

Daily Practices

Post by "Cassius" of March 29, 2019 at 11:51 AM

We get asked often about daily practices to better apply Epicurean philosophy.

My thought on daily practice is in three areas:

(1) Read and get familiar with the core texts. Many people read the Menoeceus letter and seem to stop. The Herodotus letter is very important, and you should eventually work yourself through Lucretius and Diogenes Laertius and even the fragments of Diogenes of Oinoanda, and also Cicero's Torquatus section of On Ends. You're not going to really understand the philosophy til you go through these yourself and can say "now I see why Lucretius was talking about x, y, and z." it may seem like he is droning on and on about unimportant matters, but you need to see **why** Lucretius / Epicurus thought those areas were important.

(2) Find a place to talk with like-minded friends about Epicurus, preferably locally, but online if necessary. Epicurus specifically advised this to live as a "god among men", and he also advised:

(3) Prepare your own 'outline' of Epicurean thought as you work through it. That specific advice is given in the letter to Herodotus. You don't always need the details of the philosophy, but you regularly need the main points, and you can't internalize what the "main" points are unless you identify them in your own mind and see how they relate to, and arise from, the details.

Post by "Hiram" of March 30, 2019 at 10:55 AM

I have a chapter in my book on "hedonic regimen", which includes foods and practices tied to studies that I came across related to the science of happiness.

The celebration of the Twentieth with close friends should also be a tradition that we try to revitalize and create cultural and culinary practices around, well beyond cheese and bread and water. Perhaps we should find sympathetic vendors who manufacture customized "Happy Twentieth" candles and decorations. If anyone knows of them, please let me know.

Then there's the problem of self-sufficiency, which should inspire in us long term existential and autarchy projects: starting side hustles or side businesses, financial planning, minding and managing one's business--this is not separate from the practice of philosophy and we should

learn to make our productivity a source of pleasure. We are supposed to have (and, presumably, support--if we are really led by "mutual advantage" principles) **Epicurean businesses**.

Quote

At one and the same time we must philosophize, laugh, and manage our household and other business, while never ceasing to proclaim the words of true philosophy. - [Vatican Saying](#) 41

Post by “Cassius” of March 30, 2019 at 11:40 AM

I totally agree with all in that list, and also in the material you just posted elsewhere Hiram on Epicurean sculpture / artwork. The more we surround ourselves with reminders, the easier it is to stay in focus.

Post by “Elayne” of April 5, 2019 at 12:43 PM

My practices are:

1) Writing out a rough daily schedule/ to do list and in writing it consider "what will be the outcome for me if I do this, or don't do it?" I make sure at the beginning of the day that my goal remains pleasure. I have learned not to put too many things on my list, because leaving breaks between actions is pleasurable for me. This is when I check to see if I need to do any long term planning also.

My example list for today includes: coffee (which I roast myself so it tastes great for low cost), cheese/fruit and enjoy the view from my deck while waking up all the way; read (this morning I read some from the book Joyful, and I caught up on some medical journals-- the act of reading has always been very pleasurable for me, and I get information I can apply for future pleasures); write condolence cards to two friends who have had deaths in their families; do some research for a friend who has been diagnosed with cancer; take a brisk 1 hr walk outside before it rains, noticing the daily changes in spring flowers and leaves, which causes me pleasure at the time and later in terms of good health; catch up on FB and Epicurean friends; do 4 hrs of telemedicine, with breaks to stretch my legs-- this I mostly enjoy because I like talking

to parents and solving problems, plus it pays for my housing and food; do some cleaning/straightening while dancing around/ singing; practice my part for an upcoming Chorus concert; make dinner for a friend who is coming to my place for dinner and a movie tonight. This weekend I will have a busy schedule with two Chorus events, hanging out with the atheists for coffee, and having my family over Sunday afternoon as usual for "dinner" and conversation-- and hugs. At the end of the day, I remember what I have enjoyed that day and from past days, so I go to sleep happy.

