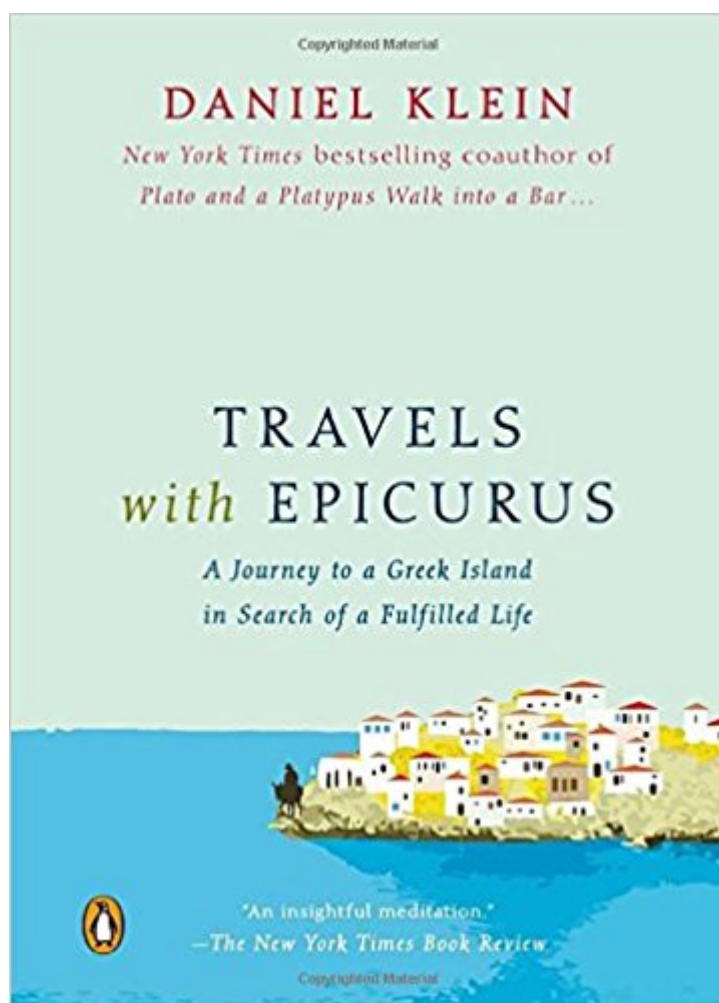


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# Travels With Epicurus: A Journey To A Greek Island In Search Of A Fulfilled Life



## Synopsis

Advice on achieving a fulfilling old age from one of the bestselling authors of *Plato and a Platypus Walk into a Bar* . . . After being advised by his dentist to get tooth implants, Daniel Klein decides to stick with his dentures and instead use the money to make a trip to the Greek island Hydra and discover the secrets of aging happily. Drawing on the inspiring lives of his Greek friends and philosophers ranging from Epicurus to Sartre, Klein uncovers the simple pleasures that are available late in life, as well as the refined pleasures that only a mature mind can fully appreciate. A travel book, a witty and accessible meditation, and an optimistic guide to living well, *Travels with Epicurus* is a delightful jaunt to the Aegean and through the terrain of old age that only a free spirit like Klein could lead.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Following a trip to his dentist, 73-year-old Klein considers his options after being advised that he needs tooth implants or a denture. Klein (*Plato and a Platypus Walk into a Bar*) opts for a sojourn to the Greek island of Hydra. Accompanied by a suitcase crammed with philosophy books, Klein contemplates the Greek philosopher Epicurus' pivotal question. He fundamentally wanted to know how to make the most of his one life, writes Klein. Eschewing the forever young treadmill many American's embrace, Klein explores a different path, examining the relaxed Greek lifestyle surrounding him. He laments what's lost in the frantic rush to stay youthful: And we have no time left for a calm and reflective appreciation of our twilight years, no deliciously long afternoons sitting with friends or listening to music or musing about the story of our lives. The author ruminates on the

benefits of freeing ourselves from the prison of everyday affairs; the pleasures of companionship in old age; battling boredom; the difference between sexual urges and sexual nostalgia; and the value of facing death blissfully. Along the way, Klein touches on the ideas of Bertrand Russell, Erik Erikson, Aristotle, and William James. Klein's narrative is a delightful and spirited conversation, offering up the ingredients inherent to the art of living well in old age. Agent: Julia Lord. (Nov.) --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

