

Revisiting Issues of The Use of AI in Epicurean Philosophy

Post by “TauPhi” of March 24, 2026 at 9:26 PM

ADMIN NOTE BY CASSIUS -- I don't have the ability to create my own post so as to explain this thread so I am doing so in this ADMIN edit. I am moving all discussion of issues of the use of AI in two blog posts I generated in late March 2026 (of course it's applicable far beyond those) to this thread. I am posting in those original threads links to this thread. The original discussion threads for those articles should be used for discussing substantive comments, criticisms, changes, etc. Issues of the use of AI apply to both and should be made here in this thread entitled "Revisiting Issues of The Use of AI in Epicurean Philosophy"

I usually avoid philosophical skirmishes because they tend to lead to 'my god is better than your god' scenarios but I want to give credit where credit is due. I really enjoyed your response [Cassius](#) . This is a very well written article and the quality of Mr. Pigliucci's work pales in comparison with yours.

Post by “Cassius” of March 25, 2026 at 12:33 AM

Thank you Tau Phi.

Many of our EpicureanFriends participants arrived here after traveling through Stoicism - myself included. Many open-minded people read the Stoic materials and it's probably a good means of exposure for us to at least occasionally engage at appropriate times.

I have avoided skirmishing with the committed Stoics in the past, but I think we need at least a couple of articles setting out the ultimate points for those who are new to the study. The articles that are specifically anti-Epicurean and relatively high-profile - such as this one by Pigliucci on Substack - probably deserve individual attention.

In the future where specifically anti-Epicurean articles appear, i want to at least consider publishing a public response. I try to monitor the internet for new articles, but this one got past me for almost a month. As people see articles that deserve attention I will appreciate it if they will let me know by public thread or private message.

Post by “Don” of March 25, 2026 at 6:26 AM

Well done!!

Oddly enough, this came up on my Substack feed before I saw it here, and I started reading. Really enjoyed it. Kept thinking, I have to share this on the forum. Got to the end, and at that point realized it was Cassius's!

Great response to Pigliucci, although I didn't read nor do I now plan to read his article.

Engagingly written! Overall excellent job.

Post by “Don” of March 25, 2026 at 6:46 AM

I see you don't allow comments on Substack. That's a shame. I'd really be curious to see Pigliucci's response to your response. I did see someone posted your link to his comments.

Post by “Cassius” of March 25, 2026 at 7:40 AM

[Quote from Don](#)

I see you don't allow comments on Substack.

I may change that but have not thought it through.

Post by “DaveT” of March 25, 2026 at 12:27 PM

[Cassius](#) Complements on your thorough refutation of Pigliucci's article on the duty to engage among Stoics. I wish you and he could engage in a scholarly journal on issues he asserted and your response. Any ideas on how to initiate something like that?

Post by “Cassius” of March 25, 2026 at 12:53 PM

[Quote from DaveT](#)

I wish you and he could engage in a scholarly journal on issues he asserted and your response.

It's an interesting question. I am not opposed to doing that at some point, and in fact I expect to do more interviews/discussions as we've done on the podcast in the past, but I need to think through exactly if and when debating with someone committed to an opposing position is worth the time.

If I were promoting myself as a guru or writing a book I wanted to sell or wanted to become a "personality" then that would clearly be the thing to do. However that is not my goal: my goal is the successful restoration of an Epicurean "camp" (to use that terminology here), and that isn't necessarily best accomplished by engaging in personality debates or trying to build my own personal "brand." I don't admit that anything we do here is anything other than correct Epicurean philosophy, so it would only detract to allow it to appear to be a "Cassius Amicus" innovation.

in fact I am remembering lately what Francis Wright had to say in A Few Days In Athens about how in-person arguments rarely produce anything good as a result.

As [Martin](#) and I and others observed over at Facebook, there is an unlimited supply of Stoics who love nothing better than arguing about detailed points of logic. The truth is that basic issues of the nature of the universe and our perspective on this world as sufficient for us, rather than focusing on a transcendent "true world" need no sophisticated analysis. The respective positions are unbridgeable and the main question is how to get the world to people who are open to the Epicurean side.

As you yourself indicated in an earlier post, engaging in debates where we have no reasonable expectations of coming to agreement with the other side. For the present I am thinking that the best thing i can do for the project is to continue to focus on the podcast and producing new content of our own. So I'm still thinking but those are my current thoughts.

We have a lot of projects going on here and those will probably continue to be my primary focus.

Post by “DaveT” of March 25, 2026 at 3:04 PM

[Cassius](#) I respect your inclinations and wouldn't try to change your thoughts on widening the issue of a Stoic vs Epicurean duty to engage. As you confirmed, I think there is little likelihood to gain agreement between debaters, and frankly why should there be? And that is why I'm not suggesting personality driven debate to the public at large. That becomes two men of a certain age nit picking each other's belief's. My thinking was that a scholarly debate read in an academic journal, might raise the misstated issues by Pigliucci to professionals in the field. Any one of those who may better understand Epicurus though your forceful review of Pigliucci becomes a force multiplier so to speak toward your goal of clearing up misconceptions of Epicurean foundations.

Once again, great job!

Post by "Cassius" of March 25, 2026 at 6:20 PM

[Quote from DaveT](#)

My thinking was that a scholarly debate read in an academic journal, might raise the misstated issues by Pigliucci to professionals in the field. Any one of those who may better understand Epicurus though your forceful review of Pigliucci becomes a force multiplier so to speak toward your goal of clearing up misconceptions of Epicurean foundations.

Unfortunately my experience tells me to expect just the opposite as to who the "professionals in the field" can be expected to say is misguided. Although I am no Academic myself, it's my observation that Pigliucci's position is in fact the majority position of the vast majority of philosophic professionals.

This feeds back into our earlier discussion of "experts" and when to defer to them. I have to go with my reading of the sources and the commentators as to what makes sense to me after reviewing the best material available.

I'll be pleased if there are any Academics who would weigh in to agree with my position, but I don't expect it. If there were such writers out there already, we wouldn't be almost alone in the positions that have been taken on this forum on the best interpretation of Epicurus, and Pigliucci's positions would not be so prevalent.

