

# Is there Choice without satisfaction? What's the name of the pleasure of Choice itself?

Post by "Julia" of March 15, 2025 at 10:06 PM

Dear friends 😊

a while ago, I wrote about the [guidance of satisfaction](#) (post #4), and how it helps me avoid the loss of deliberate action and purposeful agency characteristic of kleros (κλήρος) and dioko (διώκω) ([post #11](#), and [post #27](#)), which I consider to be the passive versions of Choice (conquer/master/capture) and Avoidance (flee/set free), which are both active and deliberate. Currently, I wonder:

Assuming my hedonic calculator made no mistake, and further assuming that no unforeseen event (weather, other people, human error on my part, ...) prevents me from succeeding with what I had set out to do: is it safe to say that every Choice is followed by satisfaction (in addition to other pleasures) and every Avoidance is followed by relief (in addition to other pleasures)?

Please note that I am not arguing that satisfaction and relief could replace Pleasure as the guide to life. I am asking: Can one have made a Choice despite not having any satisfaction to look forward to? Can one have decided on an Avoidance without having any relief to look forward to? Thus, is the concrete anticipation (lower-case "anticipation" in the non-Epicurean casual sense of the word) of satisfaction / relief a reliable indicator that a successful Choice / Avoidance decision has been made?

And finally: When I commit (using "commitment" in the sense of non-flakiness, not in the sense of duty; further details see [here](#) in posts #29 & #30) to a Choice, that mental operation in itself brings about a pleasurable "Let's do this!"-type energy which would not be present with mere uncommitted, remaining-passive dioko. What is the name of this pleasure? What is the name of the pleasure of Choice itself? It also exists with Avoidance as opposed to kleros: There is a rousing, electric pleasure associated with saying "I will take no more, I will now defend myself against this pain!" Does this have a name? Do we have a (modern or ancient) word for this? 😊

In case you wonder why any of this matters: I think it's very important to note that the act of making a Choice / Avoidance decision is itself a pleasure, because that immediate gratification conditions the brain towards making Choices / Avoidances in the first place. More importantly, when (re-)learning proper Choice / Avoidance, it seems to me to be a useful test to ask oneself "Am I looking forward to satisfaction / relief?" because if not, the Choice / Avoidance procedure was faulty or incomplete. I am still making a lot of half-hearted would-be Choices / Avoidances,

and keep ending up in the pain of dioko / kleros passivity and all its consequences, and it is through mentally bringing into the present the anticipated satisfaction / relief that I am learning to fix that: Either I cannot yet readily bring any satisfaction / relief to mind, which means my Choice / Avoidance was too vague; or I am still unconscious of the foreseeable satisfaction / relief, which means my commitment is lacking and I'm probably in dioko / kleros. My underlying question being: "Is that just me, or is this a general principle?" If it were a general principle, I imagine it would be useful to other newcomers to the Garden, especially those who are pained by a lack of activity overall or a lack of deliberate activity 😊

Thank you 😊

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## Post by "Cassius" of March 16, 2025 at 7:00 AM

### [Quote from Julia](#)

I think it's very important to note that the act of making a Choice / Avoidance decision is itself a pleasure, because that immediate gratification conditions the brain towards making Choices / Avoidances in the first place.

Here's a first effort at a response:

On a very basic level I'd start off observing that it seems to me that Epicurus is saying that simply being alive and not in pain is pleasurable, so the act of choosing / avoiding would also be classified as pleasurable unless there's something specifically painful about the situation.

Now it is necessary at times to think about this to realize it, because some choices may not involve immediate mental or physical stimulation, and the standard philosophical position other than Epicurus was/is that there is a neutral state where you are experiencing neither pleasure nor pain.

So I do think it's correct to say that in general being alive and making a choice / avoidance is pleasurable, and it's important to think that way. But to suggest to someone that exercising choice is going to produce immediate pleasurable "stimulation" in the sense of eating candy isn't likely to be the way to look at it.

So I see this as an occasion to be very clear about what is meant by pleasure.

