

Possible use of the Pythagorean exercise called "evening review" for Epicurean purposes.

Post by "Daniel188" of December 19, 2025 at 3:53 PM

Hello everyone!

Today I'd like to present a method for developing self-awareness that I originally learned from the Stoics. I believe this method can be used to pursue the Epicurean telos. First, let me quote the source from which I originally got this idea:

Quote

All our senses should be educated into strength: they are naturally able to endure much, provided that the spirit forbears to spoil them. The spirit ought to be brought up for examination daily. It was the custom of Sextius when the day was over, and he had betaken himself to rest, to inquire of his spirit: "What bad habit of yours have you cured to-day? what vice have you checked? in what respect are you better?" Anger will cease, and become more gentle, if it knows that every day it will have to appear before the judgment seat. What can be more admirable than this fashion of discussing the whole of the day's events? how sweet is the sleep which follows this self-examination? how calm, how sound, and careless is it when our spirit has either received praise or reprimand, and when our secret inquisitor and censor has made his report about our morals? I make use of this privilege, and daily plead my cause before myself: when the lamp is taken out of my sight, and my wife, who knows my habit, has ceased to talk, I pass the whole day in review before myself, and repeat all that I have said and done: I conceal nothing from myself, and omit nothing: for why should I be afraid of any of my shortcomings, when it is in my power to say, "I pardon you this time: see that you never do that anymore? In that dispute you spoke too contentiously: do not for the future argue with ignorant people: those who have never been taught are unwilling to learn. You reprimanded that man with more freedom than you ought, and consequently you have offended him instead of amending his ways: in dealing with other cases of the kind, you should look carefully, not only to the truth of what you say, but also whether the person to whom you speak can bear to be told the truth." A good man delights in receiving advice: all the worst men are the most impatient of guidance. (Seneca, On Anger, 3.36)

This is one of the exercises I've been using daily for a while now, and I've noticed it can be useful for improving my performance and emotional control. It can be used for a variety of

purposes. Now I will try to describe more or less how this can be done and integrated with the Epicurean goal.

1. Preliminary steps

A key factor in the effectiveness of this exercise is its consistency. It should be performed regularly and consistently. You should set aside approximately 5 to 20 minutes in the evening for this exercise. I recommend finding a quiet and peaceful spot, but you can also go for a walk and reflect while walking. Before you begin, you can calm down a bit, perhaps using a meditation technique or anything else that helps you relax.

2. Keeping your distance from yourself

The point isn't to relive or engage with emotions that surfaced during the day. The goal is to approach the situation more objectively. We should try to perceive everything as if we were observing a friend to whom we wanted to offer valuable advice, without becoming emotionally involved in what happened.

3. Reflection

At this point we move on to reflect on the course of the day and the general feelings associated with it.

We reflect on what we've accomplished from our planned tasks. We appreciate ourselves for completing them and allow ourselves to feel satisfied with our goals.

We reflect on what we didn't achieve and why. Was it due to a lack of desire, fatigue, or perhaps something that happened during the day that caused us to lose motivation? We don't rely on first impressions, which are often misleading, caused by regret or irritation. We try to calmly find the real cause of our failure.

We reflect on whether our behavior throughout the day was consistent with what we expected of ourselves and whether we made the most of the day. Perhaps we said something we later regretted? Or perhaps someone acted in a way that hurt us, and we spent a long time analyzing the situation. We recall such moments and assess what we can do in similar situations in the future.

Or perhaps we managed to break a certain pattern today and acted exactly as we intended in a difficult situation? We analyze the situation, looking for the key moment that allowed us to behave in a way we consider desirable.

After completing this reflection, we can consider the day complete. Now we can forgive ourselves for any shortcomings and unfulfilled tasks. We now have a complete analysis of why something didn't work out, so we promise ourselves that next time, using this knowledge, we will try to act in a way that will be more effective for us. We can also express gratitude for

certain things at the end.

Benefits

Thanks to this exercise, I've managed to overcome some habits that were harmful to me. For example, I've managed to improve my social skills, limit my alcohol consumption, reduce some of my anxiety, and avoid making unwanted mistakes over and over again. It seems like a good way to develop self-awareness. In our hectic daily lives, sometimes things slip by if we don't reflect on them calmly.

This exercise doesn't have to be used to pursue "virtue." It can be developed specifically to improve prudence. For example, you can consider various actions using hedonistic calculus. Depending on the telos we adopt, this can be used in various ways.

What do you think about all this?

Post by "Cassius" of December 19, 2025 at 4:37 PM

Thanks for posting Daniel and welcome to the forum.

[Quote from Daniel188](#)

What do you think about all this?

[Quote from Daniel188](#)

Today I'd like to present a method for developing self-awareness that I originally learned from the Stoics. I believe this method can be used to pursue the Epicurean telos.

First of all in suggesting this, have you thought about what the Epicurean telos is and how it relates to setting a goal of developing self-awareness?

How would you explain that to someone who came across this post on the forum and thought to themselves: I thought this was an Epicurean forum, not a Stoic forum?

Since you are new here and others don't know "where you're coming from" in suggesting this, before we go too far with it there are fundamentals to examine. First, we should examine the thought process in how and when we can look to Seneca or to any other Stoic for anything other than *gross philosophical malpractice* and perpetuating the *wrong* approach to the nature

of the universe and to living.