This is an ongoing journey, and no one here should be under the false impression that they can refute Pigliucci's position by numbers of testimonials. For the present at least, anyone whose priority is to be in the mainstream of Academic scholarship likely isn't going to feel at home at

Post by “Joshua” of March 25, 2026 at 7:18 PM

That was well done, [Cassius](#), and I only have one note; I would suggest replacing the reference to Christian 'inner peace' in section I with a citation instead to Philippians 4:7, and *the peace of God, which passeth all understanding*. Christianity does not really idealize inner peace, it idealizes obedience.

Post by “Cassius” of March 25, 2026 at 7:24 PM

Thanks Joshua I will incorporate that!

Post by “Godfrey” of March 26, 2026 at 10:58 PM

Very well thought out and on point essay [Cassius](#) . I was actually quite surprised while reading Pigliucci's essay that he so thoroughly misreads Epicurean philosophy. His essay reads more as Ciceronian snark than as serious scholarship. At any rate, well done!

Post by “DaveT” of March 31, 2026 at 2:44 PM

First off, this was such a well written piece in its structure, clarity and logic. I'm jealous of the style you have exhibited in constructing this as well as the recent review of Massimo Pigliucci's essay. This is really good writing. My only critical comment is that I think this is publication material beyond this forum and your Substack, and therefore, you might want to solicit reviews from fellow experts to remove any issues that it might (I don't know of any) distract from the main point.

Post by “Cassius” of March 31, 2026 at 3:20 PM

Thank you Dave let me be clear as to the organization of the articles and address what some no doubt are wondering:

In these two articles I have taken my draft outline as well as prior articles I've written on these topics and input the mix to AI to help structure the organization and presentation. After I get a second draft I have then edited all phrasing to be sure that I can personally stand by the wording 100%.

I see this as similar to the AI art that I've included with each article. There is no way I could myself produce such artwork without AI assistance, and yet the subject of the graphic is what I dictate it to be and the result is something that I am willing to stand by and significantly enhances the article.

No doubt there will be those who say that the result is "slop" and should be rejected out of hand because AI was involved in the composition. That's a criticism I am willing to take given that (1) the result takes my own points and arguments, and (2) the articles make no other points than what I myself am directing. Everything in these articles has been discussed numerous times in many ways in both articles here and on the podcast.

As for places of publication, for now I think I'm probably going to just let nature (and Facebook, X, and Substack) take their course on that. I see that as kind of like the issue of debates. At this point in my life my contribution to the team effort doesn't involve making myself a brand name or personality. My contribution (if any) is that of organizing material and calling it to the attention of others who can hopefully then take it to another level. That's a goal and a process in which I'm happy to take any assistance (alive or artificial) I can find.

As usual you are raising issues I think a lot about so thanks for the input.

Post by “TauPhi” of March 31, 2026 at 6:34 PM

Unfortunately, I have to retract my praise for this article as I found out it was AI assisted creation. [Cassius](#) , please add information about AI usage in your publications when AI is used. Signing such creations with your name only is misleading as you're not the sole author of such works. I have the utmost respect for you as a person and your vast knowledge of Epicurean philosophy but I have zero intention of publicly praising your ability to give prompts to LLMs. To be perfectly clear, I have no problems with people using AIs if they choose to do so. I just don't want to be unknowingly involved in AI generated content.

Post by “Cassius” of March 31, 2026 at 7:17 PM

Note -- In order to appreciate the context of Tau Phi's post 14, this earlier post is essential context.

Tau Phi I will think you have adequately stated your position as to any AI in this thread here. If you have some substantive criticism of the article please add it too.

I am going to certainly consider your position but I don't expect to require labeling of each and every post or article as involving AI no matter what level of involvement it has.

As I see it the job of presenting and promoting Epicurean philosophy is to express Epicurean ideas clearly and accurately. Holding the line against all AI under any circumstances is not consistent with that goal, and in fact an absolutist position against it would stand in the way of that goal.

Post by “TauPhi” of March 31, 2026 at 8:14 PM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

Tau Phi I will think you have adequately stated your position as to any AI in this thread here. If you have some substantive criticism of the article please add it too.

I still think the content of the article is very good. Nothing has changed and I have no criticism in this regard whatsoever.

I retract my praise for the article because I was misled to think you wrote it which is not entirely the case. As I said before, I have no problem if you, or anyone else, choose to delegate creative processes to AI. I'm interested in doing philosophy with humans. That's my goal here. I'm not interested in AI summaries. If you have different goals, that's perfectly fine as long as you are clear about them.

