" does not come out the clear winner over feeling

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### Post by “AxA” of February 25, 2025 at 12:54 PM

#### [Quote from Kalosyni](#)

And also, "Congratulations" (just as Don said above) because it's pretty awesome, and I've thought about starting a group myself, but I'm feeling that where I live may make it a bit difficult. (Also, to come up with answers to people's questions right off the cuff, could prove challenging...the forum gives space and time for answering 😊)

#### [Quote from AxA](#)

Some of the objections that came up:

- Pain as a source of meaning vs boring bland state of continuous pleasure (I did not even get into the whole "pleasure as absence of pain" definitional issue, and this came up at the end and was never really addressed)

Perhaps this was a reaction to a phrase such as "living a life of simple pleasures" ? (...would need to know what exactly they were reacting to)... or simply the idea of

"continuous pleasure" which comes up in Cicero's Torquatus section as a goal for an Epicurean. I could see the idea of continuous pleasure as being just a kind of idealized goal, or perhaps it would be said of the wise elder or Epicurean teacher).

As for pleasures, all pleasures...both ones which are sensory, vary with intensity, location, and duration, as well as those of good health, good internal feeling, and satisfaction with one's life. The sensory pleasures are always in flux, and pain will come because of the natural state of living.

Also, I think that there are two (or more) flavors of Epicurean philosophy (and Epicureans). 1) the early time when Epicurus was alive (or early Garden, and generations close to the time of Epicurus) and would include the lifestyle of Epicurean philosophy students. 2) later Roman times which were removed from the core studies and included wealthy Romans.

We see in Diogenese Laertius Book 10, that Metrodorus (who was Epicurus' closest student) left for 6 months to journey across the Aegean Sea to visit his family in his home town of Lampsacus. This of course would have likely had some level of risk, but the Epicurean would wisely minimize risk by making the journey at the safest time of year for crossing.

Regarding "pain as a source of meaning" - that possibly could be a remnant left over from Christianity: If God is all powerful then why does he allow suffering to exist in the world? Their answer: because he wants to test you and teach you important lessons. (No wonder the world is so screwed up, because the "perfect love" of God is itself evil. As humans (human animals) we inherently dislike pain and suffering, so then to try to extract some meaning from it seems twisted.(for [more on the Trilemma you can check out this](#))

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I encourage everyone to do something in person anywhere in the world. I believe it only takes one other person to join to make it worthwhile!

I would suggest that it's not necessary for the host to be an authority on Epicurean philosophy and be able to answer any questions at all. It can simply be a gathering of people who are interested in studying it and trying it out in practice in one way or another. Somebody asked me what is the Epicurean position on animal or non-human consciousness, and I said I don't know and I'd have to look into it.

The idea of endless pleasure being boring is an interesting response, one that never occurred to me. But I think there would be enough variation of pleasure (that point was never raised), and enough pains are sure to come up anyway along the way, in addition to all the pains that are deliberately chosen because of the greater pleasure they allow. So once again, it's a matter of

perspective.

If pain itself had value, why not bang your head against a wall when you're feeling bored and meaningless? I think it's more that pain can be connected with things that are considered meaningful, like overcoming obstacles, achieving difficult tasks, etc. So the mistake would be to glorify the pain itself rather than seeing it as a tradeoff where we accept pain in order to gain the greater pleasure of a job well done.

But the culture of "hard work", "discipline", "overcoming our natures", etc. etc. runs deep.

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## Post by “AxA” of February 25, 2025 at 1:03 PM

### [Quote from Eikadistes](#)

Out of curiosity, do you know what the general, demographic spread is of religious involvement in your area? I am so pleased with the response to your invitation, and surprised. I am mired in (*as I think is the case with a few of us*) a Southern Christian swamp (*literally*) near the genitals of the Bible Belt, and the ideological bubble in which I find myself is thick with criticism toward the Other.

Toronto is very demographically mixed, and I believe most of the religious enthusiasm comes from recent immigration, while long time locals are fleeing far away from religion, with average ages in the formerly dominant churches (e.g. the Anglicans) approaching senior citizen levels. The popular zeal that once went into religion, I find is now often devoted to progressive political causes.