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## Post by "Cassius" of March 16, 2025 at 8:12 AM

Probably not directly on point but also relevant to this is the vatican saying -- Necessity is an EVIL, but [there is no necessity to live under the control of necessity](#).

To me, that's a statement that the ability to choose and avoid is a good, which means it is a pleasure.

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## Post by "Kalosyni" of March 16, 2025 at 8:38 AM

Just throwing this into the mix, from Cicero's Torquatus section:

Quote

[62] XIX. But these doctrines may be stated in a certain manner so as not merely to disarm our criticism, but actually to secure our sanction. For this is the way in which Epicurus represents the wise man as continually happy; he keeps his passions within bounds; about death he is indifferent; he holds true views concerning the eternal gods apart from all dread; he has no hesitation in crossing the boundary of life, if that be the better course. Furnished with these advantages he is continually in a state of pleasure, and there is in truth no moment at which he does not experience more pleasures than pains. For he remembers the past with thankfulness, and the present is so much his own that he is aware of its importance and its agreeableness, nor is he in dependence on the future, but awaits it while enjoying the present; he is also very far removed from those defects of character which I quoted a little time ago, and when he compares the fool's life with his own, he feels great pleasure. And pains, if any befall him, have never power enough to prevent the wise man from finding more reasons for joy than for vexation.

And highlighting this section:

**"For he remembers the past with thankfulness, and the present is so much his own that he is aware of its importance and its agreeableness, nor is he in dependence on the future, but awaits it while enjoying the present;"**

So this would be about a kind of satisfaction because of the agreeableness of the present moment. And it seems like it would be a kind of a feeling of flow, not striving over things, not worry or ruminating, because one's "house" (life) is set up properly and in order.

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## Post by "Julia" of March 16, 2025 at 9:04 AM

### [Quote from Cassius](#)

to suggest to someone that exercising choice is going to produce immediate pleasurable "stimulation" in the sense of eating candy

That's not quite the way I meant it. More like: Exercising Choice is going to produce an immediate pleasure because 1. the pain of being in a state of indecision ends and 2. the pain of being in a state of lack-of-agency, a state of letting life happen to oneself instead of taking control (in so far as is possible) ends (that 2nd point is what differentiates Choice from dioko [in the sense laid out in post #27](#)).

### [Quote from Cassius](#)

Probably not directly on point but also relevant to this is the vatican saying -- Necessity is an EVIL, but [there is no necessity to live under the control of necessity](#).

To me, that's a statement that the ability to choose and avoid is a good, which means it is a pleasure.

To me, this is the rejection of fatalism, the rejection of preordained fate; I agree with it, but that alone doesn't necessarily make me take charge of my life (which is an unhealthy behaviour on my part), nor does it help me assess or continually check for whether or not I have truly made a Choice or Avoidance (rather than living through my day in a sleepwalky autopilot trance, largely devoid of deliberate action).

I aimed more at where Kalosyni is going:

### [Quote from Kalosyni](#)

"For he remembers the past with thankfulness, and the present is so much his own that he is aware of its importance and its agreeableness, nor is he in dependence on the future, but awaits it while enjoying the present;"

So this would be about a kind of satisfaction because of the agreeableness of the present moment. And it seems like it would be a kind of a feeling of flow, not striving over things, not worry or ruminating, because one's "house" (life) is set up properly and in order.

Yes, and this is the compounding result of lots of Choice and Avoidance (plus following through on it). Sort of like: I *chose* to wipe my bathroom mirror. I don't like doing it, but I know the result

will be satisfying. I can assess that I have indeed made a Choice if I can name what will bring me satisfaction in the future and am able to visualise it or "bring it into the present" as I said above.

I very much like the line "the present is so much his own that he is aware of its importance and its agreeableness" because for the present to be able to be my own implies that I have taken charge of my own life in the past (Choice/Avoidance plus following through) instead of letting it happen at me (dioko/kleros).