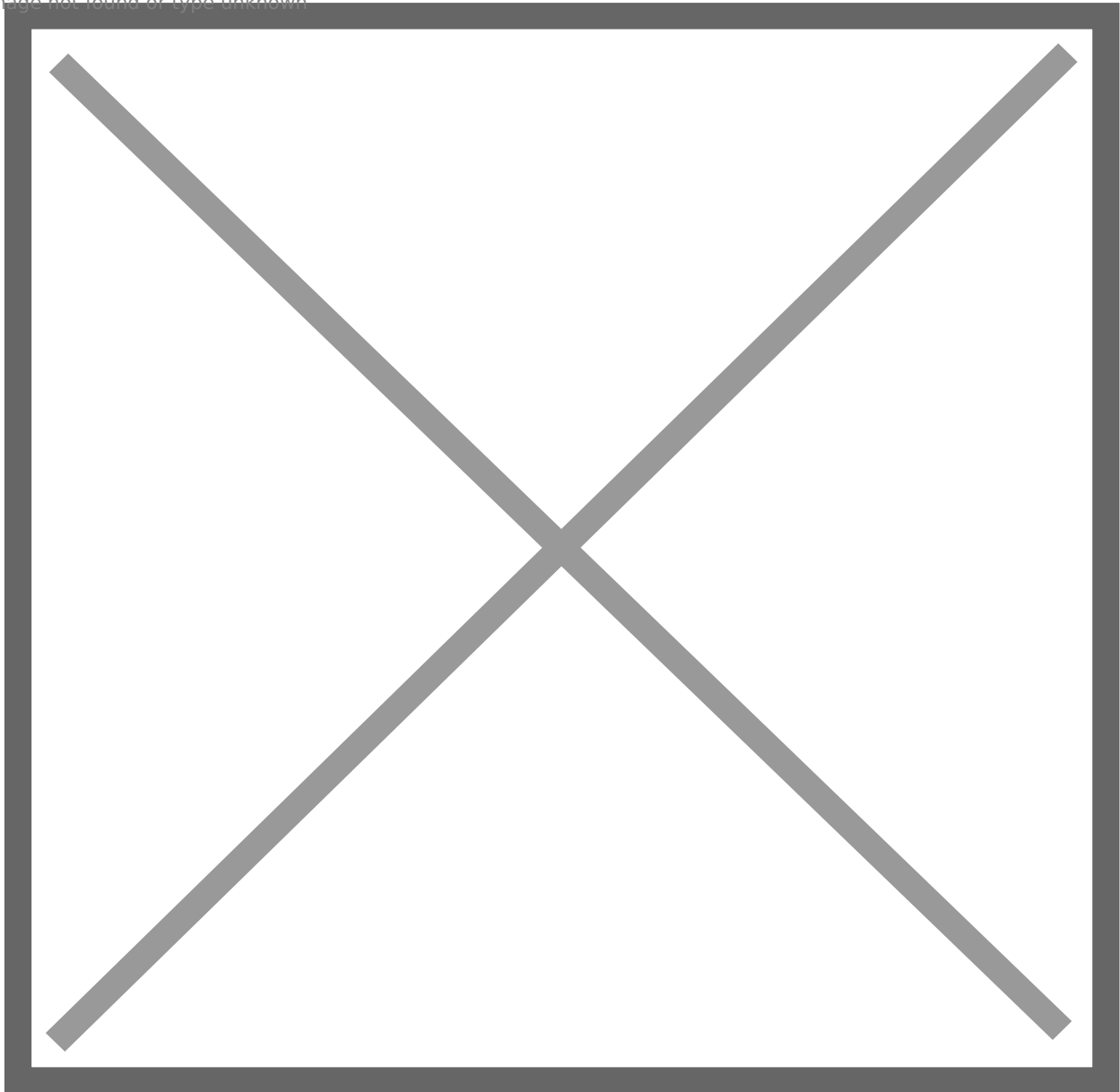
However, if you intend to present AI creations as yours in conversation with me without notifying me about it, please refrain from doing so as I'm not interested in having conversations about AI algorithmic simulacrum of philosophical ideas, no matter how clear or accurate. I'm only asking about clarity in this respect when it concerns me personally. Nothing more.

Post by “Cassius” of March 31, 2026 at 9:29 PM

At the moment I don't have much more to say about the specifics of labeling, but I do want to share a recent conversation elsewhere which has greatly influenced my thinking on this subject. For those who don't follow the link here's the thumbnail:

HaikuOS is an independent operating system deriving from the old "Be" computer company which folded 20+ years ago. A group of enthusiasts has kept it alive all these years since then, but progress in implementing new application software has been very slow. The following thread was started by a developer there who wanted to use AI to accelerate the pace of development. The thread exploded into harsh division between those who argue for the non-AI-purity of hand coding vs those who think AI is the way to accelerate development of the OS. While there are many differences in context the basic issue of "let's get the job done" vs "every line of code must be done by humans" has some basic analogies to our situation. Without AI the goals of the project might never be accomplished. With AI there are obvious hazards that need to be accounted for. This thread illustrates how the issues involved in AI can lead to absolutist positions on either side of the AI question which need to be avoided.

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[\[TUTORIAL\] How to install Claude Code on Haiku - because apparently waiting twenty years wasn't enough](#)

► Moderated but left up for historical purposes (Slanderous strawman arguments) Here's how to install Claude Code on Haiku. 1. Install Node.js and npm via...
discuss.haiku-os.org

Post by "Don" of April 1, 2026 at 7:37 AM

Hmmm...

I understand the context of this AI component now a little better after reading this in the other article's thread:

Post

[RE: Revisiting Issues of The Use of AI in Epicurean Philosophy](#)

Thank you Dave let me be clear as to the organization of the articles and address what some no doubt are wondering:

In these two articles I have taken my draft outline as well as prior articles I've written on these topics and input the mix to AI to help structure the organization and presentation. After I get a second draft I have then edited all phrasing to be sure that I can personally stand by the wording 100%.

I see this as similar to the AI art that I've included with each article. There...



Cassius

March 31, 2026 at 3:20 PM

This revelation on the use of AI to compose these articles does evoke *feelings* in me. I'm some ways, I feel cheated? Tricked? Fooled or made a fool of? Let's leave it at feeling *uneasy* for now.

If an AI application was used *simply* to fine tune syntax, grammar, and phrasing (like a "super" Clippy from 1990s Microsoft) I suppose I can see utility in that. If [Cassius](#) loaded in an outline, albeit a detailed outline, and prompted the AI to *compose* the article, I'm more uneasy with that. If, on the other other hand, the text used to train the AI was only Epicurean texts, only this forum, or only [Cassius](#) 's other writings and podcast transcripts, maybe that ameliorates my uneasy feelings. If I now understand that the eloquence in the article that I respected didn't come from a human mind but is a simulation of what [Cassius](#) might have written, I feel that eloquence is a facade, a masquerade, and that I was suckered in by a machine. I would like to understand how much is [Cassius](#) and how much is an AI application in those texts.

If the goal is Epicurean evangelism and the argument is that those ends justify any means, that path leads down eventually (and admittedly hyperbolically) to Epicurean-prompted bots posting endlessly to FB, X, Instagram, etc., and replying algorithmically to human generated questions and comments, just to get the message out.

From my perspective, Epicurean philosophy is a human-centered philosophy based in human senses and human feelings and human reason in response to the natural, material world as humans experience it. Generative AI removes the human element from creative work, and the

human element is what gives authenticity to what's expressed in those creations.

That summarizes my feelings. No AI was used in the composition of this post (unless you count spell-check and using a swipe keyboard on my phone).

Post by “Cassius” of April 1, 2026 at 7:56 AM

[Quote from Don](#)

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Post by “Cassius” of April 1, 2026 at 8:11 AM

[Quote from Don](#)

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From my perspective, Epicurean philosophy is a human-centered philosophy based in human senses and human feelings and human reason in response to the natural, material world as humans experience it. Generative AI removes the human element from creative work, and the human element is what gives authenticity to what's expressed in those creations.

I think this does a pretty good job of identifying the issues I am currently considering.

