

Personal mottos?

Post by “Rolf” of April 16, 2025 at 9:48 AM

Hey folks

I've always found it helpful to have some sort of motto or aphorism to live by. While of course such mottos inevitably oversimplify things, I feel they can be useful to ground and remind oneself of the bigger ideas that lie behind them.

Recently I've been holding close the phrase, "*Enjoy what you can, accept what you cannot*".

Does anyone else have a short saying they use as a mental reminder or a salve during hard times?

Post by “Cassius” of April 16, 2025 at 10:17 AM

By no means do I consider this my ultimate motto, but I was always pleased with the motto of the first school I attended, which has stuck with me ever since:

"Fide sed cui vide"

which my teachers translated as "Have faith, but be careful in what."

Post by “Eikadistes” of April 16, 2025 at 12:01 PM

Glad you asked! 😊

My personal favorite is from DRN 2.991, CAELESTI SVMVS OMNES SEMINE ORIVNDI meaning "*We have all come from heavenly seed*", which I really like because it summarizes, anticipates, and informs Carl Sagan's observation that "*we are made of star stuff*". (Got it tatted a while ago!)



As far as those go, ΛΑΘΕ ΒΙΩΣΑΣ is also a favorite, "*Live Anonymously*" (or "*unknown*", etc.):



Antiquity also provides us with SIC FAC OMNIA TAMQUAM SPECTET EPICVRVS, meaning "*Do all things as if Epicurus were watching*", a kind of ancient, Epicurean version of "*What Would Jesus Do?*"

Then also, we have FELIX QVI POTVIT RERVVM COGNOSCERE CAVSAS meaning "*Happy [is] the person who knows the causes of things*" from a piece of work by Virgil that I forget.

Juvenal shares with us RANDVM EST VT SIT MENS SANA IN CORPORE SANO... meaning "*You should pray for a sound mind in a healthy body...*" which has a nice, confident, encouraging ring to it.

And then, of course, Horace gives us CARPE DIEM, which we all know as meaning "Seize the Day", but, personally, I prefer that we "Pluck the day [from the vine of time]."

Sorry for the overshare! 😄 These are always fun questions.

Post by "Cassius" of April 16, 2025 at 3:46 PM

[Quote from Eikadistes](#)

Then also, we have FELIX QVI POTVIT RERVM COGNOSCERE CAVSAS meaning "Happy [is] the person who knows the causes of things" from a piece of work by Virgil that I forget.

Yes that is a HUGE one! The full quote from the Georgics

Felix qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas

Atque metus omnes, et inexorabile fatum

Subjecit pedibus, strepitumque Acherontis avari

[Felix, qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas - Wikipedia](#)

Post by "Godfrey" of April 16, 2025 at 5:10 PM

Personally, I'm using "slogans" these days. Many of the best ones are ones that I just make up to fit my current situation, some aren't Epicurean but are compatible with the philosophy, depending on what I keep in mind when thinking about them. I put one on the home screen of my phone and think about it throughout the day. Then after a couple of days I switch to another one.

A model for this is the Buddhist lojong slogans. Depending on the translations, some of those are applicable. Of course, those refer back to Buddhist concepts, but I just happily bastardize them to my own ends.

Post by “Rolf” of April 16, 2025 at 5:28 PM

[Quote from Godfrey](#)

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Oo, I hadn't heard of lojong before. Very interesting. Do you have any favourite slogans? What would you say is the difference between a slogan and a motto?

[Quote from Eikadistes](#)

Glad you asked! 😊

My personal favorite is from DRN 2.991, CAELESTI SVMVS OMNES SEMINE ORIVNDI meaning "*We have all come from heavenly seed*", which I really like because it summarizes, anticipates, and informs Carl Sagan's observation that "*we are made of star stuff*". (Got it tatted a while ago!)

CAELESTI SVMVS OMNES
SEMINE ORIVNDI

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Sorry for the overshare! 🤪 These are always fun questions.

Display More

Ah, a kindred spirit! A lovely collection of sayings. Badass tattoos too, super clean.

Post by "Godfrey" of April 16, 2025 at 6:53 PM

A motto refers to a guiding principle, whereas a slogan is more of a pithy phrase, although it, too, can reference a guiding principle.

Don't overthink it. Do less than you want to. Approach practice as indulgence instead of work. Choose what is self-reinforcing. Old age is not for the faint of heart... These are some of my current favorites; I find them useful based on circumstances, but to others they may certainly be trite or even meaningless. Basically I use them as pointers. And sometimes they just make me chuckle.

Post by "Joshua" of April 17, 2025 at 12:04 AM

I was watching an old episode of [Monk](#) the other day and I couldn't stop laughing at this scene ☐☐



Post by “Don” of April 17, 2025 at 5:08 AM

I'll also offer...

[Aphorism - Wikipedia](#)

... if someone is looking for examples.