To rephrase it all: "When there is no anticipated satisfaction nor an anticipated relief, which I could specifically name, I cannot possibly have completed the Choice or Avoidance operation in my mind yet."

Would you agree that this rephrased statement is correct?

(Of course, after having Chosen / decided to Avoid something, I also need to follow through; that's not what I am wondering about, though. I'm specifically looking at what happens beforehand.)

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## Post by "Kalosyni" of March 16, 2025 at 2:50 PM

### [Quote from Julia](#)

To rephrase it all: "When there is no anticipated satisfaction nor an anticipated relief, which I could specifically name, I cannot possibly have completed the Choice or Avoidance operation in my mind yet."

Would you agree that this rephrased statement is correct?

(Of course, after having Chosen / decided to Avoid something, I also need to follow through; that's not what I am wondering about, though. I'm specifically looking at what happens beforehand.)

I'm feeling something subtle here...perhaps to name it as "an urge to control everything". And I think that this attitude can become a problem. There are a lot of things that happen just by chance, but we make do and go with the flow. But it is very good to focus on the important things when making choices, such as where to go to college, what to major in, whether to get into a relationship for the purpose of marriage or stay single, or whether or not to have children. But there are a lot of small things that often don't matter, in my opinion (such as whether or not, or when, to clean the bathroom mirror, and it depends on each individual as to

what brings pleasure and pain).

So I don't think it is important to feel or notice whether or not you've "completed the choice and avoidance operation" (as you stated above), because many things we do are based on habits that are automatic. If we do feel some pain then we should look to see what were doing wrong and then work on making changes to our habits.

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### **Post by “Julia” of March 16, 2025 at 7:22 PM**

I'm sorry, I was somewhat ambiguous as to how I mean my question(s); please allow me to clarify:

I don't try to control everything; I try to not mindlessly go about my days doing random things which I'll only regret. In that process, I'm often stuck in that middle-ground of dioko/kleros: Despite not having anything better to do, merely wishing my bathroom mirror was clean (dioko), instead of consciously deciding to clean it and committing to that decision (Choice), and instead I sleepwalk to the kitchen, get a snack despite not being hungry or go back to staring at the ceiling or doing something else that's at best useless, at worst self-sabotaging.

This is why I am so keen at finding something to habitually check for. Such as "name the satisfaction/relief that will come from this" and if I cannot do so, I see that I didn't actually do proper Choice/Avoidance.

This is why I wonder if there is a case where proper Choice/Avoidance has been done but there's still no anticipated (in the lower-case casual sense of anticipation) satisfaction/relief to come from the current action. It's really not that deep, and very pragmatic hands-on. I just want to make sure I'm not missing an edge-case or something, because I certainly cannot think of any Choice without foreseeable satisfaction (among other pleasures), nor can I think of any Avoidance without foreseeable relief (among other pleasures). Because the other pleasures are variable, simply checking for "What's the satisfaction/relief that'll come from this" is a dumbed-down, fool-proof, simple yet effective a "Did I *really* do Choice/Avoidance, or am I fooling myself, or in an autopilot trance?"-test as I could come up with.

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### **Post by “Cassius” of March 17, 2025 at 8:00 AM**

Quote from [Julia](#)

I just want to make sure I'm not missing an edge-case or something, because I certainly cannot think of any Choice without foreseeable satisfaction (among other pleasures), nor can I think of any Avoidance without foreseeable relief (among other pleasures

Are you asking this because you are writing an article and want to be complete, or because you see some practical use for the exercise?

I know you're asking something you see as helpful but I wonder if you are overthinking the issue (?)

If you're writing up something and you wish to dot an I or cross a T I can see that, but would you ever be able to get anything done if you were trying to actually live this way?

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### Post by “Eikadistes” of March 17, 2025 at 8:57 AM

I think that the pleasure *that is having choice* can be properly called [freedom](#).

In that sense, the pleasure of *having freedom* is different from the pleasures had from *doing things while free*. In that regard, I might argue, *then*, that **freedom** is a katestamatic pleasure.