And it immediately evokes in my mind the hypothetical of the "experience machine" and the issues involved in [PD10](#).

The world is currently going through changes that probably are going to exceed that of the industrial revolution. It's commonplace to see movies and articles talking about AI leading to

mass population reduction and worse.

Quote

Generative AI removes the human element from creative work, and the human element is what gives authenticity to what's expressed in those creations.

This is the question that is often posed and while I am still thinking it through I don't think I actually or can afford to agree. As to actuality, it doesn't "remove" the human element - it's a tool. And as for practicality, the forces arrayed against "us" - meaning against those who support living according to Epicurean philosophy - are too great to unilaterally disarm and give up this tool, which at the moment I see likely to become necessary for self-preservation.

[Quote from Don](#)

that path leads down eventually (and admittedly hyperbolically) to Epicurean-prompted bots posting endlessly to FB, X, Instagram, etc., and replying algorithmically to human generated questions and comments, just to get the message out.

And would that *necessarily* be a bad thing? Once again the considerations of [PD10](#) apply - if there are methods by which we actually succeed in establishing and preserving an actual community of living Epicureans. would we say "Nah that's not worth the use of AI to do so because I find it makes me uneasy / is despicable"?

The question keeps asking itself over and over in different ways. As I see it, there's no way to get around asking "What is the ACTUAL result of the use of any tool or method - including AI?"

At least at the moment my personal answer is that it doesn't make any difference who or what or how a presentation that is accurate, well-expressed, and persuasive is produced. If it meets those tests then it is useful no matter who or how produced. if it doesn't meet those test, then it makes no difference who produced it or how. The only ultimate test is "What happens if we pursue this course of action vs what happens if we don't?"

No doubt different people are going to make different predictions about that result, but I don't think it is justifiable to draw a red line because as we all agree in Epicurean philosophy there is no "fate," and I doubt anyone can justify concluding that every aspect of AI is one of "necessity."

Post by "Cassius" of April 1, 2026 at 8:14 AM

This thread is being used to consolidate renewed discussion of AI in late March / early April 2026.

Post by “Don” of April 1, 2026 at 9:09 AM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

And would that necessarily be a bad thing? Once again the considerations of [PD10](#) apply - if there are methods by which we actually succeed in establishing and preserving an actual community of living Epicureans.

And therein lies the rub. In my scenario of bots posting and responding algorithmically, there is no "actual community of living Epicureans." There may be unlimited "Epicurean" content online in this scenario, but there is no community, no real Epicureans, just AI bots posting, responding, commenting. One person could program a bot or bots to do all this. A community can't be one person sitting in a Garden with a laptop.

If one wants an "actual community of living Epicureans," you need actual living humans interacting with each other, online and in-person. Increasing content posted everywhere created by generative AI doesn't get humans to have meaningful interactions with other humans.

[Quote from Cassius](#)

the hypothetical of the "experience machine" and the issues involved in [PD10](#).

LOL That's a whole other kettle of fish for (yet) another thread. *Come at me, bro! I'll throw down on [PD10](#), dude!* (I'm doing my best to channel some trash-talking WWE wrestler here. I'll take my Oscar now 😁)

[Quote from Cassius](#)

it doesn't "remove" the human element - it's a tool. And as for practicality, the forces arrayed against "us" - meaning against those who support living according to Epicurean philosophy - are too great to unilaterally disarm and give up this tool, which at the moment I see likely to become necessary for self-preservation.

Sure, I'll concede generative AI is a tool. And I'm consciously using generative AI to get away from using "AI" as some generic acronym. Tools are great. The Internet is a tool. A wrench is a tool. One can use the Internet to post misinformation and harassment. One can use a wrench to change your car battery or to bludgeon someone. If one uses an AI application to analyze a huge dataset to help research cancer cures, that's a great use of a tool. If an AI application is used to model weather data to predict severe weather and to save lives, 👍. If someone uses generative AI to create computer code and something goes wrong, you can't ask the coder "Why did you write this line this way instead of that way?" Software engineers can be asked. Generative AI has no idea, that was just the prediction of what came next in their LLM modeling data. I use this same analogy about articles. If an AI-generated article has a turn of phrase or a point is made, and someone asks "That's clever. Could you tell me where that came from? Could you expand on that point?" there's no there *there*. Generative AI is a black box. If a human writes an article, we can ask the human to expand on a point. We can disagree with a human. We can have a discussion with a human. There is NO opportunity to "have a discussion" with an AI bot. There's the verisimilitude of a conversation, but conversations happen between people.

So, how we use any tool - or use the right tool for the right job - needs to be a conscious human decision. Does the tool enhance human abilities or does it *replace* uniquely human abilities.

Post by "Cassius" of April 1, 2026 at 9:37 AM

[Quote from Don](#)

If an AI application is used to model weather data to predict severe weather and to save lives, 👍. If someone uses generative AI to create computer code and something goes wrong, you can't ask the coder "Why did you write this line this way instead of that way?" Software engineers can be asked. G

Yes as I see it that is the test - the actual result. You would not want to turn loose generative AI without human supervision and without the ability for a human to override the Ai when it is wrong, as it often will be. I think that's pretty much the dividing line between what is acceptable and what is not. Because if indeed we use generative AI to actually and in fact reach people with genuine Epicurean presentations that would not otherwise be available to them, and we also make sure that there is human supervision that allows the human to engage, ask questions, and participate with real humans, then that's in my mind an example where the specific end justifies the specific means.

Post by “Cassius” of April 1, 2026 at 9:49 AM

Another specific hypothetical:

Suppose a human in 1965 who is creative but not a musician decides that he can use AI to produce a song that is as beautiful and catchy as anything produced by the Beatles, and also specifically brings to the listeners' attention genuine Epicurean arguments as to no life after death and no supernatural gods. It would make Epicurus's name and genuine teaching as famous as any name used as the title of any famous love song.

Now someone is likely going to say "that's not possible" (our Experience machine [PD10](#) argument again) but i am simply going to disagree firmly. If it's not already possible, it's going to be possible soon.

Would a Lucretius or a Diogenes of Oinoanda or a Philodemus say "No, I'm not going to do that, because AI makes me very uneasy. It doesn't matter if I could "change the world" overnight and bring consciousness of Epicurean ideas to millions of real humans at essentially no cost."

