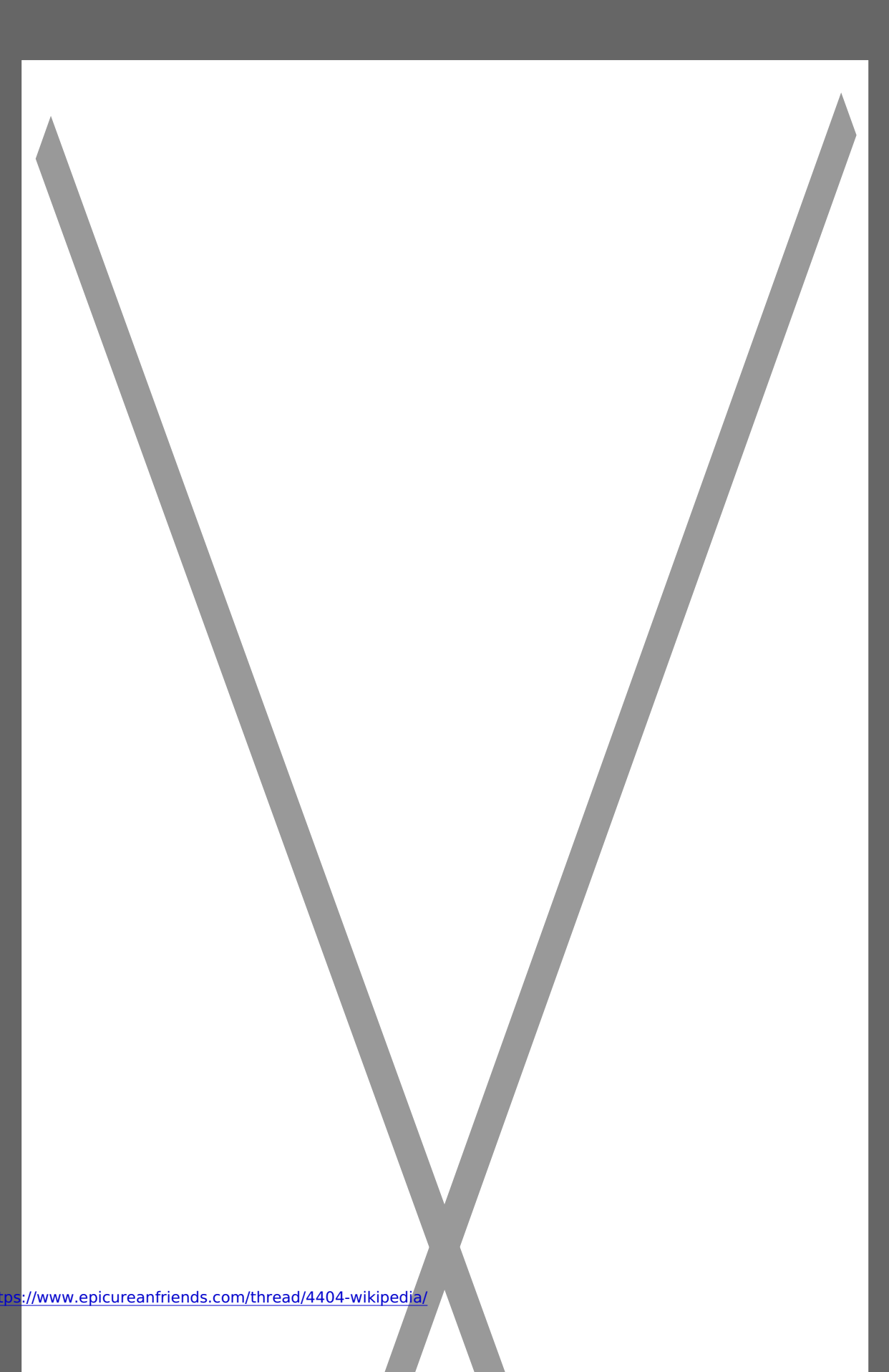


Wikipedia

Post by "Rolf" of April 16, 2025 at 4:16 AM

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I was skimming through the Epicureanism Wikipedia page and noticed some potential issues. Mainly, the popular interpretation that Epicureanism is all about reducing pain so that one can live in a pain-free, tranquil state. Is this worth revising? Wikipedia is such a commonly used reference and it could very well be the first stop for many people learning about the philosophy. Admittedly, I'm not the best when it comes to academic writing and I'm certainly no expert on the ins and outs of Epicureanism, but I figured it was worth forwarding this idea.