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### Post by “Julia” of March 17, 2025 at 2:53 PM

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

would you ever be able to get anything done if you were trying to actually live this way?

I already am living this way as best I can. The reason is that as soon as I stop doing this I end up living similar to what Rand describes here:

#### Quote from Ayn Rand

Thinking is not an automatic function. In any hour and issue of his life, man is free to think or to evade that effort. Thinking requires a state of full, focused awareness. The act of focusing one's consciousness is volitional. Man can focus his mind to a full,

active, purposefully directed awareness of reality—or he can unfocus it and let himself drift in a semiconscious daze, merely reacting to any chance stimulus of the immediate moment, at the mercy of his undirected sensory-perceptual mechanism and of any random, associational connections it might happen to make.

My days work like this:

I decide on something (Choice/Avoidance), write it down, set a timer (5-60 minutes), and start doing what I decided upon. Once the time is up, I do that same thing again (which might result in simply continuing what I was doing). Without the timer, I get distracted with something different entirely, or lose myself in a pointless detail, so it acts as a fail-safe (worst case I lose 59 minutes). Without having to write down my Choice/Avoidance result, I lie to myself, and pretend that eating a box of ice cream was my Choice, even though it's 9am, I'm not hungry, and know full well I'll only regret it before I'm even half done. Or I'll lie to myself, saying that my Choice is to now research window wiping techniques on Youtube for three hours (which I'll only regret), instead of just cleaning my bathroom mirror (which would have brought me satisfaction plus other pleasures).

I'm not writing an article, I am trying to get my head straight and relearn how to function properly as an adult human. The point is not to turn myself into a robot, either. For example, I often write down: "Take a break" and set the timer to 30 minutes. The point is to stop sleepwalking through my life, drifting from one Pavlovian conditioning or object-action association to another, like some kind of zombie seeking immediate gratification, which in the vast majority of time ends with me doing things that I regret as soon as I dare to think about them -- such as wasting countless hours on nonsense, eating because I'm bored (instead of because I'm hungry), or doing something that doesn't need doing simply because the object caught my eye's attention ("Oh look, the vacuum cleaner. Haven't used that in a while!"). Most things worth doing require some level of delayed gratification (putting in a little work to make a pizza from scratch; actually cleaning the mirror), and most things that offer immediate gratification aren't worth doing (calling for delivery; the dopamine release of watching a mind-numbing infomercial).

I'm dotting my I's and crossing my T's for purely personal reasons, to make sure I'm not somehow breaking the Choice/Avoidance by checking for "What's the expected satisfaction/relief that'll come from this?"

#### [Quote from Eikadistes](#)

I think that the pleasure that is having choice can be properly called freedom.

In that sense, the pleasure of having freedom is different from the pleasures had from doing things while free. In that regard, I might argue, then, that freedom is a katestamatic pleasure.

I very much agree. My problem is, that I have the pleasure of a lot of freedom (but I won't have that forever, so it pains me to not be using it), and instead of using it to my advantage, I waste it with things I regret, because I simply don't think and am not deliberate in my actions. I'm technically conscious and aware, but I'm also...not. It's a very odd thing, that happens due to a virtually complete lack of outside interruption, outside demands, external structure. How would you keep yourself from wasting your time on immediate gratifications, if there were zero demands? There is no boss, no people, no pets, no deadline, no nothing. I suppose a lot of people fall into a slumber when they retire for that very reason, and unless they can find something external to structure their days, it'll be a tough nut to crack. I haven't retired, and there's no fishin' buddies to hang out with, either, so I need to keep myself on track, and this is how I do it:

By anchoring myself around a timer and a daily planner, and asking: "Will this bring either satisfaction or relief?"

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### **Post by “Godfrey” of March 17, 2025 at 8:00 PM**

For me, the immediate pleasure of choosing is that of agency. And this can build upon itself with tiny successes such as choosing to take a break, then taking it when the time comes.