I'm sure there are some who would say "Yes that's exactly what they would say - they'd refuse to do it."

And my response to that is that I would diplomatically but firmly disagree.

As in my earlier comments as to the Industrial Revolution, i think the arguments we're concerned about now are already becoming obsolete in younger generations, and the specific concerns we have are going to die with us.

Younger people are already being acclimated to the idea that no image or video or document can be trusted at face value, because it may be AI generated.

That's not entirely a bad thing and it may not be a bad thing at all. We've always had illusions to deal with as Lucretius discusses in Book 4. And much of what we've been taught over the last 2000 years is fraudulent as well. It's probably long past time to take anything or anyone at face value. We should always test whether an assertion is in fact really true, and what implications will arise if it is in fact believed versus those if it is not.

Post by “Don” of April 1, 2026 at 9:54 AM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

if indeed we use generative AI to actually and in fact reach people with genuine Epicurean presentations that would not otherwise be available to them,

Okay, so with that context, what's the selling point of generative AI over just creating content the "old fashioned" way and putting it out there?

Using your articles specifically, what did the generative AI application give you that you couldn't have brought to the work by composing them without the AI tool?

What does a generative AI tool do to "reach people" that is not available without that tool?

Post by “Don” of April 1, 2026 at 10:31 AM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

Suppose a human in 1965 who is creative but not a musician decides that he can use AI to produce a song that is as beautiful and catchy as anything produced by the Beatles, and also specifically brings to the listeners' attention genuine Epicurean arguments as to no life after death and no supernatural gods. It would make Epicurus's name and genuine teaching as famous as any name used as the title of any famous love song.

Your scenario is still just positing an *imitation* of a Beatles song, and the "musician" didn't create it. The algorithm did, admittedly using a training data set of Epicurean texts, I suppose. Is it really Epicurus' "genuine teaching" if it's an algorithmic summary? We've seen that gone awry in tests on this forum.

[Quote from Cassius](#)

if I could "change the world" overnight and bring consciousness of Epicurean ideas to millions of real humans at essentially no cost."

Could you really change the world overnight? That seems like AI hype and hyperbole. Again, what does the AI tool bring that seeking out a partnership with an actual musician and working with them to write a catchy song doesn't? Is it harder and more expensive to work with a human being and working on rhymes and rhythms with them than plugging in a prompt to ChatGPT? Of course! But the end is a human creative work with REAL meaning and intentionality behind the words. If you want a song, work to create a song.

There IS a real cost to using AI: socially, creatively, economically, environmentally. "At essentially no cost" is a figment of the collective imagination surrounding AI. I'm curious if you'd be as enthusiastic about generative AI if everyone had to pay what it actually cost to run the queries and prompts. It would not be cheap, and right now the hyperscalers and generative AI companies subsidize the technology to shoehorn it into everything. They want to get people hooked, like a drug dealer giving the first hit or two for free.

Post by "DaveT" of April 1, 2026 at 10:48 AM

[TauPhi](#) [Don](#) [Cassius](#) and fellow forum members: Perhaps some reactions to the editorial use of AI are based on mis-perceptions. If you already know this, you quite understand my comment here.

As an award-winning fiction author, I hired a highly accomplished New York publishing industry editor to get my work to the best of my ability. He did not substantively change my story, nor add to the intense research I did on historical events, but he helped me structure the chapters and some paragraphs, and occasionally made some of my sentences sing. BUT in every specific case, he made clear my decision on accepting or rejecting his advice was final.

I can guarantee that everything we read in the best journals and magazines in popular media and in academia, is reviewed by an official or unofficial team and it is modified to present the best product possible. This is **no different** from using an AI in its present simple form.

I am not aware of instances in either commercial or academic publishing where the author(s) notate their work to identify editorial help. (Exceptions can be seen in long-form books where the author usually thanks at least some of their editorial team.)

As to what AI actually does when it is asked: Current publicly available AI only recognizes patterns in its database that may match and answer the question asked of it. It doesn't think about other questions, if it can be said to think at all. It only recognizes possible answers and spits out the best answer **responsive to the specific request**. If one asks the AI for editorial assistance on structure, syntax, or grammar, that is **all it will provide**.

I suggest the question is no different now with the use of AI than it is for human editorial assistance.

Post by "Cassius" of April 1, 2026 at 10:58 AM

[Quote from Don](#)

Using your articles specifically, what did the generative AI application give you that you couldn't have brought to the work by composing them without the AI tool?

What does a generative AI tool do to "reach people" that is not available without that tool

Great question. Ultimately nothing that I could not have done alone given enough time and effort. But it is an exponential force multiplier that allows things to be possible in reasonable time and effort which would not have been possible without it.

The graphics are another example - I could "never" have done those myself, yet the "message" of the graphic is entirely at my direction.

Post by “Eikadistes” of April 1, 2026 at 11:29 AM

I deleted my LinkedIn account a few weeks ago.

(Quick side-note, AI killed my industry a few month ago, so I'm trying to get into technical writing).

The last activity I registered on LinkedIn was a comment thread about the ethics of using AI in self-published authors' works. The comment section was active, mostly with (per their profiles) employed professionals who made livings producing all kinds of literature. The author published the post as a question: "**What % of your book can ethically be written by AI?**"

My response of "0%" was met with unanimous hostility.

... *specifics aside*, they're all professionals, and none of them expressed commitment to functionally *writing* all of their own, well, *writings*. Each one of them was defending the position that an author's job boils down to, "One, solid thesis statement. THAT'S the real brilliance." Seriously, the thing they thought made them "skilled writers" was their capacity to write a solid thesis statement, not brainstorming, not research, not education, not outlining, not production, not editing, the editing, the editing, the editing, the editing, the endless editing that can fall to infinity.

Regardless of whether or not a ghost writer is made of silicon, **the ghost writer** is the **real** writer of a piece of literature, not the superficial name attached to the cover. That goes for

everything.

They're not putting the same effort into their professional tasks that you two, [Cassius](#) and [Don](#) are here, as is also [Bryan](#) and [Joshua](#) and **many, many** others on this forum who dedicate **extensive** study to a pursuit (and doing so without a financial incentive).

