

# Conveying Epicurean Philosophy Correctly and Clearly

Post by “Kalosyni” of July 2, 2025 at 1:09 PM

Here are some thoughts on conveying Epicurean philosophy, which would be relevant for in-person groups as well as online.

I believe that there is both theory and practice when you learn something, and for Epicurean philosophy I put together the following chart - "**Epicurean Philosophy: Internal Study and External Behaviors**". A lot of what happens with Epicurean philosophy is an internal experience, but it doesn't have to be stuck in a high level of abstraction.

## Internal

mental experience of silently reading texts and explanations

thinking about concepts and ideas

observing thoughts about beliefs, attitudes, desires, and one's life and environment

considering how concepts can precipitate a change in beliefs, attitudes, desires, as well as how one thinks about making choices

## External

actions and behaviors

habits

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And I've been thinking about the ladder of abstraction, and that whatever you place at the top will affect your ladder (how and what you are communicating).

## Quote

The ladder of abstraction illustrates another problem with conveying ideas clearly: “dead-level abstracting.” This is Hayakawa’s phrase for when someone communicates almost exclusively at one level on the ladder.

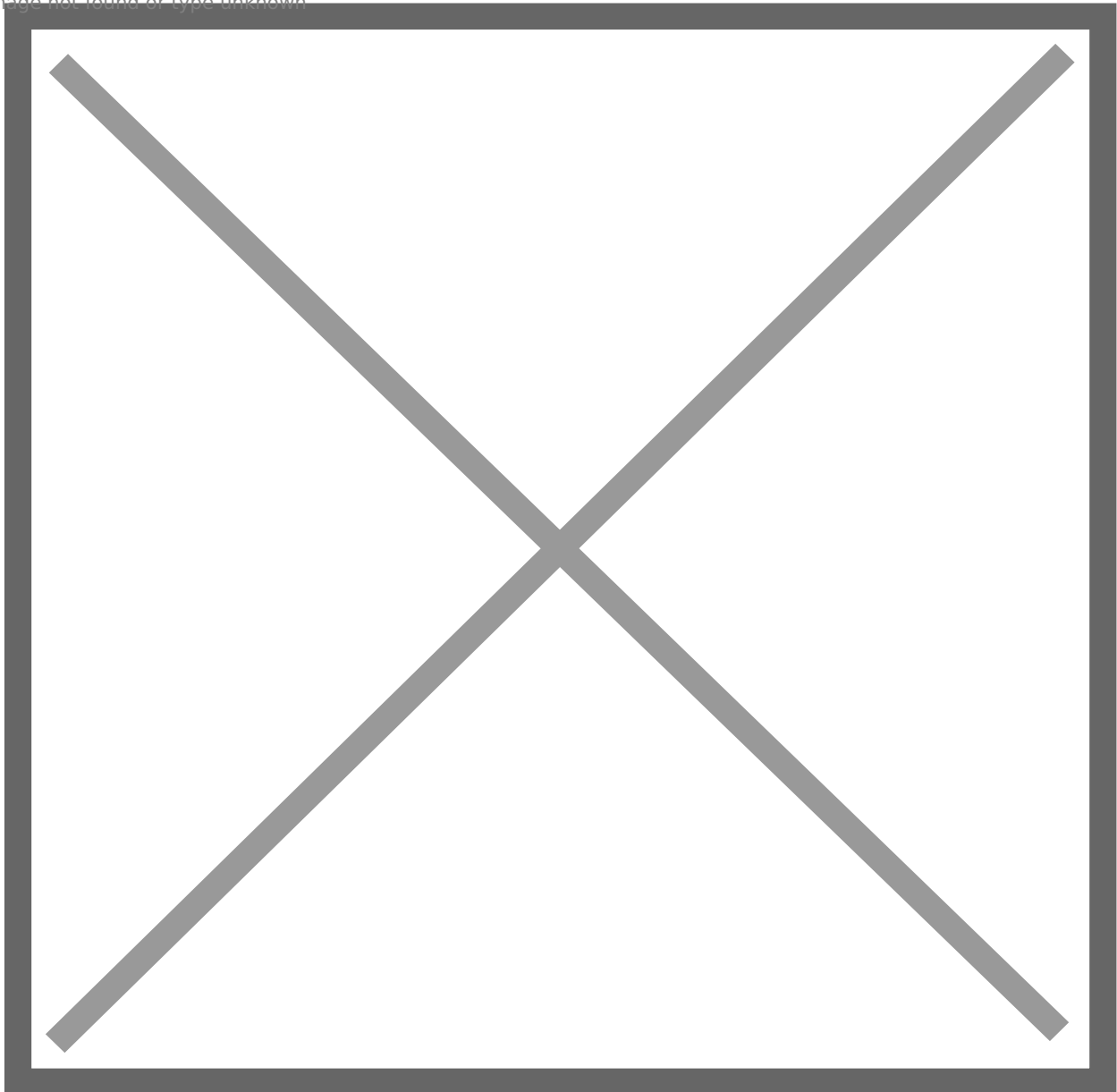
Perched on the ladder’s top rungs, an economist may lecture on the labor force through high-level classifications, macroeconomic terminology, and phrases like “enunciatory modalities” (say what?). But unless he connects those ideas with the real jobs that people commute to and experience everyday, his meaning will be lost on listeners who don’t think like him.

“The trouble with speakers who never leave the higher levels of abstraction is not only that they fail to notice when they are saying something and when they are not; they also produce a similar lack of discrimination in their audiences,” Hayakawa writes.

Communicators who stick to the low-rung details don’t fare much better. A science journalist may write beautifully about a newly discovered fossil. But unless she ties those details and facts together into a handy generalization or purposeful takeaway about evolutionary history, then she’ll leave her readers wondering, “So what?”

You can read a bit more about the "ladder of abstraction" in this article:

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[Boost your communication skills with the “ladder of abstraction”](https://www.epicureanfriends.com/thread/4545-conveying-epicurean-philosophy-correctly-and-clearly/)

The “ladder of abstraction” reveals why people communicating about the same thing may be doing so at different levels — and how to fix that.  
bigthink.com

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**Post by “DaveT” of July 2, 2025 at 3:05 PM**

 Long ago, my college speech prof put it simply, "Take your audience into account."