

"Health Hedonism - Why Feeling Good Is Good For You" - Book By Erica Oberg

Post by "Godfrey" of July 27, 2026 at 12:01 AM

Funny thing, I've been reading Health Hedonism: Why feeling good Is good for you! by Erica Oberg.

It's not a philosophical book but rather an argument for pursuing pleasure in various areas of one's life. Some quotes that may be of interest:

The ancient Greeks, particularly the Epicureans, understood hedonism as an intentional and balanced pursuit of pleasure. They recognized that sustainable pleasure requires both wisdom and moderation. Their philosophical framework emphasized the relationship between pleasure and virtue, suggesting that genuine satisfaction arises from choices that align with personal values and ethical principles. This perspective counters the modern tendency to equate pleasure with excess, reminding us that true joy comes not from fleeting highs but from habits that support long- term well- being. Health isn't just about the absence of disease. It is about the presence of joy and the ability to embrace life's pleasures in a way that enhances vitality rather than diminishes it. Contemporary psychological research has validated this perspective as well, showing that activities consonant with core values provide more profound and lasting satisfaction than purely sensory experiences. In other words, pleasure that aligns with your values, whether through connection, creativity, or self- care, contributes not only to shortterm happiness but also to your overall sense of purpose and vitality. Rather than viewing pleasure as a reward to be earned through suffering, you can recognize it as an essential aspect of human experience that, when integrated thoughtfully, enhances rather than compromises health and well- being.

The interplay between pleasure and pain profoundly influences how you handle life's challenges and recover from difficulties. While many people try to avoid all discomfort, understanding the complementary nature of these experiences reveals an important truth: some degree of challenge often enhances your appreciation of positive moments. For example, the satisfaction of completing a difficult project or mastering a new skill feels particularly sweet precisely because of the effort required. Your nervous system naturally learns from both pleasant and challenging experiences, using each as a reference point for future situations. After facing and overcoming moderate stress, you often discover an enhanced capacity for enjoying positive experiences. Consider how a challenging hike makes the view from the summit more rewarding or how working through a difficult conversation can deepen a relationship. These experiences demonstrate how temporary discomfort can lead to more meaningful satisfaction.

Learning to accept temporary discomfort while working toward meaningful goals marks an important aspect of personal growth. This ability develops gradually through experiences that show you the connection between effort and reward. Each time you persist through a challenge and reach your goal, you build confidence in your capacity to handle future difficulties. This growing resilience makes it easier to embrace both the pleasant and challenging aspects of pursuing what matters to you.

Science makes clear that pleasure is more than mere indulgence, but also provides essential support for physical health, emotional resilience, and cognitive function. Armed with this understanding, you can approach the pursuit of hedonism not as a guilty pleasure but as a legitimate guiding principle to create a balanced, joyful, healthy life.

I think that these are the most directly applicable quotes for our purposes. I'm only about a quarter of the way through the book, but I couldn't resist adding it to this thread... even though it should probably be moved elsewhere. So far, I'd recommend the book to anyone who's into good health through pursuing pleasure. Originally, I assumed this would be another book that offered a modern interpretation of Epicurean ideas without any acknowledgement, so discovering these quotes made me smile. She doesn't profess to be an Epicurean but she seems to me to know the subject pretty well.

Post by “Kalosyni” of July 27, 2026 at 8:08 AM

Thanks [Godfrey](#) for sharing. It ties in with: "And since pleasure is the first good and natural to us, for this very reason we do not choose every pleasure, but sometimes we pass over many pleasures, when greater discomfort accrues to us as the result of them: and similarly we think many pains better than pleasures, since a greater pleasure comes to us when we have endured pains for a long time. Every pleasure then because of its natural kinship to us is good, yet not every pleasure is to be chosen: even as every pain also is an evil, yet not all are always of a nature to be avoided." - Letter to Menoeceus.

You mention that you just started with the book and this is from the first section of it. I see that there are words/phrases such as "personal values", "moderation", "meaningful satisfaction"...and I think that these need to be unpacked and re-labeled according to Epicurean philosophy.

"personal values" - Where do these come from? And you might ask, How did these come to be "my" values? They are often instilled by parents, family interactions, school, childhood experiences and friends, and culture (pop music, books, movies), etc. Now, through the lens of Epicurean philosophy then we might ask how what we value relates to: "natural-necessary, natural-but-optional, and empty opinion" -- as it relates to what brings pleasure, joy, and long-term well-being. But also it seems that we will see certain patterns with regard to "values" such

that everyone essentially will value the same basic categories if they want a life of feeling good and experiencing joy - financial sufficiency, exercise (movement), friends/family connections, etc.

"moderation" - moderation in everything, right? ...no, sometimes we need to not do something at all. And the reason is that when we firmly decide that something brings more pain than pleasure then we lose interest in doing that. And what about excess of something? Who determines what "excess" is? If it causes problems (or pain) then it is no good, but if it brings pleasure and well-being then it's a thumbs-up. So as Epicureans we don't need to even need to worry about adding in "moderation" because it is baked-into the feedback loop automatically when we choose things according to long-term well-being.

"meaningful satisfaction" - the word "meaningful" can have two main definitions: 1) anything that brings long-term enjoyment to me, 2) long-term enjoyable social connections and interactions with people