But I wouldn't let any Bible Belt hold me back from holding a gathering, unless I actually felt our safety threatened (in which case I would probably want to move out). Even in the heaviest religious areas, I believe there is always a crop of misfits rebelling against it and looking for a place to go. Even if it's only 10%, even 5%. Because as I keep saying, it only takes one other attendee to make it worthwhile. Really, if I had a circle of 5-10 great friends, I would be set for life. So big numbers aren't needed.

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## Post by “AxA” of March 23, 2025 at 12:21 PM

Report on the in-person March Eikas in Toronto:

This was the group's second meetup and the first pot luck.

It was generally a good discussion and the people were generally pleased, but I learned a few lessons on how to improve it as well.

There were about 20 people present. We went around the circle for a chance to say names and add any other comment (suggestions being why you came, what a good life means to you, or something about the food). This brought up some questions which I talked about a bit, such as about the "gods don't trouble us" and "[death is nothing to us](#)" points. I also introduced some of the justice concepts that we didn't get to in the first meeting (no absolute justice, only by agreement). Someone asked about the natural/necessary taxonomy, which led to questions about the Epicurean view of sex (which I described as being generally more trouble than it's worth).

The conversation took a turn towards the benefits or harms of technology, and through the mention of the harms of social media, led to a discussion of anger and rage and whether one or both or neither are useful. Then it was time to pack up so I steered the topic back toward the idea of applying anger towards useful action.

Lesson #1: saying "bring whatever you want" to a pot luck, and especially in a place without kitchen facilities, led to more of a collection of snacks than a full meal. So for next time, I'm going to implement a more organized signup system where people can sign up for each of the components of a complete meal.

Other tasks to also be delegated include being background music DJ and being gatekeeper/welcomer, both of which I did myself and were distracting.

Lesson #2: The later conversation meandered and felt somewhat random. A unifying topic will help to guide the discussion. A good one to start with for next time: "What does friendship mean to you?"

Lesson #3: I always imagined these events as a single circle, with all of us facing each other and speaking together, but I also never imagined there being more than 5-10 people showing up. 20 barely holds together as a single conversation circle, and it doesn't give enough time for each person to talk. So next time, I will have at least part of the event broken into smaller groups of maybe around 5-6.

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## **Post by "Cassius" of March 23, 2025 at 3:06 PM**

Great insights and thanks for posting them! All these will be of use in the future.

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## **Post by “AxA” of April 4, 2025 at 4:09 PM**

Last night we had 9 people meet in a “tea house” environment.

I found the smaller group size made for a more natural conversation. But it was a pub-like environment with far too much background noise.

It was framed as an “open discussion” with the Epicurus quotes in my pamphlet as starting points.

I found the most success posing a question that went around the table: “Is life mostly suffering, with some pleasure, or mostly pleasure, with some suffering?” I was expecting a simple answer, just to set up my idea that people who believe life is more suffering than pleasure are more likely to favour beliefs about denying the body and embracing transcendent spiritual realms or afterlives. But instead it led to some very detailed and varied insights on this topic.

We had an issue with a attendee who showed up halfway through and started delivering comedic monologues, always ready to jump in and speak at length. I had to repeatedly stop him and redirect the conversation to others. He had some good commentary and good jokes. He seemed to be aware of what he was doing, even used the term “monologue” and said he “accepts correction”. So he was willing to be interrupted and yield the floor, but it seems like it would require active intervention to maintain a round table discussion. Once again, I’m learning the requirements of being an active moderator, much more than my original idea of saying “talk about whatever you want”.

We ended with: “The optional “homework” is to think of ways of bringing this philosophy to life other than talking. Conversation will always of course have an important place in philosophy, but I’m interested in all the other ways to turn these ideas into real life effects. The suggestions so far have been boxing, interpretive dance, and eating (either feasting on cheese or just eating bread, olives and water after a long walk for “hunger sauce” lol).”

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## **Post by “Cassius” of April 4, 2025 at 4:28 PM**

Thanks for the detailed updates. These are fascinating and useful!

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## **Post by “Kalosyni” of April 5, 2025 at 10:57 AM**

[AxA](#) That's great that you had another meeting with such a good turn out!