It's frustrating, and I have a lot of criticism about it ... *but*, as of now, it's also *the case*. I think I have to let go of the hot ball of spite I've been clutching, because I can't stop this. We can't put the lid back on this box. We'll just have to deal with it, and, if recent experience is any indicator, we're going to go through a period where ... let's just say I'm really hoping that our species won't split, and everyone connected to AI will become Eloi and the rest of us will become Morlocks.

I've seen great uses of AI, and I've seen abominable uses for it. I think we're all still working all of this out. Every new tool throughout human society has always been disruptive. It always allows new people make new fortunes while threatening the stability of those who have already prospered. It eliminates old lifestyles and presents new options. We'll each have to figure out what to do with it, and, eventually, we'll collectively form opinions about the desirability of it to continue.

In the meantime, I'm no longer using spellcheck. 😊

Post by “Cassius” of April 1, 2026 at 12:53 PM

[Quote from Eikadistes](#)

let's just say I'm really hoping that our species won't split, and everyone connected to AI will become Eloi and the rest of us will become Morlocks.

As some say but I am saying without any sarcasm to you, as the phrase goes, "hope is not a strategy."

I think you're absolutely right to be concerned about that. It seems to me very very likely to happen, so we have to fight against it with every tool at our disposal. Ironically it appear AI itself will be necessary to enlist against those who would use it to produce the result you and I both don't want to see.

Post by “Cassius” of April 1, 2026 at 2:54 PM

[Quote from Eikadistes](#)

I deleted my LinkedIn account a few weeks ago.

I want to add into this thread as an aside that I have tremendous respect for the effort that Eikadistes has put into Epicurean philosophy over the years. Not only that, but he's younger than most of the rest of us here and he's having to live through more of the stresses than most of us.

Not referring to him specifically but in general -- for how many years now have people been patronized with "learn to code" as the answer to economic changes?

And now where are we? Coders being laid off in every direction, all at the same time that the competition in some parts of the intelligence-driven job market is greater than ever.

Not just those of us who are older, but to whom and to what can younger people look to to help navigate these issues?

I think Epicurus had uniquely valuable insight into what really matters and how to attack ultimate issues.

I can reduce a lot of the frustration I have with Epicurean writing over the last 100 or so years to the observation that it seems people want to encourage everyone to believe that Epicurus advised "checking out" from society.

I think Epicurean philosophy calls us to "check in" and grapple with problems with everything we've got. Not because we want unlimited wealth or power or fame or momentary physical stimulation, but because this world and this life is all we have, and we have to use it in the best possible way while we can. And that doesn't mean giving in to Platonic idealism or Kantian models based on categorical imperatives or any other kind of ivory-tower logic-based reasoning.

AI hasn't been the cause of these problems. It's the uses to which AI is being put that are ramping them up. If we allow Platonic idealism and its related culprits to dominate the use of AI (or any other technology) then we're just going to get driven deeper into obscurity. Look what the anti-Epicurean world has done over the last 2000 years with just the more primitive tools of psychological manipulation they had available to them. If they are allowed to dominate AI and use it for the advancement of Idealism then much worse is yet to come, and that can't be allowed to happen unchallenged.

Post by "Don" of April 2, 2026 at 12:07 AM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

I have tremendous respect for the effort that Eikadistes has put into Epicurean philosophy over the years.

Ditto! [Eikadistes](#) has definitely earned ΚΥΔΟΣ ! Additionally [Cassius](#) has also earned respect for creating this little virtual Garden on the Internet without which I guarantee I would not have stuck with Epicurean philosophy as long as I have.

That said...

[Cassius](#) , I'm going to take a slight tangent but eventually keep AI in the mix.

From my reading of your posts in this thread, you are ready to use whatever tools are at your disposal to evangelize the Good News of Epicurus' Philosophy to a world that is in desperate need of it. You see AI as one of those tools, and you refuse to cede the field to those who would use AI to advance idealism, Platonism, et al.

If you like to use AI to enhance your writing or to provide visuals to your work, so be it. I've shared my personal feelings about AI and its use.

However, if you want to "strike a blow for Epicurus" or to challenge the prevailing dominance of idealism, Platonism, Skepticism, Stoicism, AI is a very small arrow in your quiver.

Breaking through to a larger audience is not going to happen by posting better articles on this forum or on Substack, no matter how enhanced by AI they are.

You have 34 subscribers on Substack. Granted, here on the form, the "Most Active Threads Of The Last Year " had from 10K to 20K views; but that's not near "going viral." Posting *better* articles on the forum or Substack are not going to strike that decisive blow you want to strike. We all do good work here, *outstanding* work, but this doesn't put a dent in increasing awareness of Epicurus to the wider world.

Emily Austin's book - arguably the best, most accessible intro to the philosophy - on Amazon has only 140 reviews and is #79 in Ancient Greek & Roman Philosophy and #135 in Philosophy of Ethics & Morality. Ryan Holiday's most recent Stoic book from 2025, *Wisdom Takes Work: Learn. Apply. Repeat. (The Stoic Virtues Series)*, is #8 in Ancient Greek & Roman Philosophy and has 659 reviews. The 20 of the top 25 books [on Amazon in Ancient Greek & Roman Philosophy are ALL Stoic!](#) Not an Epicurean book until #48!!

For whatever the definition of "winning" is, the Stoics are winning in the wider modern world. Epicureans are a small fish in a VERY large pond, with most people not having any idea we exist... and those who do know, likely having an erroneous view. [Ryan Holiday was just on Hasan Minhaj's YouTube show](#), and Holiday talks BRIEFLY about Epicureans just to say they

advocated staying out of politics and "retreating to their Garden."

Even if you used generative AI to create bots to post a constant stream of content to social media platforms, the algorithm would likely bury them all under all the slop sloshing around and I doubt it would get the engagement we all want it to. Plus, if it's just one-off posts with no comments or reaction, it definitely dies on the vine.

So, what's my strategy for striking that blow?? I have no magic wand. The podcast is great, and I'm glad its on multiple platforms. But how many views does it get? Having a presence on Substack is fine if people find your articles randomly on a search of the platform or Google.