I just finished reading a short book titled Time Surfing, by Paul Loomans, which talks about the power of taking breaks as one of the seven steps to intuitive productivity that he addresses in the book. As a retiree, I find his ideas in the book very appealing. One caveat, for [Cassius](#), is that the author is a Zen monk 😊 But, to paraphrase Seneca, take good ideas from wherever you may find them. Within reason, of course.

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### **Post by “Julia” of March 17, 2025 at 11:08 PM**

[Quote from Godfrey](#)

For me, the immediate pleasure of choosing is that of agency.

Yes, but this regards the mental operation of Choice/Avoidance itself, whereas...

[Quote from Godfrey](#)

And this can build upon itself with tiny successes such as choosing to take a break, then taking it when the time comes.

...whatever you Choose or Avoid will bring satisfaction and/or relief, won't it? Seems to me that

- Choice: to do something for satisfaction and other pleasures
- Avoidance: to do something for relief and other pleasures

are indeed valid definitions.

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## Post by “Godfrey” of March 18, 2025 at 12:47 AM

Quote from Julia

...whatever you Choose or Avoid will bring satisfaction and/or relief, won't it?

Not necessarily. For example, a bowl of ice cream at 9 in the morning might bring an excess of pain over pleasure. This could be in the form of anything from indigestion to self-self-loathing. For this reason, this choosing is a place where one can examine the category of desire being addressed. A prudent choice would then theoretically lead to a preponderance of pleasure, and an imprudent one to a preponderance of pain.

This brings to mind a previous thread discussing the best words in English for "choice" and "avoidance". I don't think any agreement was reached at the time, but in the current context it becomes apparent that a third word is needed which describes the act of reasoning/intuition that leads to a choice or avoidance. There may be such a word in the Greek, but that's beyond me. My offering at the moment is "weigh" for the act of reasoning/intuition, and "select" or "reject" for the intention resulting from said "weighing". After the intention comes the performing of the resultant action.

Looking at it in this way, it becomes a three step process: 1) weighing, 2) selecting or rejecting, and 3) doing. Further, as I'm thinking of it currently, 3) isn't "doing or not doing", it's actually doing one thing or doing another thing. Rejecting eating the 9am bowl of ice cream doesn't result in doing nothing but in moving on to another endeavor, be it active or passive. So in this way selecting isn't either/or, it's actually choice and avoidance. In selecting one thing, you reject another, and vice versa. This relates to the idea that there's no neutral state: just as we're always experiencing either pleasure or pain, we're never doing nothing unless we're dead. At any moment, we've chosen to do one thing and are avoiding myriad other things.

It would be interesting to know if the Greek supports this interpretation of and v or in any way.

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### Post by “Kalosyni” of March 18, 2025 at 1:54 AM

#### [Quote from Julia](#)

I lie to myself, and pretend that eating a box of ice cream was my Choice, even though it's 9am, I'm not hungry, and know full well I'll only regret it before I'm even half done.

In this example, you eating the ice cream is "doing" and so by default that is a "choice" that you made. Instead of labeling it "lying", try out the label of "justifying" (which is less harsh). There is a reason behind the action - possibly the desire for "entertainment" (novelty) or a desire to remove anxiety (through distraction). Also consider that modern foods are created with a very strong "yummy" factor, so if you know you have "trigger" foods (foods which when you start eating you are unable to stop) then make sure that you do not buy them or bring them into the house. Instead go out to a ice cream parlor and only buy a single scoop (once a month, or less, which makes it more special and more enjoyable). Substitute healthy foods for snacking (carrot sticks are great, etc).