Very possibly you're much more advanced and better read than me or others here. However since there's no way for us at this point to know that, please explain your thought process in asking the question.

Post by “Cassius” of December 19, 2025 at 4:52 PM

To elaborate on my post a little further, I note that D. tells us that he is "relatively new to Epicurean philosophy but am very eager to learn more and your site appears to have an amazing wealth of materials."

It's definitely possible to answer the question posed by the post in a positive way without implying that Pythagoras or Seneca have any merit in terms of any advice they might offer to Epicurean philosophy. However the elephant in the room is that Pythagoras was an awful influence on Greek philosophy, and the life of Seneca displays the worst aspects of adopting Stoicism as a guide, leading to the hypocrisy which Thomas Jefferson and Nietzsche and many others have condemned.

So maybe the first step in developing our skills in "self-awareness" includes being aware of who should and should not be cited and followed as being beneficial authorities and influencers.

Post by “Daniel188” of December 19, 2025 at 5:05 PM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

First of all in suggesting this, have you thought about what the Epicurean telos is and how it relates to setting a goal of developing self-awareness?

The Epicurean telos is pleasure. Self-awareness is useful in pursuing this goal because it allows us to recognize habits that are harmful. When I think of harmful habits, I mean those that cause more pain than pleasure in the long run. Without any regular introspection, we often resolve to do things but are unable to stick to them. While this is useful, it is only one possible trick and is not necessary. Self-awareness is not a goal in itself.

[Quote from Cassius](#)

How would you explain that to someone who came across this post on the forum and thought to themselves: I thought this was an Epicurean forum, not a Stoic forum?

I would explain it this way: you can draw from any tradition. What matters most is the effect. If something helps you achieve your goal, it doesn't really matter what the tool is. If the Stoics claimed that $2+2=4$, we don't have to reject that particular knowledge just because the Stoics advocated it.

[Quote from Cassius](#)

Since you are new here and others don't know "where you're coming from" in suggesting this, before we go too far with it there are fundamentals to examine. First, we should examine the thought process in how and when we can look to Seneca or to any other Stoic for anything other than gross philosophical malpractice and perpetuating the wrong approach to the nature of the universe and to living.

I apologize if I sounded arrogant. My intention was simply to try to convey something that helps me personally and can be adapted for various purposes. I find such a suggestion rather harmless. As for the issue of Seneca himself and his philosophical views, I assume that most people here understand the errors of Stoicism. I think this is an appropriate post for "Epicurean Life Strategies for Modern Times." Critiques of Platonic absolutes and providential order would fit into other categories.

Post by “Daniel188” of December 19, 2025 at 5:12 PM

My intention wasn't necessarily to demonstrate that Seneca could offer any useful philosophical advice for Epicureans. Rather, I'm aiming to distill the specific exercise itself. In this case, regularly reviewing everyday events in order to learn from them.

In fact, I could have omitted Seneca's quote from this post altogether. I included it more as a curiosity that some ancient people used something like this.

Post by “Kalosyni” of December 19, 2025 at 5:44 PM

Here is the first part of the quote above, which has a different goal than in Epicurean philosophy:

"All our senses should be educated into strength: they are naturally able to endure much, provided that the spirit forbears to spoil them. The spirit ought to be brought up for examination daily. It was the custom of Sextius when the day was over, and he had betaken himself to rest, to inquire of his spirit: "What bad habit of yours have you cured to-day? what vice have you checked? in what respect are you better?"

I seems to suggest that a "perfectly virtuous" person will live a pleasant life, however it is also brings with the suggestion that this can only be done through the subjugation of emotions. This is not Epicurean, as we need emotions to see what is pleasurable and what is painful. The only people who need to subjugate their emotions are those who are pursuing empty/vain desires (great wealth, high status, etc) - since these are are difficult and painful to pursue.

There are times that anger is helpful, which is talked about by Philodemus. So that is an added layer that isn't covered here.

I would suggest doing internal self-reflection only on an as needed basis (and not nightly), when one feels internal distress. One could examine what is going on and think about how to make better choices in the future. Self-harm from over-indulgence (food or alcohol) results in physical discomfort, and the Epicurean takes note of bad results and thinks about what to do differently next time. Also, the Epicurean naturally understands that any time one causes harm to another human being that there will be consequences -- mental uneasiness and disturbance will result and the person harmed will seek restitution or retribution, lawfully or otherwise (or their friends or family will seek restitution or retribution) -- or if minor harmful actions are done then their reputation and trust will be lost.

[Quote from Daniel188](#)

We reflect on what we've accomplished from our planned tasks. We appreciate ourselves for completing them and allow ourselves to feel satisfied with our goals.

We reflect on what we didn't achieve and why. Was it due to a lack of desire, fatigue, or perhaps something that happened during the day that caused us to lose motivation? We don't rely on first impressions, which are often misleading, caused by regret or irritation. We try to calmly find the real cause of our failure.

The words here seems to point toward something that ought to be reflected on when starting ones day at an office or job -- a professional work issue -- and possibly the need to implement good time management skills.

Instead of thinking about work at the end of the day, it seems like an Epicurean might be more focused on all the pleasant things that happened - practicing gratitude for ones friends and family and reliving any happy/fun/pleasurable events that happened earlier in the day...anything that one appreciates.