To really get the message out, there needs to be a movement, heck - a celebrity endorsement would be nice. There was a flurry of podcast appearances when Dr. Austin's book came out, but it wasn't sustained. There needs to be a constant drumbeat of new books, new interviews, new widely published content, engagement with Stoics on their platforms (That's why i would LOVE to see you go head to head with Pigliucci! but you didn't even have comments enabled on your Substack article/response about his article)

There's even a little rivalry (friendly?!) among the Epicurean communities and little to no organization or collaboration or coordination or mutual support. The Society of Epicurus goes its way. The Greek Epicurean groups go their ways. This forum is a bastion of fine work and enthusiasm. But The Stoics continue to outpace our school with books, interview appearances, regular Stoic Week events, merchandise that's widely available from notebooks to calendars to shirts to you name it.

Generative AI is a drop in the bucket and is really the least helpful of the tools in the toolbox.

How does our School make a dent in the popular Zeitgeist? How do we get talked about in the same circles - as a REAL alternative - to the Stoics??

I think we are ONLY on the very early curve of making a dent in this area but thinking AI is going to get us a statistically significant way down the road is a pipe dream.

ALL this would take time, energy, money, coordination, etc. I'm not saying this to be pessimistic, I'm not. I'm trying to take this conversation in a constructive direction, and this thread on AI seemed like it was getting bogged down. I may have more to say later, but it's getting late, I have to get up for my regular job tomorrow (well, later "today" now). I agree with you that striking a blow for Epicurus is a truly worthy goal, but there are only so many minutes in the day and so many days in one's life.

I leave this here as food for thought and responses.

Post by “Cassius” of April 2, 2026 at 7:34 AM

Ok there's a lot to address there but here's at least a start:

All of the facts you've cited about current levels of penetration into the wider culture are very true from my perspective as well.

But I don't see those facts as the starting point of the analysis.

You can't even begin to penetrate the culture at all with a position until you have a clearly articulated position.

In fact, I'd hazard to say that I am happy that cultural recognition of Epicurus is so low given for what passes as the conventional wisdom about Epicurus.

Nothing exists to fight for in the culture unless and until there is a body of work that effectively translates what the ancient understanding of Epicurus was into modern terms.

So that's the place we have to start.

And I do think that good progress is being made, and I'd put Austin's and DeWitt's books into that category. But "books" aren't the goal either, and are becoming less and less relevant.

What you've described as real people engaging on social media and a regular drumbeat of activity are certainly the goal. But that can't come until we have more people confidently advocating what needs to be advocated.

And that's where AI as a tool become useful. A lot of good work has been produced here and other places, but it needs to be organized and presented persuasively. For example with the podcast in particular I think there has been a lot of useful formulations which most people even here on the forum are not aware of. AI will be useful, as it has been with the transcripts, in getting that material easier to access.

Another example are the "charts" or "side by side" versions of Lucretius and DL 10 and the collections of quotations. Those are all prepared using AI coding and would simply not have been reasonably possible without it.

In terms of social media posting most any of them that get any traction need some kind of graphic. AI makes possible creative and persuasive charts and graphics that would also otherwise be functionally impossible to most of us.

That's the first line of activity I am talking about. We need lots "summary" material that brings argument together in the way Epicurus talked about in Herodotus to enable people to go back and forth between the outline and the details. AI can help a LOT with that.

But no amount of slickness of presentation is going to be of any help if we have no more than a handful of people who can talk about Epicurus without corrupting him with skepticism, with

idealism, with "retreatism," with falling into talking about "tranquility" as the real goal of life, with inability to talk about pleasure as the goal of life without apologizing for active pleasures, and characterizing basic aspects of the Epicurean approach to prudence and practical wisdom as obsolete.

Until we've got a core group of activists who are solid on those issues its probably better that our social penetration remains exactly where it is now! 😊

Most of what I've written in this post is directed toward using AI to make more effective presentations. But there's another level too. It isn't a possible or satisfactory goal to "produce an AI version of Epicurus," because a model is not a living thing and cannot possibly take into account all actual real-world circumstances. But the process of creating an "algorithm" that an "AI version of Epicurus" would follow is almost exactly the same kind of training material that educating real human Epicureans requires.

So that's a second aspect of what we're talking about.

I'll close with saying that I don't think you're being pessimistic. You're one of the people who we really owe a lot to for the work you've put into Epicurus already. It's not being pessimistic to point out what a big job we face because that's the reality. It's food for motivation, not pessimism, just like Lucretius and Diogenes of Oinoanda and many others DID NOT *** let the size of the job stop them from what they accomplished. [*** - thanks for the correction Martin!]

But none of that would have been possible had the earliest Epicureans not articulated the standard. The first step in going forward is to recover that.

Post by “DaveT” of April 2, 2026 at 9:24 AM

[Cassius Don](#) and all: The irony of choosing the best way to live an Epicurean life is that he taught that social activism was less valuable or necessary to happiness than living his basic principles. Yet, he and his disciples tried to spread his influence via the Garden(s) and writing "books" and letters. Their efforts were essentially dependent on some form of marketing and promotion, don't be fooled about that. Spreading the word takes work, no matter the era.

I hope I have made my feelings clear about better ways to spread Epicurean philosophical concepts, as well as my upbeat belief in the slow but obvious progress of Western culture toward Epicurean/secular directions.

Anyone can keep track of how often Epicurus is mentioned on the Internet by signing up for Google Alerts by your email address (on any topic you wish) <<http://www.google.com/alerts>

>. I have listed "Epicurus" on my alerts list and get frequent emailed links to articles in the popular press about Epicurus. True, as Don pointed out , the other schools of philosophy and religion probably get tons more press, but progress is progress, however small.

Even if popular press articles may miss important aspects, and I am not saying they always do miss something or other, I'm still encouraged by the mere mention of the philosophy in a positive light.

Each of us must choose his way of making known his choice of lifestyle. But we must keep in mind when choosing how to do so in a public way, to not give up the "good" in search of the "perfect."

Post by “Martin” of April 2, 2026 at 1:52 PM

Quote

just like Lucretius and Diogenes of Oinoanda and many others let the size of the job stop them from what they accomplished

should be "just like Lucretius and Diogenes of Oinoanda and many others let the size of the job **not** stop them from what they accomplished".

Post by “Cassius” of April 2, 2026 at 2:10 PM

Thanks Martin will fix!