Post by “sanantoniogarden” of April 20, 2025 at 3:47 PM

Something I take as a motto is David Hume's "Be a philosopher, but amidst all your philosophy, be still a man." Which once removed from its original context becomes a sort of succinct byway to VS 41

Post by “Rolf” of April 21, 2025 at 1:54 PM

The phrase "Prudent Enjoyment" has been on my mind today. Or in the imperative, "Enjoy Prudently". I think it sums things up nicely.

Or if you speak emoji, 🧠👉👉.

Post by “Kalosyni” of April 22, 2025 at 8:16 AM

I'm thinking that Vatican Saying 78 might make for a nice motto (especially the first part):

"The noble soul is devoted most of all to wisdom and to friendship — one a mortal good, the other immortal." (Saint Andre translation).

Post by “Don” of April 22, 2025 at 8:26 AM

That's a good one.

I literally have this VS hanging on my door frame at work (Greek large font, English caption)

οὐ δεῖ λυμάνεσθαι τὰ παρόντα τῶν ἀπόντων ἐπιθυμία, ἀλλ' ἐπιλογίζεσθαι ὅτι καὶ ταῦτα τῶν εὐκταίων ἦν.

VS35. Don't ruin the things you have by wanting what you don't have, but realize that they too are things you once did wish for.

Post by “Rolf” of May 14, 2025 at 3:46 AM

Would you say that the imperative phrasing '*Enjoy what you can, accept what you cannot*' accurately reflects the meaning of parts 3 and 4 of the Tetracharmakos — that what is good is easy to obtain, and what is bad is easy to endure?"

Post by “Cassius” of May 14, 2025 at 7:17 AM

Rolfe you have not been exposed to my deep reservations about the Tetracharmakon, which you can read [here](#).

So I'd phrase the question: Does the phrase accurately reflect Epicurean philosophy?

With that intro I'd say "enjoy what you can" seems correct to me, but "accept what you cannot" strikes me as too ambiguous -- cannot what? Cannot *enjoy*? *Why*?

I think I'd have to ask "*why can't you enjoy it?* Because it was totally beyond your power? Or because you didn't try?"

Post by “Rolf” of May 14, 2025 at 10:55 AM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

Rolfe you have not been exposed to my deep reservations about the Tetracharmakon, which you can read here.

Interesting, I'll read through this. Thanks Cassius.

[Quote from Cassius](#)

With that intro I'd say "enjoy what you can" seems correct to me, but "accept what you cannot" strikes me as too ambiguous -- cannot what? Cannot enjoy? *Why*?

Accept what you cannot enjoy, yeah.

[Quote from Cassius](#)

I think I'd have to ask "why can't you enjoy it? Because it was totally beyond your power? Or because you didn't try?"

This is a fascinating question, and something I've been thinking about a lot lately: The role of reframing and other such "mental tricks" in reducing pain and increasing pleasure, even in tough situations. Do you think that most things are able to be enjoyed with the right effort? I have a few health issues that cause me fairly consistent pain, and I cannot say that I enjoy them, but I have learned and am learning to accept them and thus reduce the associated pain. Interested to hear your further thoughts on this.

Post by "Godfrey" of May 14, 2025 at 12:28 PM

Quote from Rolf

Accept what you cannot enjoy

This is very instructive to think about, and first I'd like to second what [Cassius](#) had to say.

As to the Tetracharmakos... for me, there's a big difference between "*what's bad is easy to endure*" and "*Pain does not last continuously in the flesh; instead, the sharpest pain lasts the shortest time, a pain that exceeds bodily pleasure lasts only a few days, and diseases that last a long time involve delights that exceed their pains.*" (St-Andre) The first is a plumbum, but [PD04](#) offers a guideline with which to examine our pain.

A better way to say this might be that the first offers a way to distract the mind, the second offers a way to engage the senses to arrive at a deeper truth. And, really, this is at the core of Epicurean philosophy.

Relating to this is the experience of intensity, duration and location, which is expressed in other PDs. Examine where the pain resides. Is it physical, mental? Where? Is it an "organic" sensation or a reaction to sensation (fearing, anticipating or dwelling on it)? Are there gaps? Can pleasure be found in the gaps? Can this pleasure be increased? Are there prudent ways to directly decrease the intensity of the pain? Can the pain be expected to subside at some point? &c... The feelings are two, not one, and both are guides to living our best lives.

Living as an Epicurist requires a generally unacknowledged degree of mental and physical strength: we're not offered formulas for living our lives, we have to come to an understanding that we thrive through asking difficult questions and facing difficult experiences. We don't try to cast them off as "indifferents", as some would have us do.

Post by “Cassius” of May 14, 2025 at 1:20 PM

Godfrey, so as to avoid taking this thread too far on a Tetrapharmakon tangent, let me ask a question [here](#) .

Post by “Cassius” of May 15, 2025 at 6:25 AM

Quote



[Quote from Cassius](#)

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Quote from Rolf

This is a fascinating question, and something I've been thinking about a lot lately: The role of reframing and other such "mental tricks" in reducing pain and increasing pleasure, even in tough situations. Do you think that most things are able to be enjoyed with the right effort? I have a few health issues that cause me fairly consistent pain, and I cannot say that I enjoy them, but I have learned and am learning to accept them and thus reduce the associated pain. Interested to hear your further thoughts on this.