[Quote from AxA](#)

We ended with: "The optional "homework" is to think of ways of bringing this philosophy to life other than talking. Conversation will always of course have an important place in philosophy, but I'm interested in all the other ways to turn these ideas into real life effects. The suggestions so far have been boxing, interpretive dance, and eating (either feasting on cheese or just eating bread, olives and water after a long walk for "hunger sauce" lol)."

Some thoughts and suggestions...

The philosophy of Epicurus has many conceptual sub-categories dealing with specific aspects:

- knowledge and study of natural physics
- the knowledge of how we can know if something is true
- overcoming the fear of death through understanding the true nature of human beings
- the true nature of pleasure and pain
- prudence and wise choices
- pursuing pleasure and ethical living which leads to well-being (eudiamonia)

You could create specific homework assignments that deal with these and other specific aspects and concepts of Epicurean Philosophy which would require study and contemplation.

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**Post by "Kalosyni" of April 5, 2025 at 11:47 AM**

[Quote from AxA](#)

just eating bread, olives and water after a long walk for "hunger sauce" lol)."

Regarding "just eating bread,..." --- VS. 63 - Frugality too has a limit, and the man who disregards it is like him who errs through excess.

## Post by “Eikadistes” of April 5, 2025 at 12:30 PM

Frugality has a limit for Epicureans, true, but bread and water are not described as frugal pleasures:

**"Therefore I teem with sweet [sensations] through a modest body, desiring water and bread, and I spit upon pleasures that come from extravagance not *because of them*, but because of the *difficulties* that follow them. (Usener Fragment 181 / Bailey 37)**

"[T]hen [Dioklés](#) in the third [book] of his *Epitome* affirms [Epíkouros] **lived his cheapest and simplest life; 'well a teacup,' [he] affirms 'of the cheap wine is sufficient, but just the water would be the [preferred] drink [for] us.'**" (*Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers* 10.11).

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## Post by “Kalosyni” of April 5, 2025 at 4:02 PM

And fragment 182 -- Epicurus asks to be sent cheese.

181. Living on bread and water, βρυάζω τῷ κατὰ τὸ  
I rejoice in the pleasure of σωματίον ἡδεῖ, ὕδατι καὶ  
my body and spit upon the ἄρτω χρώμενος, καὶ  
pleasures of extravagance, προσπτύω ταῖς ἐκ  
not for what they are but πολυτελείας ἡδοναῖς οὐ δι'  
because of the difficulties αὐτάς, ἀλλὰ διὰ τὰ  
that follow from them. ἐξακολουθοῦντα αὐταῖς  
δυσχερῇ.

182. Send me a little vessel of πέμψον μοι τυροῦ κυθρίδιον,  
cheese, so that I may feast ἵν' ὅταν βούλωμαι

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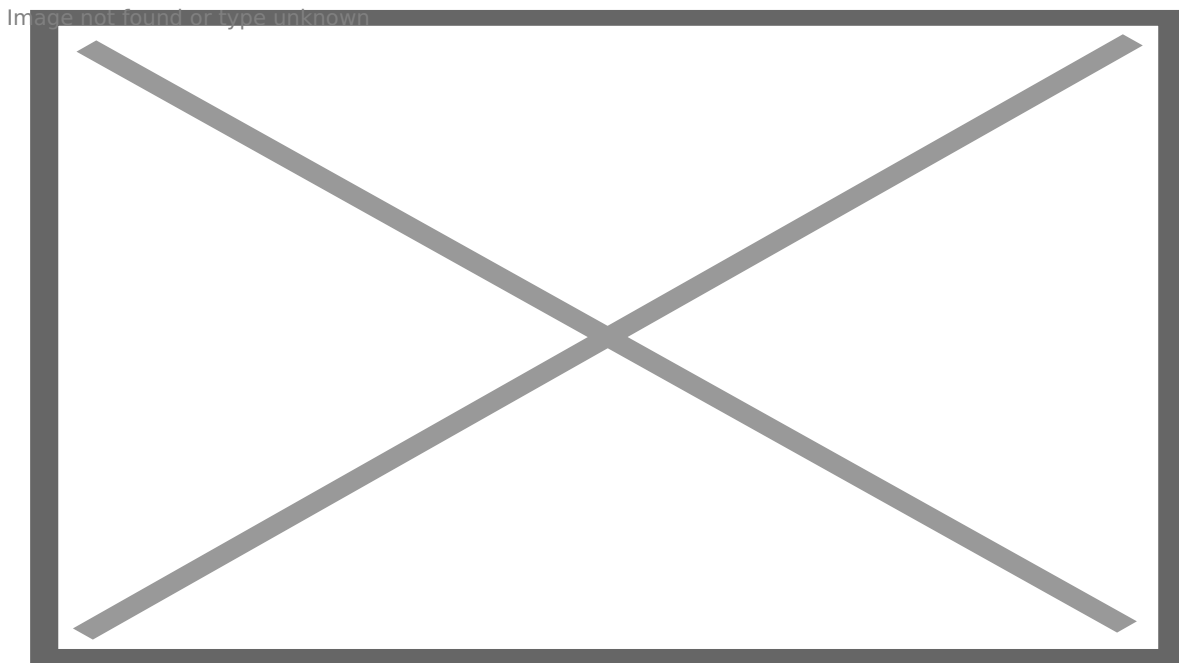
## Post by "AxA" of April 28, 2025 at 11:36 AM