So now thinking... an Epicurean might like to create a nightly habit of practicing gratitude and appreciation, and happy recollections on a nightly basis. 😊

Post by “Kalosyni” of December 19, 2025 at 5:47 PM

[Quote from Daniel188](#)

My intention wasn't necessarily to demonstrate that Seneca could offer any useful philosophical advice for Epicureans. Rather, I'm aiming to distill the specific exercise itself. In this case, regularly reviewing everyday events in order to learn from them.

In fact, I could have omitted Seneca's quote from this post altogether. I included it more as a curiosity that some ancient people used something like this.

I didn't see this post till after posting my reply.

But it is ending up as a fun "compare and contrast". (Hopefully fun, lol). 😊

Post by “Cassius” of December 19, 2025 at 5:52 PM

[Quote from Daniel188](#)

I apologize if I sounded arrogant. My intention was simply to try to convey something that helps me personally and can be adapted for various purposes. I find such a suggestion rather harmless. As for the issue of Seneca himself and his philosophical views, I assume that most people here understand the errors of Stoicism. I think this is an appropriate post for "Epicurean Life Strategies for Modern Times." Critiques of Platonic absolutes and providential order would fit into other categories.

No need for concern and I want to stress I did not intend to be harsh either. Your responses were excellent! I am constantly fine-tuning the tone and approach of the front page of the forum and our vetting process. I want to be sure that we are being clear about the differences between Stoics and Epicurus, and as we move into 2026 I am working towards making some of these differences even more prominent.

Again, welcome to the forum. Your answers show just the kind of awareness that we need in the type people who post here!

Post by “Don” of December 19, 2025 at 10:34 PM

I'm coming late to the game here, so I'm just starting from the top...

[Quote from Daniel188](#)

This exercise doesn't have to be used to pursue "virtue." It can be developed specifically to improve prudence

This seems akin to exercising *parrhesia* (frank speech) upon oneself. Not that I'll necessarily have the discipline to implement this on a regular basis, but I can see the utility of doing this to increase one's prudent choices and rejections.

[Quote from Cassius](#)

I thought this was an Epicurean forum, not a Stoic forum?

I'm inclined to take Seneca's advice (up to a point): "I am wont to cross over even into the enemy's camp,—not as a deserter, but as a scout."

[Quote from Daniel188](#)

Self-awareness is useful in pursuing this goal because it allows us to recognize habits that are harmful. When I think of harmful habits, I mean those that cause more pain than pleasure in the long run. Without any regular introspection, we often resolve to do things but are unable to stick to them. While this is useful, it is only one possible trick and is not necessary. Self-awareness is not a goal in itself.

Well said. Self-awareness - whether gaining it from others through frank speech or looking at ourselves objectively (as far as that is possible) - is a tool, just like virtue, on the way to a more

pleasurable life.

[Quote from Daniel188](#)

Rather, I'm aiming to distill the specific exercise itself. In this case, regularly reviewing everyday events in order to learn from them.

Exactly. Using a tool or modifying a tool does not endorse someone else's use of that tool in a different way. Okay, that's a clunky metaphor... but I hope the general thrust of that comes through.

[Quote from Kalosyni](#)

I would suggest doing internal self-reflection only on an as needed basis (and not nightly), when one feels internal distress. One could examine what is going on and think about how to make better choices in the future. Self-harm from over-indulgence (food or alcohol) results in physical discomfort, and the Epicurean takes note of bad results and thinks about what to do differently next time. Also, the Epicurean naturally understands that any time one causes harm to another human being that there will be consequences -- mental uneasiness and disturbance will result and the person harmed will seek restitution or retribution, lawfully or otherwise (or their friends or family will seek restitution or retribution) -- or if minor harmful actions are done then their reputation and trust will be lost.

...

Instead of thinking about work at the end of the day, it seems like an Epicurean might be more focused on all the pleasant things that happened - practicing gratitude for ones friends and family and reliving any happy/fun/pleasurable events that happened earlier in the day...anything that one appreciates.

So now thinking... an Epicurean might like to create a nightly habit of practicing gratitude and appreciation, and happy recollections on a nightly basis.

I like the idea of a regular practice of gratitude and recollection. This seems to dovetail nicely with an Epicurean perspective. I do think that recollecting where we may have made imprudent choices leading to pain - to bring back in the self-awareness can be helpful, too. So a balance between what gave us pleasure and how we got there balanced with noting what brought us pain and how we can avoid that would be a part of a worthwhile practice. As [Kalosyni](#) said, "compare and contrast".

An interesting and worthwhile discussion. Welcome aboard, [Daniel188](#) !

Post by "Cassius" of December 20, 2025 at 5:43 AM

i haven't closely studied issues involving meditation, but this discussion reminds me of that. I seem to recall we have one or maybe more threads with people talking about hazards of meditation at least in certain circumstances, so I will see if I can link one or more of those comments.

I'm probably thinking about this one from three years ago:

Thread

[Meditation and Epicurean Philosophy \(?\)](#)

Admin Note: This thread is currently closed.

There is no evidence that Epicurus or Epicureans practiced meditation. There are many forum members who have studied Buddhism in the past, and this thread remains here as a reminder to focus on Epicurean goals for how choices of what to do are based on the pleasure that they bring, or the relief from stress that they bring (and not as a kind of virtue/religious discipline to develop as it often becomes for Buddhists). -- October 17, 2024

...



Matt

January 9, 2022 at 8:01 PM

"Self-awareness" however is certainly something I agree is desirable, and I also know that I identify "lack of self awareness" as a huge problem.