On this point, Rolf, I was mainly referring to mental attitudes that cause people to focus on pain when they could by making another choice focus on pleasure. In regard to consistent physical pain, that's what's referenced I think in [PD04](#) as to long term pain being endurable, we have the kind of offsetting that Epicurus was doing on his last day, but not much more in the way of specifics as far as I know.

The other thought that I think it's important that "acceptance" of things always be conditioned on first taking as much action as one can to overturn the problem. I have a general concern in philosophical discussion that - under the influence of Stoicism or similar views - people "accept" far too many things that could be changed with the right effort. Physical problems that truly can't be fixed are an obvious exception to that concern, but even there I'd want to tell someone

to be absolutely sure that they had exhausted all reasonable remedies before they "accepted" that the pain could not be fixed.

But of course you're right that when you have a problem that truly cannot be fixed after your best efforts, then you find ways to accept it, generally by distracting yourself from its presence.

Post by "Rolf" of May 15, 2025 at 9:15 AM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

I have a general concern in philosophical discussion that - under the influence of Stoicism or similar views - people "accept" far too many things that could be changed with the right effort.

This is a wise and helpful perspective, thank you Cassius. It's gotten me thinking how deeply engrained the glorification of acceptance is within myself and modern society. Even before reading up on stoicism, and after disregarding it, I've placed great value in so-called "radical acceptance". Of course acceptance can be useful at times, but you're right that we mustn't lose site of the bigger, fundamental picture - it's all about pleasure and pain. If I accept something that's causing me pain, it might minimise the pain slightly, but it's always going to be better to root out of the source of the pain entirely if possible.

That said, painful chronic conditions are something I'm still struggling to reconcile with the philosophy. I've heard arguments against Epicureanism that "it's a philosophy only for healthy, happy people". While I disagree, I'm not entirely sure how I'd respond to the criticism.

Post by "Cassius" of May 15, 2025 at 9:35 AM

[Quote from Rolf](#)

That said, painful chronic conditions are something I'm still struggling to reconcile with the philosophy. I've heard arguments against Epicureanism that "it's a philosophy only for healthy, happy people". While I disagree, I'm not entirely sure how I'd respond to the criticism.

I would say that it's not *just* a philosophy for healthy, happy, people, it's a philosophy that is the best way for anyone in any condition to work toward the greatest health and happiness that is possible for them.

Contrary to the mystical-based Stoicism or Platonism or the rest, Epicurus doesn't offer a magic pill that death is a better place, or that every circumstance in life can be changed. There are indeed many situations where there's no further viable option to reduce pain other than to live with it and recognize that the pleasures of being alive outweigh the pains. When you get to the point that you are certain that there is no possibility of pleasure ever again outweighing pain for you in your circumstances, then and only then is it time to start thinking about "exiting the stage." But as Epicurus also said (VS38) "He is a little man in all respects who has many good reasons for quitting life."

In respect to the main question, Epicurus is reported to have said that:

"A man cannot become wise with every kind of physical constitution, nor in every nation."
<https://handbook.epicureanfriends.com/sbsdix/#117>

I'd be careful about how to apply that, but it only makes sense that Epicurus would recognize that everything that makes up what we think of as "us" is essentially bodily, and therefore sickness, disease, death, or the circumstances in which we live can effectively prevent us from living as we would like to live.

I'd call that realistic rather than pessimistic, and I'd call it much preferable to imagining that there is a better life after death, or a magic pill that overrides nature, because those things just don't exist, and I'd rather know the truth about my situation rather than spend whatever time I have under fake pretenses.

Post by "Rolf" of May 15, 2025 at 10:04 AM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

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I agree, well said.

[Quote from Cassius](#)

"A man cannot become wise with every kind of physical constitution, nor in every nation."

This one has always been a bit prickly for me. If Epicureanism is a philosophy that is beneficial for everyone, and wisdom is so vital for prudently pursuing pleasure, then the idea that certain people are involuntarily unable to work towards this feels rather deflating. What is one to do if they lack the "physical constitution" or live in the "wrong nation"? Does Epicureanism still have something to offer such people, or are they better off looking elsewhere for pleasure and the reduction of pain?

Post by "Cassius" of May 15, 2025 at 10:32 AM

[Quote from Rolf](#)

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The first thing to work to improve the "physical constitution" and get out of the "wrong nation" if at all possible. That in itself is a huge offering because it tells people not to wallow in their bad circumstances (not to "accept" them) if they can be changed.

If those circumstances cannot be changed, then what those people have is an extremely unfortunate situation that is thankfully very rare -- when you have absolutely no way to make things better. Then if there are truly no alternatives, one can exit the stage, but that is not going to be the case for almost anyone except in extreme conditions.