Post by “wbernys” of April 2, 2026 at 2:10 PM

[Quote from Don](#)

For whatever the definition of "winning" is, the Stoics are winning in the wider modern world. Epicureans are a small fish in a VERY large pond, with most people not having any idea we exist

I am perhaps less pessimistic than you on this [Don](#), Emily Austin pointed out that philosophers at a convention felt no one could even defend Epicureanism (it's why she wrote the book and it went on to be the most popular in the series by far)

We definitely have a long way to go but considering how censured Epicureanism is, officially for a while and still to some extent, especially by the Christian populace which is religiously not allowed to accept Epicurean ideas unlike the Stoics and Plato. Still I think Austin and this community growing is a sign in the right direction. But these things take time.

I actually think we're mainly hurt by modern Stoics really being Epicureans who don't want to admit it, they define virtue as something which is good because it leads to a good life rather than good because I dunno divine fire God in you said so. This is why I love Austin's book because she really takes Stoic to tasks for hypocrisy and slaughtered bird entrails.

Post by "Eikadistes" of April 2, 2026 at 6:19 PM

This discussion brings a few quotes to mind that provide some nuance.

We're certainly cautioned against explicit proselytization as a matter of practicality:

- **"Never did I reach to please the masses, for truly what pleases them, I did not understand, but what I understood was far away from their perception."** (Usener fragment 187)

And any actions fueled by the motivation of personal advancement are risky:

- **"They will not make flowery speeches [...] They will make plans to gain public approval only so far as to avoid being treated with contempt [...] They will establish a school, but not in order to lead a mob; and they will gain notoriety in public, but not enthusiastically."** (Laërtios 10.120)

Loukianós provides some nuance in terms of an Epicurean's first intention in discourse:

- **"My object, dear friend, in writing the book *Alexander the False Prophet* has been twofold. [1] First, I was willing to oblige a friend and comrade who is for me the pattern of wisdom, sincerity, good humour, justice, tranquillity, and geniality."**

Epíkouros says the same thing in his *Epistle to Herodótos*, in terms of a personalized outline:

- "[For] you, oh, Hēródotos, these summaries have been epitomized on account of the whole of the nature [that] exists." (10.82).

It seems that, first and foremost, we're trying to help our immediate friends. Yet that's now all those two authors say. Loukianós adds this in *Alexander the False Prophet*:

- "[2] But secondly I was still more concerned [...] to strike a blow for Epicurus [...] I think casual readers too may find my essay not unserviceable, since it is not only destructive but, for men of sense, constructive also." (61)

Epíkouros also explains to Herodótos that the "memory of doctrines" are also intended "so that for each of the [critical] times [students] are able to help themselves in the most important [matters]" (10.35), so there is a dual purpose. The voice is intended for *one* reader (Epíkouros changes his tone in each letter for comprehension), but the concepts are meant for us *all*.

So "striking a blow for Epicurus" is contrasted against helping a single friend. Here, we have a much more cosmopolitan attitude that, as far as I understand, is championed by Diogénēs:

- The man of Oinóanda writes that in "I wanted at this moment to help men of sense [...] I would do all in my power [...] to give them the best advice. But since, as I have asserted, the great majority are all in common [...] and their numbers are growing even bigger [...] and since it is right that I should help also those who will come after me [...] as well as being a kindly act to give assistance to the strangers living amongst us; since then the assistance from my work concerns a greater number I wished by making use of this colonnade to set forth in public the remedies which bring salvation" (*The Stone Inscription*, frag. 2; trans. Chilton)

Here, his words express to me a kind of social altruism or civic philanthropy, especially with regard to providing "assistance to the strangers living amongst us." This proposition of empathy toward strangers sounds ... downright Judeo-Christians? (Lev. 19:33-34 Ex. 23:9, Detu. 10:18-19, 27:19, Matt. 25) ... well, at least *those* verses. I can't defend the entire chronicle.

Along these lines, Lucretius also writes, first and foremost, to his friend Memmius, with a secondary intention of writing a masterpiece for the ages, foreigners and strangers, alike:

- "... this doctrine seems generally somewhat bitter to those by whom it has not been handled [... so I] have resolved to set forth to you our doctrine in sweet-toned Pierian verse and overlay it as it were with the pleasant honey of the muses" (Book 1.943-947).

Considering all of this, I'm not sure exactly where I fit in terms of my personal motivations to spread the word. On one hand, I bring up our tradition in casual conversations with friends to

help explain concepts. In terms of inviting them to Eikas (etc.) ... I sort of leave an open invitation, but I also don't remind everyone, and I want to make sure I'm not pressuring anyone. I hate it when anyone does that to me, so I want to avoid making anyone feel like I'm trying to make a sale or convert them.

In the meantime, I'm going to leave cryptic message in public places and pique curiosity. 😜



Post by “wbernys” of April 2, 2026 at 7:03 PM

Great collection of quotes [Eikadistes](#) !

I feel like the main focus right now should be on actually connecting personal relationships. I'm really trying to convert my father into really liking Epicurean philosophy as a great remedy which fills you with joy and loaned him the Emily Austin book to read.

Always remember that Epicurus himself just started by meeting a few people like Metrodorus and interacting with his family and brothers and converting them to his cause.

In all this talk about trying to convert the masses don't forget that interpersonal conversion between friends co-workers or family is probably the main driving factor.

And above all else attest to the wonders that Epicurean philosophy does to bring joy to the soul, Christians entice people with heaven and we need to entice people by showing how our philosophy leads to happiness. My father mainly got interested after I had tested how much Epicurean philosophy filled me with gratitude for what I had.

Post by “Cassius” of April 2, 2026 at 8:37 PM

[Quote from wbernys](#)

In all this talk about trying to convert the masses don't forget that interpersonal conversion between friends co-workers or family is probably the main driving factor.

This is a good conversation. I'm pressed for time in writing but just to note quickly:

1 - I completely agree with concerns about not trying to convert "the masses." It always pays to know who you're talking to and not intrude on others who clearly don't want to hear your opinions.

2 - Diogenes' wall is good food for thought. He put up a PUBLIC WALL for all who happened upon it to read. But he presumably did not stand on the corner yelling at people about it either.

3 - And if I recall DL says Epicurus numbered his "friends" in whole cities, and Cicero said that Epicurean philosophy had taken Italy "by storm."

Like with everything else there's a context which has to be worked through in deciding what to say and to whom.