[Quote from Don](#)

An interesting and worthwhile discussion. Welcome aboard, Daniel188 !

Yes Don is right there are all many aspects of this discussion worth pursuing, so thank you Daniel for starting the topic!

Post by "Cassius" of December 20, 2025 at 5:46 AM

Hmmmm I just noticed in posting that last link that [that thread](#) is "closed."

Not sure what happened there - probably the thread and the reason for closing it needs a revisit at some point! 😊

Ok I just scanned over that thread and now I expect that my subconsciously remembering it is part of the reason I responded to Daniel's initial post the way I did.

I'd put the Seneca quotation in a category similar to what I think Don (?) has cited in the past about Cicero exploring techniques for improving memory such as the "walk-through-the-house" (?) method. Nothing wrong with posting about that kind of thing at all.

If I'm remembering correctly most of the "concern" would probably be about pursuing certain specific "meditation" techniques such as are associated with eastern/buddhist ideas. I think Kalosyni and others know a lot more about issues there than do I.

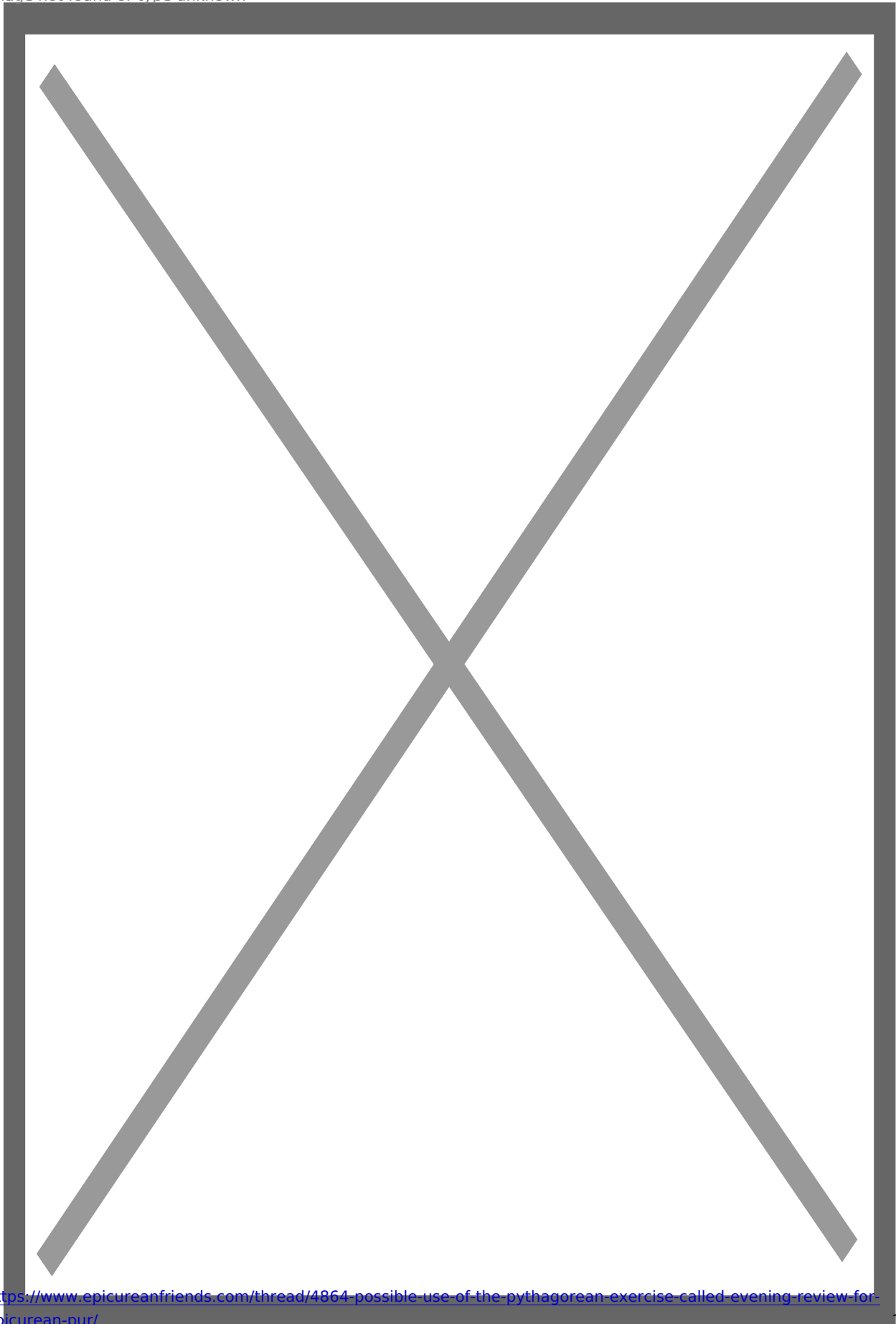
At the moment however that doesn't seem to be the topic so we can defer those issues to another place and time unless/until someone wants us to open another thread on them.

Post by “Don” of December 20, 2025 at 7:27 AM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

about Cicero exploring techniques for improving memory such as the "walk-through-the-house" (?) method

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[Method of loci - Wikipedia](#)

en.wikipedia.org

The method of loci is a good example of an ancient cultural meme (for lack of a better term) that was available to everyone and all schools of philosophy. It seems many times these techniques or tools get associated with a particular school (many times the Stoics since that's the one that was acceptable or malleable or able to be appropriated by later authorities, ex, Christians), but that doesn't mean it's *their* proprietary tool or technique.