A few examples:

- “Epicureans had a very specific understanding of what the greatest pleasure was, and the focus of their ethics was on the avoidance of pain rather than seeking out pleasure.^[42] As evidence for this, Epicureans say that nature seems to command us to avoid pain, and they point out that all animals try to avoid pain as much as possible.”
- “While the pursuit of pleasure formed the focal point of the philosophy, this was largely directed to the "static pleasures" of minimizing pain, anxiety and suffering. From this understanding, Epicureans concluded that the greatest pleasure a person could reach was the complete removal of all pain, both physical and mental.^[52] The ultimate goal then of Epicurean ethics was to reach a state of *aponia* and *ataraxia*.^[52]”
- “*Natural but not necessary*: These desires are innate to humans, but they do not need to be fulfilled for their happiness or their survival.^[55] Wanting to eat delicious food when one is hungry is an example of a natural but not necessary desire.^[55] The main problem with these desires is that they fail to substantially increase a person's happiness, and at the same time require effort to obtain and are desired by people due to false beliefs that they are actually necessary.^[55] **It is for this reason that they should be avoided.**^[55]”
[Emphasis mine]
- “If one follows only natural and necessary desires, then, according to Epicurus, one would be able to reach *aponia* and *ataraxia* and thereby the highest form of happiness.^[56] Unnecessary and, especially, artificially produced desires were to be suppressed.^[57]”

Post by “Don” of April 16, 2025 at 6:24 AM

The Wikipedia article is a *mess*. If you have the time to edit with supporting citations, go for it. I've been editing Wikipedia off and on for - checks userpage - *yikes!* - 15+ years, but haven't had the chance or inclination to wade into the potential edit battles that would ensue in trying to steer that specific article into a better direction.

Post by “Cassius” of April 16, 2025 at 7:23 AM

[Quote from Rolf](#)

Is this worth revising?

I am very glad that Don has done the work he has done and I hope he'll continue as long as he can. But the question of "is it worth it" is going to be different for different people.

Don's been studying Epicurus a long time and he's free of the orthodox peer-pressure. But to even recognize that pressure takes a lot of reading, and a lot of the process involves UN-Learning what is written on Wikipedia.

So for a lot of people I wouldn't recommend spending a lot of time there.

And that doesn't touch on the dynamics of wading into a battle of dealing with people who are committed to opposing viewpoints, and the very nature of Wikipedia and the way it is set up.

So as I see it for those who have time to work on an accurate presentation of Epicurus, I'd say that time is far better spent setting up your own blog or article or book or website or video and starting from scratch to explain Epicurus more correctly.

Even worse than wikipedia are many of the popular videos on Epicurus. If someone has talent in that department, probably new video introductions to Epicurus would be even more useful in the near term than trying to tackle the wikipedia editors.

Post by “Don” of April 16, 2025 at 7:29 AM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

tackle the wikipedia editors



We are ALL (potential) Wikipedia editors. Just throwing that out there.

Post by “Kalosyni” of April 16, 2025 at 8:14 AM

[Quote from Rolf](#)

I was skimming through the Epicureanism Wikipedia page and noticed some potential issues.

Thank you [Rolf](#) ...These points from Wikipedia that you posted above have all been dealt with here on the forum by Cassius. There may be some short answers in the [FAQ](#) section and many longer answers elsewhere on the forum. So we may want to use these Wikipedia issues to create a document or article, and collect together all the writing that has been generated already here on the forum.