

Adage: In A Crisis, We Don't Rise To The Occasion As Much As We Fall To Our Level of Practice

Post by "Cassius" of June 10, 2025 at 7:24 PM

In [Lucretius Today Podcast Episode 284](#) we discussed the issue of "practice" in dealing with pain and other challenges, and I found the adage which is the subject of this thread and wanted to pass it on, with its source, as part of that discussion.

The backstory is that as a result of a series of recent accidents I became aware of a genre of Youtube videos by people in the airline industry who make videos on the causes of airplane crashes. It's interesting on a variety of levels, especially as to the care they take in investigating all the evidence and waiting on [sufficient](#) evidence before jumping to conclusions about what happened.

In the link below, this commentator dissects a recent air crash in California in which we don't know what happened, but the recording of communications between plane and tower points to some disturbing possibilities about pilot error. In listening to that exchange and the analysis given afterward, I think we can hear several important issues that apply by analogy to Epicurus's suggestions as to how we should practice to live the happiest life possible to us.

I recommend watching the whole video if you have time, because it's very interesting and only about 15 minutes. If you do that you get the backstory and the pilot's own voice, but the analysis which I've cued at around the 10 minute mark includes the phrase I used for the title of the thread.

Another aspect that sounds like it was involved was the pilot perhaps getting a sense of helplessness and even resignation, and again there's a direct parallel to Epicurean philosophy that we should always remember that we can affect our outcomes and we're not subject to the supernatural or to fate.

No doubt there's various ways to interpret this video but I think it's true that if we haven't practiced in applying the lessons that Epicurus is teaching, it's much less likely that when we are confronted by a crisis that we will fall back to our level of practice, rather than rise to the occasion when we have not properly prepared our minds and bodies.

Quote

Hazardous attitudes can compromise safety and decision making for Pilots. I think a lot about a couple, I think I'm susceptible to like [impulsivity](#) and [invulnerability](#). And then

there's macho and anti-authority. That's four of the five, but the last one I don't think about that often is resignation, which is where a sense of helplessness can lead a pilot to just give up. And I need to remember to stay in the fight that my actions can make a difference. And to me, the best solution for resignation is training. It's often stated, but in a crisis, we don't rise to the occasion we fall to our level of training.

<https://youtu.be/krO7dR9JOck?t=604>