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### Post by “Julia” of March 18, 2025 at 8:53 AM

#### [Quote from Godfrey](#)

So in this way selecting isn't either/or, it's actually choice and avoidance. In selecting one thing, you reject another, and vice versa. This relates to the idea that there's no neutral state

However, extending the "no neutral state" analogy once more, then every single point in time one is never honoring both sides of the same coin with perfectly equal strength. For example, even though they both exist on a continuum, "working against the risk of getting fired" is Avoidance, because one conceives of it as *actively moving away from* something, whereas "pursuing a promotion" is Choice, because one conceives of it as *actively moving towards* something. If I try, in my mind, to conceive of an action as being perfectly equally both αἵρεσις (haireisis, Choice) and φεύγω (pheugo, Avoidance), I fail. I always gravitate to one or the other reference point as my anchor: either the reference/anchor is where I want to be, or the

reference/anchor is where I do not want to be, but it is never *equally* both. Not in my mind, anyways 😊

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

In this example, you eating the ice cream is "doing" and so by default that is a "choice" that you made.

It is not an upper-case Epicurean Choice, because it is quite obvious to me that, all things considered, this would cause way more pain than pleasure. I'm only talking about upper-case Epicurean Choice (and upper-case Epicurean Avoidance), not the lower-case casual choice or lower-case casual avoidance.

#### [Quote from Godfrey](#)

For example, a bowl of ice cream at 9 in the morning might bring an excess of pain over pleasure.

Because it was just a lower-case casual choice, it doesn't bring satisfaction, it brings regret, so the suggested Choice/Avoidance-test of "Can you name the expected satisfaction/relief that'll come from this?" would have failed, because the answer would have been "No, I'm gonna regret this..."

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

There is a reason behind the action - possibly the desire for "entertainment" (novelty) or a desire to remove anxiety (through distraction).

Virtually all the ridiculous things I do are due to procrastination, which I have the conscious and emotional tools to bisect and deliberately counteract. However, I have to pause for a second and really be deliberate about it ("Human freedom involves our capacity to pause between the stimulus and response and, in that pause, to choose the one response toward which we wish to throw our weight." - Rollo May). Because of how things are, I need to artificially create an interruption to have a pause for thought (→ countdown timer), and I also need to force myself to use it, not just nod off whatever I was doing (→ write it down).

I don't pencil into my planner "9am: eat box of ice cream". The act of writing it down is what ensures I'm mentally present enough to not do dumb stuff — but living by the commands of my planner, having to write everything down, that is itself (well worth it, but also) a pain. Having a generic, universal question to check up on myself would be a great assistance, especially when I'm away from my timer/planner desk. I could ask "Will I regret this?" but that has the down-side of being negatively framed, of not doubling as a motivator. When I ask "Will this bring satisfaction/relief?" it is too easy to just answer "Yes" to everything, so it wouldn't be effective.

Only when I ask "Name the satisfaction/relief this will bring" am I forced to actually think about the consequences, and because they're positively framed, it also motivates me to follow through: "I'll have a clean mirror, and I love that" makes it easy to just do it real quick.

So all I wonder about is if anyone can come up with an upper-case Epicurean Choice (or Avoidance) where one would be unable to name/describe beforehand the satisfaction (or relief) this action will bring...

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## Post by “Kalosyni” of March 18, 2025 at 9:53 AM

### [Quote from Julia](#)

Only when I ask "Name the satisfaction/relief this will bring" am I forced to actually think about the consequences, and because they're positively framed, it also motivates me to follow through:

This is going beyond the scope of what we have available from the extant texts of Epicurus.

You might look onto "Compassionate Communication" (NVC) by Marshall Rosenberg:

### Quote

In Nonviolent Communication (NVC), Marshall Rosenberg posits that all human actions stem from the attempt to meet needs, and that there are nine major categories of basic human needs, often called "universal human needs": sustenance, safety, love, understanding/empathy, creativity, recreation, sense of belonging, autonomy, and meaning.

Here's a more detailed breakdown of these needs:

- **Sustenance:**

This encompasses the basic needs for survival, including food, clothing, shelter, and other necessities.

- **Safety:**

This includes protection from harm, both physical and emotional, as well as security and stability.

- **Love:**

This refers to the need for connection, belonging, and affection, not just romantic love, but also friendship, family, and community.

- **Understanding/Empathy:**

This is the need to be heard, understood, and validated, both by ourselves and by others.

