

# Nicomachean ethics – the humanly successful life essays example

[Experience](#), [Happiness](#)



## Question 2 - First Answer

Having a psychological understanding framed about the realities of the human nature as applied to the experience of daily living connects to these two ideas of Aristotle about the humanly successful life specific to the fact humans require achieving the intellectual ability for discerning what emotional behavior benefits the situation. Further, as offered by Pakaluk, “ Note that on the interpretation of 10. 6–8 as giving an outline of happiness, we do not take the phrases “ a life lived according to the mind (or philosophical wisdom)” (1177b30) or “ a life lived according to the other virtues” (1178a21) to mean separate ways of life, or possible biographies, but rather ways of carrying on with life, which coexist in the life of one individual” (327).

## Question 2 Second Answer

Evaluating the ‘6 criteria’ argument for the superiority of the contemplative life asks to what extent are any of these criteria really argumentatively convincing? In the following six responses it must be remembered that Aristotle fails providing enough information “ about the nature and value of contemplation” (“ Aristotle and the Ideal Life” 32) and represents a valid identification. However, from analysis of the texts the following answers emerge.

Answering this first discusses how according to Aristotle it is humanity’s individual and collective highest activity that finds the most complete happiness through the superior nature of contemplation as aligned to humanity’s intellectual ability in its highest capacity. The contemplative life

occurs as so sublime as to relate it to nearly divine and is the human activity best fulfilling the required qualifications of the highest good of human behavior because contemplation is continuous and the most self-sufficient and complete of human actions. Thus, one surmises that “ only philosophical contemplation is happiness, especially given that Aristotle holds that happiness extends only so far as theoretical activity (1178b28) (And) maintains that there is only one activity that is happiness” (Pakaluk 328). Further, Aristotle reasons how in the end it appears that human actions (including contemplation) correspond to different virtues of a human’s character as reasons for intended activities. Consequently these intended goals somehow involves the human ability for reflection/contemplation attaining a reasonable sense of satisfaction. At the same time, “ this is not philosophical contemplation strictly, but some kind of intellectual perception, presumably of the kalon, namely what is admirable and attractive in action” (Pakaluk 328). Further, according to a singular interpretation looks at how Aristotle envisions humanity living as much as possible a contemplative life with this “ activity done well (that is, in accord with its proper excellence) as is humanly possible in ideal circumstances, and thus realizes the perfect life in -accord-with nous to the, admittedly imperfect, degree and extent that humans can” (“ Aristotle and the Ideal Life” 22). In this, the intellectual aspect of contemplation indeed is an activity leading to the value of ethical understanding in attaining a life worth living.

It is the ultimate human activity directed at achieving happiness by actively pursuing ongoing contemplation of universal and eternal truth therefore does have merit because this leads to living a life of ethical excellence as

much as is possible for a human according to the nature of humans attaining virtue. " Aristotle thinks that it is possible that we be virtuous (cf. 3. 5) and that, in some sense, it is the intention of nature that human beings be virtuous; but virtue, he thinks, implies the uniform governance of actions and emotions by reason; yet if emotions could overpower reason in some cases, then in principle they could do so in any case - and thus virtue would be either impossible or, at least, unstable (cf. 1100b15-16)" (Pakaluk 240).

Attaining happiness by living a virtuous life through the development of both reason and the faculty of theoretical wisdom is possible insomuch as human cognitive capabilities in making choices about ethical behavior exists in conjunction with a contemplative life. Aristotle emerges as generally holding that reason remains divine in its and reason therefore proves naturally authoritative within humans as part of a person's choosing to govern one's own actions and emotions (but not necessarily uniformly so as Aristotle suggests) due to the fact there is always the possibility of human emotions overpowering reason depending on the situation. It remains a metaphysical contemplative activity for humans in attaining happiness through virtuous living through choosing virtuous behavior (Pakaluk 240).

The superiority of the contemplative life on moral virtue focuses on the human activities of extremes of excess and deficiency. Again, this is arguably a convincing aspect when considering how in general humans living a moral life pragmatically remains one of practicing moderation in all things except virtue. Human appetites or desires are only negative when they lack rational self-control as connected to moral principles that develops with the combination of knowledge, self-discipline, and familiarization. " A virtuous

person has no desire to do things that are wrong or bad, Aristotle holds, and this is why such a person is pleased by doing what is right, but would be distressed to do something wrong" (Pakaluk 234).

The superiority of contemplation assigned to humans gaining understanding about engaging in virtuous acts has merit since it requires each person making a conscious choice framed in moral purpose/motivation. " To Aristotle it would seem vitally compelling that a young person should minimize the time spent on other things, in order to maximize time spent in speculative and contemplative thought. This new target implied a new standard for excess and deficiency" (Pakaluk 216) about daily activities all framed in ongoing inspection of everything about life.

Through the superior contemplation of the precepts of moral virtue humans gain understanding this is not an abstract achievement. Herein Aristotle proposes the use of theoretical wisdom combined with practical wisdom. Human moral activities requires doing so in a social environment. The close relationship of politics and ethics looks to their scientific framework where humans have the ability for achieving and living the good life through actions developing their full potential through societal activities (Pakaluk 215).

## **Works Cited**

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Lawrence, Gavin. Aristotle and the Ideal Life\* The Philosophical Review. 102: 1: 1993 Print

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