Post by “Daniel188” of December 20, 2025 at 12:55 PM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

I'd put the Seneca quotation in a category similar to what I think Don (?) has cited in the past about Cicero exploring techniques for improving memory such as the "walk-through-the-house" (?) method. Nothing wrong with posting about that kind of thing at all.

That's basically what I had in mind when writing this post. These types of techniques can be used for various purposes. Cicero's technique for improving memory can also be usefully applied to Epicurean matters. For example, you can memorize basic doctrines in this way, so you always have them at the back of your mind and within reach.

I'm betting that the ancient Epicureans probably had their own set of various practices. One need only look at the organization of Epicurean gardens and the various ritual practices they employed to perpetuate their philosophy and maintain communal bonds. But we probably don't know about many of these things because the texts haven't been preserved. In fact, hostile actions were directed against the Epicureans to erase their teachings.

Post by “Patrikios” of December 23, 2025 at 6:18 PM

[Quote from Daniel188](#)

My intention wasn't necessarily to demonstrate that Seneca could offer any useful philosophical advice for Epicureans. Rather, I'm aiming to distill the specific exercise itself. In this case, regularly reviewing everyday events in order to learn from them.

In fact, I could have omitted Seneca's quote from this post altogether. I included it more as a curiosity that some ancient people used something like this.

[Daniel188](#) ,

Welcome, and thanks for your post.

From my reading, Epicurus did teach us a similar meditation practice himself. **Meleta** is the Epicurean practice of contemplation and philosophical exercise.

In "[Choosing to Remember and to Forget](#)," Hiram Crespo speaks of **nuktos meleta**, the evening practice that Epicurus himself prescribed. This appears to be the reflective meditation you describe. After the day has concluded, we sit in quiet contemplation and examine what has transpired. We ask ourselves the very questions you mention: Did we accomplish what we set out to do? Did we treat others with the kindness and fairness we expect for ourselves? Where did we fall short, and what might we do differently tomorrow to move closer to ataraxia?

This evening reflection serves a dual purpose. First, it allows us to learn from our actions and adjust our course—what Crespo calls "inner motion," the active exercise of reason and will toward future goods. We are not passive creatures drifting through life, but deliberate agents steering ourselves toward tranquility and flourishing.

Second, and equally important, this practice culminates in **zuowang**—sitting and forgetting. After honest reflection, we release the day's perturbations. We do not cling to regrets or ruminate endlessly on our failures. Instead, we acknowledge them, learn from them, and then consciously let them go. This is the art of forgetting as an active practice, not a weakness but a necessity for mental health and presence.

In my personal adoption of this meleta approach, I found that it adds another dimension to my daily meditations by providing a template for a more rigorous philosophical discipline—one that simultaneously cultivates self-awareness and liberation from unnecessary suffering. While I may not be as rigorous in applying these techniques daily, I do find them useful to incorporate it multiple times a week, which helps keep me focused on my Epicurean priorities that lead to a life of mental and physical wellbeing.

You will find more rigorous Epicurean practices of teacher or self critique in the works of **Philodemus**, such as [On Frank Criticism](#), and [On Anger](#).

In addition, here are a couple of related postings by Crespo on the topic of Meleta.

- [Meléta: Epicurus' Instructions for Students](#)
- [Epicurus' Instructions on Meleta, Part II](#)

Those are just a few guides that I have been using as a new student of Epicurus, to apply in my personal life. Hopefully, you will find what works for you as you progress through your studies here with your **Epicurean Friends**.

Post by “Kalosyni” of December 23, 2025 at 7:15 PM

[Quote from Patrikios](#)

In "Choosing to Remember and to Forget," Hiram Crespo speaks of *nuktos meleta*, the evening practice that Epicurus himself prescribed.

A word of caution here, that the writings by Hiram that are referred to in the above post can be characterized as unique interpretations of Epicurean philosophy that: at times incorporate elements and ideas from external sources -- and at times are speculative in nature (do not come from direct textual evidence).

[Quote from Patrikios](#)

Did we accomplish what we set out to do? Did we treat others with the kindness and fairness we expect for ourselves? Where did we fall short, and what might we do differently tomorrow to move closer to *ataraxia*?

If we look directly at the Letter to Menoecus we see at the end of the letter this paragraph:

"Meditate therefore on these things and things akin to them night and day by yourself; and with a companion like to yourself, and never shall you be disturbed waking or asleep, but you shall live like a god among men. For a man who lives among immortal blessings is not like unto a mortal being."

It says that the time to practice is "night and day" so this instead refers to doing it all the time (not just at night). And we see no mention of striving for a "perfect" *ataraxia* (by analysis of how we might have fallen short). The Letter to Menoecus doesn't mention "treating others with kindness and fairness", but it does talk about dealing with the fear of death and also making

good choices and avoidances.

So the best way to determine what Epicurus taught is to read the ancient extant texts, and I highly recommend doing so.

Post by “Bryan” of December 24, 2025 at 9:30 AM

[Quote from Kalosyni](#)

at times incorporate elements and ideas from external sources

Certainly so,

[Quote from Patrikios](#)

Second, and equally important, this practice culminates in zuowang—sitting and forgetting.