I have seen the argument that this is "deflating" but it is also reality, and it need not be deflating depending on one's attitude toward reality. It seems to me that the problem with thinking that "something has to be doable" when the situation really is beyond repair is a form of mysticism that often combines itself (in my view) with modern "humanism" of the kind that gets into regular debates about things like "all men are equal." Yes we would like them to be, and many of us take action to make things as equal as possible in many respects, but with our

current technology there's nothing you can do to change a 100 year old person with terminal cancer into a 20 year old with perfect health. That's the kind of thing that in my view has to be "accepted" for now. If we want to change it, then we do whatever we can to advance medical science to the point where that might be possible. But where it isn't possible, that's the kind of thing we have to "accept."

And one more point: looking for answers to situations that are truly impossible to change seems to be what leads many people to supernatural religion. Would Epicurus suggest that people who refuse to accept reality take up supernatural religion?

I don't think so. That's a discussion worthy to pursue to, but I would say that Epicurus would not suggest that. I would say that Epicurus was so invested (properly) in living with Nature and with reality that he would find it intolerably painful to choose to abandon nature for something fictional.

Post by "Rolf" of May 15, 2025 at 10:52 AM

I see where you're coming from, and I agree with what you're saying, but I don't necessarily interpret the quote the same way. Are you saying that Epicurus means that there are only 1) those with the "right physical constitution" and 2) those who have no hope of a pleasurable life? The way I understand the quote, there is a lot in between - I take it to mean that there are people who can experience pleasure, but lack the "physical constitution" to be truly wise and prudent due to circumstances outside of their control. There are many people with chronic physical or mental illnesses that can be mitigated but not removed - would Epicurus say that these people lack the "physical constitution" to be wise?

Post by "Don" of May 15, 2025 at 1:44 PM

For what it's worth, here's my page on that...

[Epicurean Sage - Not every bodily constitution or nationality...](#)

Hicks: However, not every bodily constitution nor every nationality would permit a man to become wise. Yonge: That the wise man, however, cannot exist in every...
sites.google.com

Post by “Cassius” of May 15, 2025 at 4:45 PM

[Quote from Rolf](#)

There are many people with chronic physical or mental illnesses that can be mitigated but not removed - would Epicurus say that these people lack the “physical constitution” to be wise?

As regrettable as that might be, I think the answer to that question is clearly "Yes." Now "wise" has many shades to it, and i don't think there's an absolute definition that applies to everyone. But there are in my view clearly lines of clinical issues where it's going to be unreasonable to say that such and such a person is "wise."

Post by “Rolf” of May 15, 2025 at 5:00 PM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

Now "wise" has many shades to it, and i don't think there's an absolute definition that applies to everyone.

You're right, defining the term “wise” is important here. The way I understand it, the word “wise” here is used to mean having a full grasp on Epicurean philosophy and the prudent pursuit of pleasure.

[Quote from Cassius](#)

But there are in my view clearly lines of clinical issues where it's going to be unreasonable to say that such and such a person is "wise."

I'm talking more about whether such people have the *capability* to become “wise” (ie. “Fill their vessel” and experience continuous pleasure through prudent choice and avoidance). Not whether or not we would fall them are wise in their current state.

What kind of “clinical issues” would discount somebody from achieving a proper grasp on Epicurean philosophy, in your view?

Post by “Cassius” of May 15, 2025 at 7:27 PM

[Quote from Rolf](#)

What kind of “clinical issues” would discount somebody from achieving a proper grasp on Epicurean philosophy, in your view?

I don't know that it makes sense to try to come up with a distinct list, but I would analogize this with saying that someone born blind is not likely in the nature of things to become a good airline pilot or brain surgeon. Of course that's through no fault of their own, but in the absence of highly advanced technology such a goal for someone born blind would be as unrealistic as it would be for us to hope to live forever. Likewise some people are born with diseases or limitations of brain function that makes it highly unlikely for them to be able to understand anything of complicated intellectual nature.

There's a legal saying that "hard cases make bad law." In other words, the very unusual cases we're talking about don't often lead to useful generalizations, when the great majority of cases aren't really hard cases at all.

In regard to Epicurus, Cicero complained that it was among the simplest of philosophies, and Cicero looked down his nose at the ordinary people who took to it. (We have a graphic on the front page of the forum about that.) In other words, it's my view that the great majority of people can benefit from a philosophy that teaches getting in touch with reality rather than fantasy.

Post by “Joshua” of May 15, 2025 at 8:56 PM

Lucian of Samosata is a notable case of someone who managed to cross several boundaries, of class, language, and nationality; he was born in Roman Syria on the banks of the Euphrates, and his native tongue was probably a dialect of Aramaic. If his own biographical writings are to be believed (a dubious proposition, some think), he was apprenticed to his uncle, a sculptor. Failing in that, he traveled for an education, finding his way first to Ionia and then to Athens.

He learned Greek and wrote with good style, gaining fame for himself and popularity (and notoriety) for his works. They were sporadically read in the east in the middle ages and since the Renaissance have never gone out of fashion in the west.