2) Habitually noticing and savoring pleasures, and if pain comes up-- including anxiety, grief, anger-- taking time to figure out what I need to do to fix it.

Post by "Elayne" of April 5, 2019 at 12:53 PM

But I can get on with things this way because I have already dealt with the major issues that give people anxiety. I was raised atheist, so I never had to worry about the whole afterlife/punishment thing. I am 55 and have already learned that certain things like status are not worth the aggravation. I was raised by scientists-- a physicist and a mathematician-- who taught me the importance of evidence (the senses), and I learned to seek pleasure and to notice feelings of pleasure and pain on my own from life experiences, trial and error. I never did go with the popular modern idea that pain was just an interpretation of events-- from medical training, I know it is actually a critical signal of damage or impending damage and not to ignore it-- it is a message about reality!

I think my somewhat hard-headed nature about all this, not going with popular opinion but trusting my own analysis, has been an advantage.

Post by "Godfrey" of April 5, 2019 at 7:23 PM

Not sure if it belongs here, but this article popped up in my feed:

<https://www.businessinsider.com/exercise-makes...y---4.0-styling>

An interesting point that they make in the study is that too much exercise decreases happiness. A great example of natural and necessary approaching unnecessary and/or unnatural.

Post by “Godfrey” of April 5, 2019 at 7:56 PM

[Elayne](#), thanks for posting that. This is an interesting thread for the daily nuts and bolts and I'm quite interested to read what other people do.

As to my daily practice, it is very much a work in progress but here is the general idea:

For years, I've kept my weekly planning and to-do lists organized (in a fashion) by categories such as finance, health and fitness, social, work on so on. I recently gave it an "Epicurean" makeover by slightly reorganizing the categories and also grouping the categories by "natural/necessary" and "natural/ not necessary". I don't have a group for not natural/not necessary. 😊 Some categories only changed in name, while other categories got split up and still others eliminated.

For instance "finance" is now "autarky", which is natural/necessary. "Health and fitness" is now "freedom from disease" (natural/necessary) and "fitness" (natural/not necessary). "Spiritual" has become "Practical wisdom" (natural/necessary). This illustrates the general idea, and of course everyone would have different ideas as to their categories and what falls in to natural and necessary or not necessary. In applying this to my entire planning process I found that the end result is a major simplification from what it was originally, and that it now clearly prioritizes and aligns my planning and activities with my philosophy.

On a micro level, I've been working with an "Epicurean" mindfulness practice. I spent several years practicing Zen informally so this kind of comes naturally for me. The minor difference is that as I'm going about my mindfulness I focus on pleasant sensations, whereas in the past what normally has come up for me is unpleasant sensations, blockages, etc. I'm still aware of those, but just go further to notice the pleasantness. Interestingly, it's always there somewhere.

Post by “Godfrey” of April 5, 2019 at 8:12 PM

Another daily practice is reading. At the very least, after breakfast I'll read and chew on one of the [Principal Doctrines](#) or Vatican Sayings. Typically I'll read more than just that: currently I'm working through the Melville translation of Lucretius which is quite fun. I first read a prose version as an overview, but having done that the poetry is quite enjoyable.

Post by “Don” of March 4, 2020 at 9:44 PM



I'm not sure this counts as a daily practice but I'm sharing an image of my keychain I carry every day. I made both the SFOTSE ring (Sic Fac Omnia Tamquam Spectet Epicurus) to remind me of my Epicurean practice and the ring with the 4 wooden beads behind it to remind me of the Tetracharmakos. I will find myself "rosary-ing" the 4 beads in the elevator of my parking garage at the end of the day sometimes silently reciting the Tetracharmakos (in ancient Greek, of course 😊).

Post by "Cassius" of March 5, 2020 at 6:42 AM

Nice keyring! Years ago I would have been all over 3d printing and have all sorts of things like that by now, but I guess I am getting old! Plus technology has leapt since I first played with 3d scanning 5÷ years ago - I am going to have to pick it up again.

As for me now I content myself with wall pictures if Epicurus and the internet graphics, but something to touch is desirable too.