Quote from Hiram

"Taoists have a technology of the self for discarding memories: [zuowang](#) (sitting and forgetting). Although some descriptions of this practice sound mystifying..."

Hiram does a lot of great work, but, as he says in the article, "[zuowang](#)" is Taoist.

Pulling these definitions of Zuowang from the wikipedia article:

- "oblivious of oneself and one's surroundings; free from worldly concerns" - [Liang Shih-chiu](#) & Chang Fang-chieh
- "oblivious of one's surroundings, free from worldly concerns" - [Lin Yutang](#)
- "to be oblivious of oneself and one's surroundings, to be free from worldly concerns" - [John DeFrancis](#)

Post by “Daniel188” of December 24, 2025 at 11:20 AM

<https://www.epicureanfriends.com/thread/4864-possible-use-of-the-pythagorean-exercise-called-evening-review-for-epicurean-pur/>

[Quote from Bryan](#)

Pulling these definitions of Zuowang from the wikipedia article:

"oblivious of oneself and one's surroundings; free from worldly concerns" - Liang Shih-chiu & Chang Fang-chieh

"oblivious of one's surroundings, free from worldly concerns" - Lin Yutang

"to be oblivious of oneself and one's surroundings, to be free from worldly concerns" - John DeFrancis

This doesn't really seem like a good goal for reflective practices. I've read Hiram's book, and he listed various techniques there, but in my opinion, any meditation techniques focused on calming the body and mind are of limited use.

For example, let's look at meditation practices (popular ones associated with Eastern doctrines). We have practices like focusing on the breath, sitting quietly, body scanning, etc. These are good methods for relaxation, but beyond relaxation, they don't really offer much.

Such practices can't offer increased awareness. If we just sit and do nothing, ignoring all thoughts, we feel relaxed, but this doesn't bring awareness to daily habits or generate new ideas.

The situation is different if we regularly try to recall our actions and various situations that happen to us in order to increase our agency. This is a form of engaging in deliberate reflection. Meditation techniques focus more on disengaging from thinking.

Post by “Cassius” of December 24, 2025 at 12:02 PM

Also as to "forgetting" there are obvious common sense aspects to choosing what you focus on. Beyond that, I would consider'. Are there any specific Epicurean texts that suggest practicing forgetfulness? I tend to focus on the specific statement in Diogenes Laeetius that the wise man will feel his emotions more deeply than will others.

Also as another general consideration I think it's a very bad idea to continue using terms from other languages without being specific as to how they translate. Obviously any analysis starts with exploring the etymology, but after that, continuing to use untranslated terms can lead to more confusion than light. We should work for clarity above all, and continuing to fail to translate can imply a kind of insider jargon or esoteric truth available only to a few that is a turnoff to those who are sincerely looking for practical benefit.

Post by “Don” of December 24, 2025 at 2:48 PM

[Quote from Daniel188](#)

For example, let's look at meditation practices (popular ones associated with Eastern doctrines). We have practices like focusing on the breath, sitting quietly, body scanning, etc. These are good methods for relaxation, but beyond relaxation, they don't really offer much.

[Quote from Cassius](#)

choosing what you focus on.

[Quote from Cassius](#)

I tend to focus on the specific statement in Diogenes Laeetius that the wise man will feel his emotions more deeply than will others.

I would offer that one of the aims of this kind of meditation practice is to pay attention to the feelings of your body. I'll admit the Buddhist practice is to notice those feelings then let them pass; however, becoming more attuned to what your body is telling you rather than ignoring or lying to oneself is in line with an Epicurean life. Training oneself to tune into your body's feelings is the first step in deciding what really causes you pain and pleasure.

Post by “Cassius” of December 24, 2025 at 4:02 PM

[Quote from Don](#)

I'll admit the Buddhist practice is to notice those feelings then let them pass; however, becoming more attuned to what your body is telling you rather than ignoring or lying to oneself is in line with an Epicurean life. Training oneself to tune into your body's feelings is the first step in deciding what really causes you pain and pleasure.

Yes I agree with your comments Don. And this is a good example of being careful about the goal of techniques before they are used. Is your goal as to emotions to "let them pass" or "listen to what they are telling you and take appropriate action"?

That's a huge difference, and I would expect that the diverging purposes probably also plays in the actual practices themselves. I'd very likely approach things that I wanted ultimate to ignore much differently than thinks that I want to understand, appreciate, and learn from.

Plus, in the context of the stress that Epicurus places on the pleasure that we can take from good memories of the past, from the Epicurean point of view we want to preserve the good memories in our minds as clearly as possible so as to draw upon them in the future.

Post by “Daniel188” of December 24, 2025 at 4:33 PM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

Yes I agree with your comments Don. And this is is a good example of being careful about the goal of techniques before they are used. Is your goal as to emotions to "let them pass" or "listen to what they are telling you and take appropriate action"?

Here we have an example of the hidden philosophical assumptions behind meditation practices. Buddhist teachers often refer to the doctrine of anatta, the doctrine of non-self. Therefore, they recommend observing sensations and their transience and impermanence in all practices. They want people to recognize that sensations are not theirs and develop indifference to them. This is in clear contradiction to Epicurean philosophy.

Post by “Patrikios” of December 24, 2025 at 7:20 PM

[Quote from Kalosyni](#)

A word of caution here, that the writings by Hiram that are referred to in the above post can be characterized as unique interpretations of Epicurean philosophy that: at times incorporate elements and ideas from external sources -- and at times are speculative in nature (do not come from direct textual evidence).

