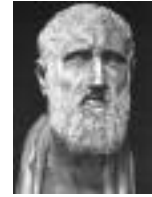


## Comparison of Epicureanism and Stoicism



	EPICUREANISM	STOICISM
Founder	Epicurus (341-270 BCE), who led a life of sobriety and simplicity; eating simple food; napping in hammock; and enjoying conversation with his friends	Zeno of Citium (334-262 BCE); followed by Cleanthes, and then by Chrysippus as head of the philosophical school
Original Haunt in Athens	“The Garden”	“The Stoa Poikile”
Philosophical Predecessors	Atomism (Democritus)	Pre-Socratic materialism; Plato
Goal	Happiness, which equals Pleasure	Wisdom
Problem Confronted	An active, politically-engaged, socially-responsible life no longer results in a fulfilled life under Hellenistic monarchs and Roman Empire	A life ruled by passions yields suffering
Prime Directive	No act should be undertaken except for the pleasure it yields	Free oneself from all worldly demands and attain wisdom of recognizing the necessity of harmonizing one’s desire with nature
View of Life	Negative: Pleasure equals the <u>absence</u> of pain	Ascetic & Indifferent: Suicide is allowable in certain situations
Problematic Implication	If pleasure equals the absence of pain, then absence of life is preferable to any life at all	The equilibrium of desire & nature is easily disturbed and therefore once stoic wisdom is achieved, the grave beckons
Metaphysics	The basic constituents of the world are atoms (which are indivisible microscopic bits of matter) moving in the void (which is simply empty space). Ordinary objects are conglomerations of atoms; the properties of macroscopic bodies and all of the events we see occurring can be explained in terms of the collisions, reboundings, and entanglements of atoms.	Fundamental proposition of the Stoic physics is that “nothing incorporeal exists.” The Stoics held that Fire/ <i>logos</i> is the primordial kind of being, and all things are composed of fire. The primal fire is God. God is related to the world exactly as the soul to the body. The human soul is likewise fire, and comes from the divine fire. It permeates and penetrates the entire body, and, in order that its interpenetration might be regarded as complete, the Stoics denied the impenetrability of matter. Just as the soul-fire permeates the whole body, so God, the primal fire, pervades the entire world. But in spite of this materialism, the Stoics declared that God is absolute reason.
Death	Death equals annihilation because the mind is a group of atoms that disperses upon death; therefore is not to be feared	The human soul is part of the divine fire, and proceeded in the form of <i>pneuma</i> (breath) from God into the first human and thence from parent to child. Hence it is a

		rational soul. After death, all souls, according to some, but only the souls of the good, according to others, continue in individual existence until the general conflagration in which they, and all else, return to God.
Friendship	Values friendship highly because friendship is one of the greatest means of attaining pleasure. Friendship provides the greatest security, whereas a life without friends is solitary and beset with perils.	
Epistemology	Resolutely empiricist and anti-skeptical. All of our knowledge ultimately comes from the senses and we can trust the senses, when properly used.	All knowledge, they said, enters the mind through the senses. The mind is a blank slate, upon which sense-impressions are inscribed.
Ethics	<p><b>Virtue is good in that it contributes to happiness; not for their own sake</b></p> <p>A form of egoistic hedonism; i.e., he says that the only thing that is intrinsically valuable is one's own pleasure; anything else that has value is valuable merely as a means to securing pleasure for oneself. However, Epicurus has a sophisticated and idiosyncratic view of the nature of pleasure, which leads him to recommend a virtuous, moderately ascetic life as the best means to securing pleasure.</p> <p>Types of Pleasure: 1) Natural Desire, which includes 2 sub-classes: Necessary (desires that <u>must</u> be satisfied and are easy to satisfy; <i>e.g.</i> desire for food and sleep) &amp; Unnecessary (<i>e.g.</i> desire for sex, which while initially pleasurable usually results in suffering) and 2) Vain Desire (difficult to satisfy and resulting in obsession; <i>e.g.</i> the desire for decorative clothing or exotic food)</p>	<p><b>Virtue is a good onto itself</b></p> <p>Good consists of acting in accordance with nature; therefore, one can do nothing but conform with the grand-design; the attainment of this equilibrium is stoic wisdom</p> <p>The Stoic ethical teaching is based upon two principles already developed in their physics; first, that the universe is governed by absolute law, which admits of no exceptions; and second, that the essential nature of humans is reason. Both are summed up in the famous Stoic maxim, "Live according to nature."</p>
Ancient Authors	Lucretius, Horace	Seneca, Epictetus, Marcus Aurelius
Modern Misconception	Hedonist	Disinterested in Life
Additional Information	<a href="http://www.utm.edu/research/iep/e/epicur.htm">http://www.utm.edu/research/iep/e/epicur.htm</a>	<a href="http://www.utm.edu/research/iep/s/">http://www.utm.edu/research/iep/s/</a>