It was an exceptional career, and one that would be very difficult for most non-Greeks to imitate.

Things are quite different now. Literacy and education are widespread, books are mass-produced and easily accessible, and the internet has rendered most historical obstacles to learning obsolete.

In compensation, we have our own challenges; adherence to a philosophical sect is no longer the default. The language barrier between nations is less daunting than it was once, but the barrier between us and the language of the ancient texts is in some ways higher now than it has been in centuries; studying classics is also no longer the default.

Epicurus himself may have been in poor health; it depends which sources you rely upon. Here is the Suda, a tenth century Byzantine encyclopedia:

Quote

This man assigned no importance to religion;[1] but there were three brothers [sc. of his],[2] who died in the most pitiful way, struck down by countless diseases.[3] As for Epicurus, although still young, he was not able to easily descend from his bed by himself, but he was short-sighted and fearful of facing the sunlight, for he disliked the most brilliant and shining of the gods. And indeed he turned his eyes away even from the light of fire, and from his lower orifices blood used to drip down, and such was the consumption of his body that he was not even able to carry the weight of his own clothes.[4] And Metrodorus[5] and Polyaeus[6], both of them his companions, died in the worst way men can die, and indeed they took for their impiety a requital that nobody might ever blame. So easily overcome by pleasure was Epicurus that in his last moments he wrote in his will a disposition that a sacrifice be offered once a year to his father, his mother and his brothers, and to the previously mentioned Metrodorus and Polyaeus, but twice a year to himself;[7] so that even in this the sage honored the higher degree of profligacy. And he had some tables of stone built, and gave orders that these be put in his tomb, this greedy and gluttonous man. He devised these things not because he was rich, but because his appetites had driven him mad, as if those things should die along with him.

So the compilers of the Suda are clearly hostile, but what about the fragments of Epicurus' own letters? Some scholars (DeWitt and Diskin Clay among them) have suggested that Epicurus makes reference to his travelling in a three-wheeled cart, as Pamela Gordon explains:

Quote

Next we hear about the claim that Epicurus wrote letters that flattered Lysimachus' minister Mithras, addressing him as one ought to address Apollo. At this point, we meet the fragments of the letters to Leontion and Themista mentioned in the previous section of this chapter. □The language of these letters is extravagant: "By Lord Apollo, my dear little Leontion, how we burst into applause when we read your letter" (Παιᾶν ἄναξ, φίλον Λεοντᾶριον, οἴου κροτοθορύβου ἡμᾶς ἐνέπλησας ἀναγνόντας σου τὸ ἐπιστόλιον); "If you [plural], and Themista in particular invite me, I am capable of twirling thrice and rushing to wherever you are" (Οἷός τε . . . εἰμί, ἐὰν μὴ ὑμεῖς πρὸς με ἀφίκησθε, αὐτὸς τρικύλιστος, ὅπου ἂν ὑμεῖς καὶ Θεμίστα παρακαλήτε, ὠθειῖσθαι, 10.5)[[footnote 35](#)]. Idiosyncratic Epicurean language of the sort parodied in New Comedy may be at play here. The signification of "twirling thrice" is lost to modern readers, and the word for "applause" (κροτοθορύβου) was unusual enough to inspire an entry in the Suda, with this fragmentary letter as the only source (kappa 2480 Adler). Diogenes also records that these sources assert that Epicurus wrote to Pythocles (whom they identify as "good looking"), "I shall sit here awaiting your desired, godlike entrance" (10.5).

[[footnote 35](#).] Clay (1998: 247), who offers the translation "on a three-wheeled cart," stresses the writer's "enthusiasm and warmth."

Presumably inferring that τρικύλιστος somehow derives from τρι - κύκλος, three - cycle.