[Kalosyni](#) , I appreciate you reading and taking time to comment on my post.

While I referenced Hiram Crespo based on his recent series of Eikas messages that made some references to meditation, I have also been studying the topic of meditation (*meleta*) from

multiple sources. I find that Crespo provides an added perspective (not speculative), that still reflects the intent of the original Epicurean text. Epicurus clearly advocated that we engage in *meleta* on a regular basis ("day and night"), as he states that admonition twice in the **Letter to Menoikeus**.

Quote

"You must study and **meditate** upon that which produces **eudaimonia**." [122]

○ *χρή* expresses necessity! It is essential - to study, reflect, and meditate on...

● *μελετᾶν* carries the sense of attending to something closely, studying it, or meditating on

it. It also means "to practise an art" and is akin to the Latin word *meditari*. We see this word again in verse 123 and 135.

. *εὐδαιμονία* is defined by LSJ as "prosperity, good fortune, opulence; true, full happiness."

The word is derived from *εὖ-* (*eu-*) "well, good" + *δαίμονία* (*daimonia*) "spirit, divine power."

This is where English gets the word "demon" but it could be either benevolent (*eudaimon*) or

malevolent (*kakodaimon*). If you have a good, benevolent in-dwelling spirit, you will lead a

prosperous, healthy, flourishing, fortunate life.

...

ἄ δέ σοι συνεχῶς παρήγγελλον, ταῦτα καὶ πράττε καὶ μελέτα, στοιχεῖα τοῦ καλῶς ζῆν
ταῦτ' εἶναι
διαλαμβάνων.

"And to you (i.e., Menoikeus), I (i.e., Epicurus) was continuously exhorting to practice,
to study,

and to meditate on those things which I state distinctly to be the basic elements of a
noble,

beautiful, and virtuous life."

Display More

[Primary Source: Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of the Eminent Philosophers*, Book X.121-135
**Meditate On These Things: Epicurus's Letter to Menoikeus - A New Translation with
Commentary** © 2021 by Don Boozar]

Because it is a 'necessity' that we study and meditate daily; most of us need to plan, set-aside times for this type of deep meditation/reflection. So, while we can/should sing and repeat Epicurean quotes throughout the day; I usually need to set aside 15 to 20 minutes in the evening for a rigorous reflection, a **nuktos meleta**, the evening practice that Epicurus himself prescribed. My meditation usually follows reading/studying texts and articles for a couple hours earlier in the day .

And in order to meditate on how to train my '*divine spirit*' (daimonia) to be more benevolent, I reflect on how well I treated others throughout the day, and identify areas of improvement. Then I engage in deep meditation, while reflecting on impressions of "*blessed and immortal beings*", so I can better envision how to '*adjust my course*' in order to be '*steering ourselves toward tranquility and flourishing*'.

This is how I understand the purpose and value in Epicurean meditation. This also fits with the description in the chapter on Theology in the Oxford Handbook on Epicureanism. They discuss using meditation, prayer to interiorize, to assimilate the blessedness of the gods.

Quote

*The simulacra of the gods, then, bring benefits, and thus to **participate in prayers** and in religious ceremonies (cf. Diog. Oen. fr. 19 II 6- 11 Smith) means to “interiorize” in an effective way the (pleasurable) divine simulacra and to put into practice the commitment to become like a god among men.⁵⁴ In this sense, the gods are not only ethical models and regulative ideals, introduced by Epicurus solely in order to render his philosophical system consistent with his recognition of beings that are eternally and genuinely imperturbable. Epicurus’s gods also become figures highly relevant to our ethical life, playing a role that is at least indirectly active (although without any deliberate intention on their part), in virtue of the benefits that their simulacra bring us in practice on the not always easy road toward assimilation to god (homoiōsis theōi), which has a Platonic pedigree (cf. Theaet. 176a- b) but is totally of this world and bounded by the limits of this life.⁵⁵*

Chapter 5 - Theology, Emidio Spinelli and Francesco Verde, Oxford Handbook of Epicurus and Epicureanism (2020) (Kindle Locations 2638-2646). Kindle Edition.

[Daniel188](#) ,

I hope these added references help to reinforce the Epicurean approach to meditation and reflection.

<https://www.epicureanfriends.com/thread/4864-possible-use-of-the-pythagorean-exercise-called-evening-review-for-epicurean-pur/>

Post by “Don” of December 24, 2025 at 7:33 PM

[Quote from Patrikios](#)

Meditate On These Things: Epicurus’s Letter to Menoikeus - A New Translation with Commentary © 2021 by Don Boozer]

LOL it's still weird - but rewarding - to see my work quoted and referred to. I'm glad it continues to be of service.

Post by “Cassius” of December 24, 2025 at 7:44 PM

[Quote from Don](#)

LOL it's still weird - but rewarding - to see my work quoted and referred to. I'm glad it continues to be of service.