- **Creativity:**

This encompasses the need for self-expression, innovation, and the ability to create and contribute.

- **Recreation:**

This includes the need for rest, relaxation, play, and enjoyment.

- **Sense of Belonging:**

This is the need to feel connected to others and to be part of a community or group.

- **Autonomy:**

This refers to the need for independence, self-determination, and the freedom to make choices.

- **Meaning:**

This encompasses the need for purpose, significance, and a sense of contribution to something larger than oneself.

Display More

For the last category "meaning", I would reframe it as "making sense of life/my life" (to avoid going into a religious framing of the concept of purpose).

[https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nonviolence\\_and\\_meaning](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nonviolence_and_meaning).

The communication aspect of NVC also includes internal habits of thinking.

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### Post by “Godfrey” of March 18, 2025 at 1:32 PM

*Quote from Julia*

*Only when I ask "Name the satisfaction/relief this will bring" am I forced to actually think about the consequences, and because they're positively framed, it also motivates me to follow through:*

*Quote from*

*This is going beyond the scope of what we have available from tKalosynihe extant texts of Epicurus*

**VS71. Ask this question of every desire: what will happen to me if the object of desire is achieved, and what if not?**

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### Post by “Kalosyni” of March 18, 2025 at 1:44 PM

<https://www.epicureanfriends.com/thread/4342-is-there-choice-without-satisfaction-what-s-the-name-of-the-pleasure-of-choice-i/>

### [Quote from Godfrey](#)

Looking at it in this way, it becomes a three step process: 1) weighing, 2) selecting or rejecting, and 3) doing. Further, as I'm thinking of it currently, 3) isn't "doing or not doing", it's actually doing one thing or doing another thing. Rejecting eating the 9am bowl of ice cream doesn't result in doing nothing but in moving on to another endeavor, be it active or passive. So in this way selecting isn't either/or, it's actually choice and avoidance. In selecting one thing, you reject another, and vice versa. This relates to the idea that there's no neutral state: just as we're always experiencing either pleasure or pain, we're never doing nothing unless we're dead. At any moment, we've chosen to do one thing and are avoiding myriad other things.



### [Quote from Godfrey](#)

[VS71](#). Ask this question of every desire: what will happen to me if the object of desire is achieved, and what if not?



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## Post by “Julia” of March 19, 2025 at 11:32 AM

### [Quote from Kalosyni](#)

You might look onto "Compassionate Communication" (NVC) by Marshall Rosenberg:

Mm, this is still at cross purposes: In general, when faced with a task one doesn't like doing, one can either use willpower and try to "just power through", but the kind of willpower available to "just force oneself" is a very limited resource. The other option is to speak to oneself compassionately, more akin to talking to child ("I know this sucks, but once it's done, this and that will be really good, and I'll can even reward myself with something or other"), and this is typically much more sustainable. My problem arises when *neither* of those are happening, and I'm either outright not thinking at all or am, by force of pre-conscious habit, shoving aside whichever faint notion of consequences might have bubbled up for a split-second; I tried to express this in a number of ways above: trance, autopilot, not thinking, mindless, sleepwalk, unaware, ....

That's why I've been looking for a question which forces me to bring to the forefront of the conscious mind the predicted consequences of my actions: "*Name* what about this will bring satisfaction/relief?"

[Quote from Godfrey](#)

[VS71](#). Ask this question of every desire: what will happen to me if the object of desire is achieved, and what if not?

Thank you so much for pointing out that connection! 👍

I'm glad it says "every desire" - not "a desire" or "your desires". There's no debating what "every" means. I'm also glad it asks to name or describe the consequence ("what will happen"), so one cannot fall into the habit of nodding it off with a mindless automatic ever-same "Yes", as would be all too possible with a closed Yes/No question. I shall pay heed to that it is phrased generically, that it isn't narrowed to any particular (set of) pleasure and pain, and try habituating myself to a more openly phrased "What will happen?" instead. Let's see how that goes 😊

Thank y'all for bearing with me, I do appreciate it 😊