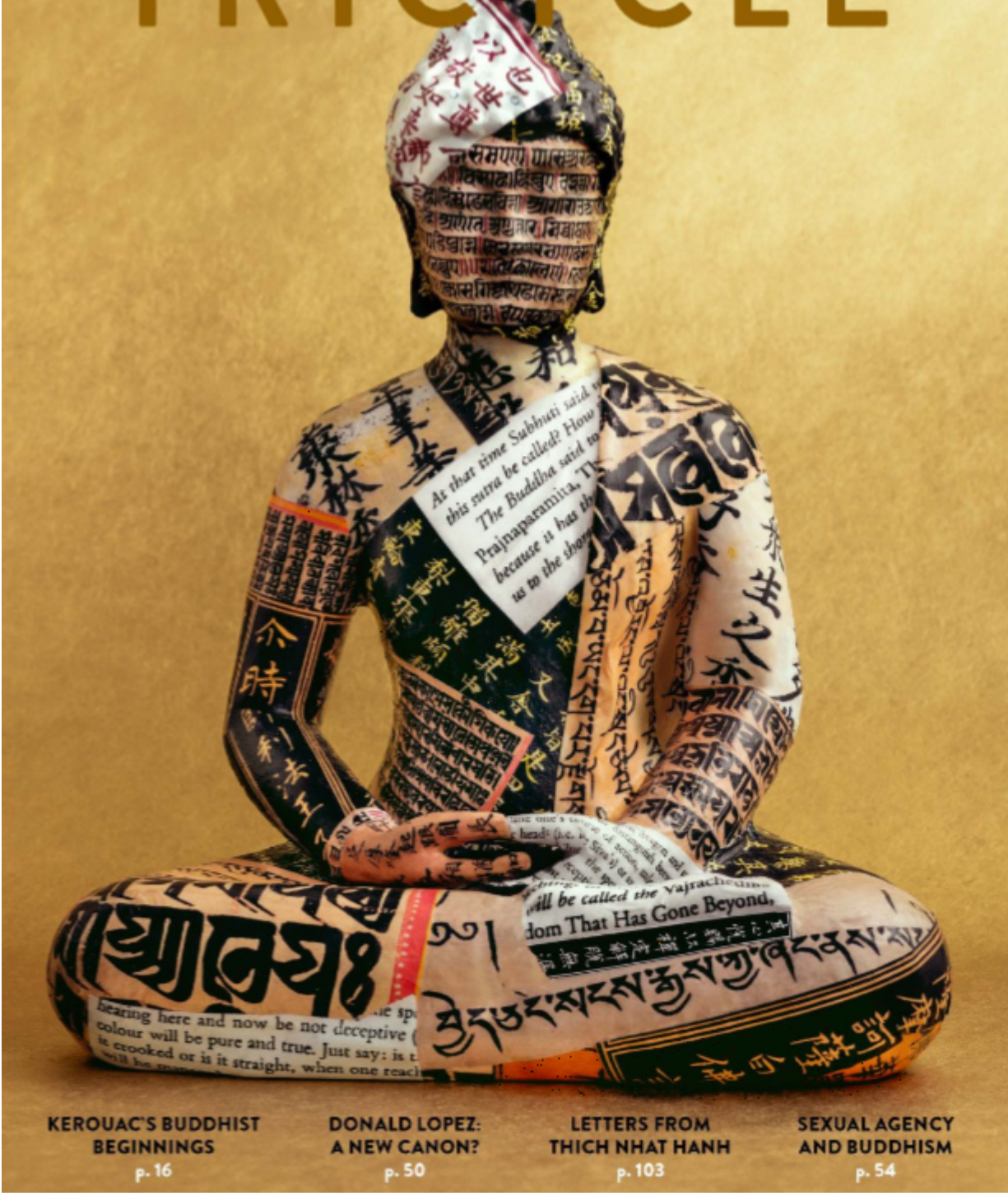
Maybe the [symbol of Epicureanism](#) should be a tricycle!

Post by "Don" of May 15, 2025 at 9:27 PM

[Quote from Joshua](#)

Maybe the symbol of Epicureanism should be a tricycle!

LOL. That's taken, sort of...



KEROUAC'S BUDDHIST BEGINNINGS
p. 16

DONALD LOPEZ: A NEW CANON?
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Post by “Don” of May 15, 2025 at 11:12 PM

Realizing this is way off topic for the thread:

On the "three-wheeled cart", DeWitt cites *his own paper* in his footnote: 13 "N. W. DeWitt, "The Three-Wheeled Chair of Epicurus," CP 35(1940) 183-185.

For the Pamela Gordon footnotes, it appears that in Diskin Clay's *Paradosis and survival : three chapters in the history of Epicurean philosophy*. According to our library catalog, it's supposed to be on the shelf in our Main Library - Social Sciences Department B512 .C57 1998. I'm putting this here for reference so I can look it up tomorrow. I'm really curious if Clay himself translates it that way.. or if he's referencing DeWitt.

I've seen it glossed as metaphorically "easily influenced" (lit., thrice-rolled). So the line would end up being, "If you [plural], and Themista in particular invite me, I am capable of being easily influenced and rushing to wherever you are." That seems more colloquial. The word also appears to be a hapax legomena (I just love that phrase. It just means "only occurring once in the corpus of texts"), so interpretation is virtually wide open.

Post by “Patrikios” of May 17, 2025 at 12:15 PM

[Quote from Rolf](#)

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As I see it, Epicureanism still offers valuable guidance for everyone, even if the highest levels of wisdom might be harder to achieve in certain circumstances.

Consider these points:

1. Everyone can work towards reducing unnecessary fears and anxieties
2. Basic Epicurean principles about friendship and simple pleasures are universally accessible
3. The pursuit of wisdom exists on a spectrum, not as an all-or-nothing proposition

Does this seem meaningful?

Post by “Joshua” of May 17, 2025 at 2:28 PM

[Cassius](#); We may want to move these posts to a new thread.