Here's the message I sent out to all group members after our last gathering, a pot luck on Saturday:

Thank you to all who have been a part of this experiment.

I started this group because talking about the "big questions" has always been one of my favourite activities. I recently discovered the surprisingly refreshing philosophy of Epicurus, and I was surprised how almost nobody had even heard of these ideas. So I wanted to meet some others who also enjoy these topics and enjoy some philosophical discussion together.

I was initially imagining 5 people sitting around a cafe table, and I was blown away by the big turnout. My first learning curve was how to actually have a group conversation. As a rules minimalist, I actually started with "everybody can share whatever they want about whatever topic they feel is important" lol. And so I learned what a moderator is and what a real art and skill it is to guide a group conversation. I kept hearing from multiple sources that there is one meetup group that has really nailed how to do this: Practical Philosophy.



[Practical Philosophy Club - Ontario \[ \] \[ \] | Meetup](#)

The goal of the Practical Philosophy Club is to create a community that is open discussing ideas that can be used practically in everyday life. Our discussions...

[www.meetup.com](http://www.meetup.com)

We've had four group discussions in total, and each one has provided some surprising new ideas for me and some tasty food for thought. But I also found that these group discussions are not the way I find most rewarding to discuss philosophy. I've learned to respect and admire the position of a moderator to handle all the different personalities and shape a discussion into something that is valuable for all. But I don't find it particularly pleasant. My ideal for a philosophical conversation is more like two people walking in a park. Maybe three or four. Where there's room for each person to go into depth about what they each consider important.

So once I realized this, the second phase of the experiment was the idea that instead of talking about philosophy, I want to find ways to "put it into practice". But what does that even mean? As was pointed out to me last night, philosophy is something that is expressed not in any particular activity but in the way we live in totality. Our philosophy comes out in our style, the way we do every little thing.

The one thing that came to mind for me was the practice of communal eating. I believe this is a very good activity in so many ways. I love the idea of full on community meal prep. But the simplest way into this is with a simple potluck meal. So this was my next learning curve. Once again I started with the minimal rules possible: "everybody bring whatever you want". Which resulted in an assortment of snacks and 50 leftover tangerines (which I took home, peeled and froze lol). And so I learned with the help of this group how to do a potluck. Thanks to this new level of organization, the new generously hosted venue, and everyone's participation in bringing an impressive variety of dishes, I was very satisfied with what came together as a real full potluck meal last night. I was pleased to see the general good cheer and enjoyment in the room and I was glad to be part of making that event happen for everyone's benefit. But it was general group socializing, something I don't particularly enjoy myself. I love an in depth one on one conversation, and I love doing useful work in a group, but just with my personality, I don't find much pleasure in that kind of group chatting.

So that reaches the conclusion of the second phase of my experiment, and I don't yet have a third phase in mind.

I would love to hear from any and all of you, either in the whatsapp group (contact me by meetup message if you'd like an invite link) or in a private message. What brought you to this group? What worked and what didn't? What do you imagine this group could be? And if you could make this group anything you wanted just for you, what would it be like?

Thank you for enriching my life with these experiences. Before 2025, everything that's happened here was not even in my imagination.