Well I and others are hoping your editorial output will continue in 2026 so that you will find many more opportunities for rewarding moments in the future! 😊

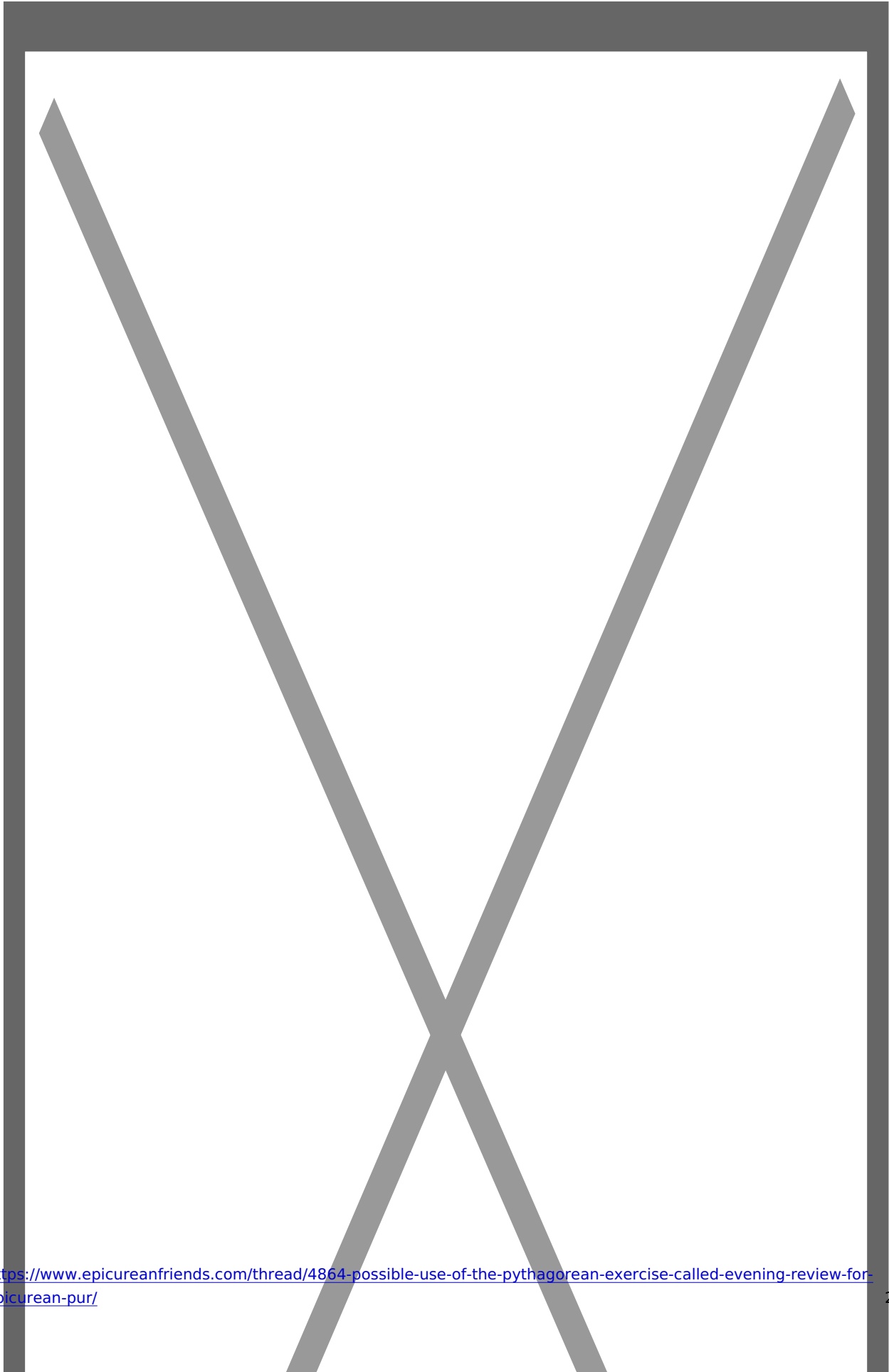
Post by “Kalosyni” of December 24, 2025 at 8:00 PM

I think it is important here in this forum to speak up when seeing articles written which say or imply that "Epicurus said to do XYZ" when there isn't specific textual evidence.

Post by “Don” of December 25, 2025 at 8:05 AM

Although not directly related to the topic at hand, I found this excellent summary of Dr. Austin's perspective on Epicurus' philosophy in an article I didn't remember her writing:

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[How to live like an Epicurean | Psyche Guides](#)

Forget shallow hedonism. Follow this philosophy for wondrous, unexpected joys and resilience against inevitable misfortune

psyche.co

This forum and the podcast get great shout-outs, too!

My reason for bringing it up here is that she brings up in several spots the fact that people often miss the joy and pleasure they have readily at hand. Epicurus calls us to recognize the pleasure we already have in daily life and to cultivate pleasure here and now to store up memories for future recall. Any tool that makes us slow down and appreciate the pleasure we have now seems to me to be beneficial.

Granted, Epicureans reject the underlying Buddhist motive of mindfulness meditation, to realize anatta. We are not "no thing." Okay, maybe at the atomic level, there is no sweet, no color, etc. But we don't live at the atomic level. We live at the level of compound things and need a way to negotiate that world. Any practice, even those from the "enemy camp" that can be retrofit and retooled to run better and more practically for the use of slowing down, paying attention to what we're feeling here and now, and teaching us how to appreciate the joys in front of our eyes and how to avoid future pains is worth taking a look at.

Post by “Daniel188” of December 25, 2025 at 12:49 PM

[Quote from Patrikios](#)

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I completely agree. It's worth having such a regular practice, if only because it reminds us of philosophy and teaches us to analyze daily life through its lens.