I'm curious to know what you've found from Clay, [Don](#). Here is a passage from Athenaeus, [Deipnosophistae](#), on one possible meaning of κυλιστός (round, large, easily rolled);

Quote

I find also, in the **comic poets** [see Pamela Gordon above re: New Comedy], mention made of a kind of garland called κυλιστός, and I find that Archippus mentions it in his Rhinon, in these lines—

- *He went away unhurt to his own house, Having laid aside his cloak, but having on His ἐκκύλιστος garland.*

And Alexis, in his Agonis, or The Colt, says—

- *This third man has a κυλιστός garland Of fig-leaves; but while living he delighted In similar ornaments:*

and in his Sciron he says—

- *Like a κυλιστός garland in suspense.*

[p. 1084] Antiphanes also mentions it in his Man in Love with Himself. And Eubulus, in his CEnomaus, or Pelops, saying—

- *Brought into circular shape, Like a κυλιστός garland.*

What, then, is this κυλιστός? For I am aware that Nicander of Thyatira, in his Attic Nouns, speaks as follows,— “ἐκκυλίσιοι στέφανοι, and especially those made of roses.” And now I ask what species of garland this was, O Cynulcus; and do not tell me that I am to understand the word as meaning merely large. For you are a man who are fond of not only picking things little known out of books, but of even digging out such matters; like the philosophers in the Joint Deceiver of Baton the comic poet; men whom Sophocles also mentions in his Fellow Feasters, and who resemble you,—

- *You should not wear a beard thus well perfumed, And 'tis a shame for you, of such high birth, To be reproached as the son of your belly, When you might rather be call'd your father's son.*

Since, then, you are sated not only with the heads of glaucus, but also with that ever-green herb, which that Anthedonian Deity¹² ate, and became immortal, give us an answer now about the subject of discussion, that we may not think that when you are dead, you will be metamorphosed, as the divine Plato has described in his treatise on the Soul. For he says that those who are addicted to gluttony, and insolence, and drunkenness, and who are restrained by no modesty, may naturally become transformed into the race of asses, and similar animals.

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And here is the Greek text which I won't re-format;

Quote

εὐρίσκω δὲ καὶ παρὰ τοῖς κωμικοῖς ΚΥΛΙΣΤΟΝ τινα καλούμενον στέφανον καὶ μνημονεύοντα αὐτοῦ Ἄρχιππον ἐν Ἰνώνωνι διὰ τούτων 'I 687 K':

ἀθῶος ἀποδοῦς θοιμάτιον ἀπέρχεται,

στέφανον ἔχων τῶν ἐκκυλίστων οἴκαδε.

Ἄλεξις δ' ἐν μὲν Ἀγωνίδι ἢ Ἰππίσκῳ 'II 298 K':

ὁ τρίτος οὗτος δ' ἔχει

σύκων κυλιστὸν στέφανον. ἀλλ' ἔχαιρε καὶ

ζῶν τοῖς τοιούτοις.

ἐν δὲ τῷ Σκίρωνί φησι 'ib. 373':

ὥσπερ κυλιστὸς στέφανος αἰωρούμενος.

μνημονεύει δ' αὐτοῦ καὶ Ἀντιφάνης ἐν Ἐαυτοῦ Ἐρῶντι 'ib. 31', Εὐβουλος δ' ἐν

Οἰνομάῳ ἢ Πέλοπι 'ib. 190':

περιφοραῖς κυκλούμενος

ὥσπερ κυλιστὸς στέφανος.

τίς οὖν οὗτος ὁ κυλιστός; οἶδα γὰρ τὸν Θυατειρητὸν Νίκανδρον ἐν τοῖς Ἀττικοῖς

Ὀνόμασι λέγοντα τάδε: 'ἐκκύλιστοι στέφανοι καὶ μάλιστα οἱ ἐκ ῥόδων.' καὶ τὸ εἶδος

ὁποῖον ζητῶ, ὃ Κύνουлке. καὶ μή μοι εἴπησθε ὅτι δεῖ τοὺς ἀδρούς ἀκούειν. σὺ γὰρ εἶ ὁ τὰ

ἐν τοῖς βιβλίοις ἀπόρρητα οὐ μόνον ἐκλέγων ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐξορύττων, καθάπερ οἱ παρὰ

Βάτωνι τῷ κωμωδιοποιῷ ἐν Συνεξαπατῶντι φιλόσοφοι 'III 329 K', περὶ ὧν καὶ

Σοφοκλῆς Συνδειπνῶ φησίν, οὗσί σοι παραπλησίους 'fr. 139 N':

οὔτοι γένειον ὧδε χρῆ διηλιφές

φοροῦντα κἀντίπαιδα καὶ γένει μέγαν

γαστρὸς καλεῖσθαι παῖδα, τοῦ πατρὸς παρόν.

ἐπειδὴ οὖν ἤδη καὶ σὺ πεπλήρωσαι οὐ μόνον τῶν τοῦ γλαύκου κρανίων ἀλλὰ καὶ τῆς

ἀειζώου βοτάνης, ἧς ὁ Ἀθηδόνιος ἐκεῖνος δαίμων ἐμφορηθεὶς ἀθάνατος πάλιν ητις γέγονε, λέγε ἡμῖν περὶ τοῦ προκειμένου, ἵνα μὴ κατὰ τὸν θεῖον Πλάτωνα 'Phaed. p. 81e' 'ὑπολάβωμέν σε ἀποθανόντα μεταμορφωθῆναι [ἐν τῷ περὶ Ψυχῆς]: τοὺς μὲν γὰρ τὰς γαστριμαργίας τε καὶ ὕβρεις καὶ φιλοποσίας μεμελετηκότας καὶ μὴ διευλαβουμένους εἰς τὰ τῶν ὄνων γένη καὶ τῶν τοιούτων θηρίων εἰκὸς ἐνδύεσθαι.'

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I find this interesting for several reasons; one is the connection in this passage between garlands and the "Epicurean" vices of gluttony, drunkenness, insolence, and immodesty. Another connection is with the proem to the [fourth book](#) of Lucretius;

Quote

I traverse the distant haunts of the Pierides, never trodden before by the foot of man. 'Tis my joy to approach those untasted springs and drink my fill, 'tis my joy to pluck new flowers and gather a glorious coronal for my head from spots whence before the muses have never wreathed the forehead of any man. First because I teach about great things, and hasten to free the mind from the close bondage of religion, then because on a dark theme I trace verses so full of light, touching all with the muses' charm. For that too is seen to be not without good reason; for even as healers, when they essay to give loathsome wormwood to children, first touch the rim all round the cup with the sweet golden moisture of honey, so that the unwitting age of children may be beguiled as far as the lips, and meanwhile may drink the bitter draught of wormwood, and though charmed may not be harmed, but rather by such means may be restored and come to health; so now, since this philosophy full often seems too bitter to those who have not tasted it, and the multitude shrinks back away from it, I have desired to set forth to you my reasoning in the sweet-tongued song of the muses, and as though to touch it with the pleasant honey of poetry, if perchance I might avail by such means to keep your mind set upon my verses, while you take in the whole nature of things, and are conscious of your profit.

-Cyril Bailey translation

So I offer 'thrice-garlanded' as one more possibility. And I also cannot help but think of this passage from [Coleridge](#);

Quote

Weave a circle round him thrice,
And close your eyes with holy dread
For he on honey-dew hath fed,
And drunk the milk of Paradise.

Post by “Don” of May 17, 2025 at 3:59 PM

[Quote from Joshua](#)

I'm curious to know what you've found from Clay,

Definitely on my list of things to do. I was able to pick it up yesterday. On quick glance, he seems to entertain the 3-wheel cart but there's also footnote to the Glossarium Epicurean. I may have to hit [Bryan](#) up for a lookup.

Post by “Rolf” of May 17, 2025 at 4:03 PM

[Quote from Patrikios](#)

Does this seem meaningful?

That's a great way of phrasing it, thanks Patrikios. It's an ideal, just as reaching a complete absence of pain (100% pleasure/0% pain) is an ideal. Epicureanism is still useful even if we never reach this idyllic place.

Post by “Joshua” of May 17, 2025 at 5:35 PM

More on garlands;

Plutarch, [That Epicurus Actually Makes a Pleasant Pife Impossible](#);

Quote

No sufficient praise therefore or equivalent to their deserts can be given those who, for the restraining of such bestial passions, have set down laws, established policy and government of state, instituted magistrates and ordained good and wholesome laws. But who are they that utterly confound and abolish this? Are they not those who withdraw themselves and their followers from all part in the government? Are they not

those who say that the garland (στέφανος [garland, wreath, chaplet, crown]) of tranquillity and a reposed life are far more valuable than all the kingdoms and principalities in the world? Are they not those who declare that reigning and being a king is a mistaking the path and straying from the right way of felicity? And they write in express terms: "We are to treat how a man may best keep and preserve the end of Nature, and how he may from the very beginning avoid entering of his own free will and voluntarily upon offices of magistracy, and government over the people." And yet again, these other words are theirs: "There is no need at all that a man should tire out his mind and body to preserve the Greeks, and to obtain from them a crown of wisdom; but to eat and drink well, O Timocrates, without prejudicing, but rather pleasing the flesh."

Post by "Kalosyni" of May 18, 2025 at 9:22 AM

The discussion on Plutarch's quote was moved here:

Post

[**The Garland of Tranquility and a Reposed Life**](#)

More on garlands;

Plutarch, [*That Epicurus Actually Makes a Pleasant Pife Impossible*](#);

[...]



Joshua

May 17, 2025 at 5:35 PM

Post by "SillyApe" of September 3, 2025 at 2:57 PM

I am a bit late for this, but here it comes anyway: "Behold the human, a wonder of nature; an ape with delusions of grandeur!"

I tend to overthink stuff due to my OCD, so it's always good to remember the silliness of it all... I

bet some "professional" Philosophers(the kind that spend endless hours arguing over abstract metaphysics) would profit from keeping this in mind too.