Klein (*Plato and a Platypus Walk into a Bar*, 2008, among others) returned to the Greek island of Hydra at age 73. His return had a new and specific purpose: "I want to figure out the most satisfying way to live this stage of my life." Prior experience with the island led to conclude that the old folks of Hydra have always struck me as uncommonly content with their stage in life. But just observing and absorbing what the people had to show and tell him didn't seem like quite enough. To augment his on-site learning, he took with him a stack of philosophy books by ancient Greeks as well as some modern writers. It's an interesting formula, resulting in a lovely little book with both heart and punch, an argument against the "forever young" syndrome so prevalent in contemporary American society. His contemplative time spent observing the old men of Hydra while reading his small library of the great thinkers led him to an evolving philosophy of a good and authentic old age. --Brad Hooper --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

Without telling you WHAT to think, Dan Klein suggests HOW we can think about growing older in any number of interesting ways. Reading this book is like conversing with a friend who knows some of the best quotes from philosophers - from ancient Greece to today- to help focus the conversation. We join the author on his Greek Island- vividly depicted- as he clarifies thoughts that have crossed the mind of anyone over 65 who lives thoughtfully, and adds some new ones. This book was very satisfying to read and savor, a few chapters at a time. It is emphatically NOT about how to stay forever young. It does point the way to finding more delight and meaning as we move toward the end of our lives.

[...]I just finished reading *Travels with Epicurus: A Journey to a Greek Island in Search of a Fulfilled Life* by Daniel Klein. Klein's book is a kind of travel guide for the life well-lived. As I read it, as a septuagenarian I wanted to throw my hands in the air and shout, "This is the best time in my life!" Klein discusses the Buddha's principle of "the emptiness of striving": In our consumer-driven society, enough is never enough; we finish one goal only to replace it with another; we don't lose

ourselves in play but are always trying to reach our "personal best;" relationships are a means to an end rather than an end in themselves; and nothing has much meaning. Klein's speaks of this time in our lives, -- the time before "old" old age sets in -- as having unlimited opportunities, and he does provide some prescriptive elements for the best possible life during this period of limited and diminishing time. Many of those opportunities have to do with spending time with people from whom you no longer want anything. He says, for example, that choosing our dinner companions is far more important than the menu. One does not have to be old to enjoy the pleasure of spending slow time with good people. The ages of 40-60 years old are the most stressful in people's lives: Dual caregiving (parents and kids), careers plateau, decline in health, difficulty with sexual function, questioning never-previously-examined values, and not many "do overs." For-profit corporations (particularly during the recent economic down-turn) no longer value their employees; they are expendable commodities. The Centers for Disease Control recently validated this with its finding that between 1999-2010 the suicide rate for people between the ages of 35 and 64 years old increased an alarming 28.4%. It is likely higher since many suicides go unreported. Because of my interest in mature gay/bi/questioning men, I have often wondered -- but of course it is never studied -- how those suicide rates are impacted by those who remain hopelessly conflicted about their sexual orientation. In my research for writing my book, *Finally Out: Letting Go of Living Straight, A Psychiatrist's Own Story*, I interviewed many men who felt trapped in midlife. As a psychiatric physician I do take some exception to a couple of things. He implies that taking testosterone replacement therapy (TRT) is simply to improve sex drive in older men. For men with low testosterone it can enhance strength and vigor, not just sex drive. He also suggests there is no need to use anti-depressants in the "old" old. People don't "deserve" to be depressed just because they are very old or getting there. Although neither TRT nor anti-depressants are a magic bullet, both -- for some -- can improve their quality of life and contribute to a life well-lived. We only have one life; live it the best way possible: Search for your personal good enough. Loren A Olson MD DLFAPA[...]

A "must read" for everyone age 60 and older. This little book helped me accept the fact that the price of living longer is the health issues we must face as we age. I am very much more at peace with my aches and pains. I loved the admonition to forgo getting on-board with the "forever young" imperative sweeping society. It's far more important to take trips, spend time with family, play, write books, and do all those things we never had time for when we were younger.

Thoughtful, informed and entertaining! Now how many books can you say that about? I hope it is

not because I fit the age demographic of the author but this book has really drawn me in both to Greek history and philosophy as well as sharing a love of Hydra!

Not what I'd anticipated, but I liked this book very much. I love how the author took his favorite philosophy books with him on his sabbatical to Greece, to a place that was free of the noise pollution we deal with on a daily basis.

What's it all about, anyway, Alfie? What are we chasing and what are the chances we will catch it before it catches us? The back cover blurb sort of sums up the theme of the book. To paraphrase: A young entrepreneurial type sees an old Greek gentleman sitting near the shore sipping ouzo and watching the sun set over the Mediterranean. Behind the old man are some poorly maintained olive trees. The young man asks the old man if he knows who owns the trees. The old man replies that they are his. The young man asks the gentleman if he knows that if he pruned and watered the trees he could triple their yield, then he could hire workers to maintain the trees and build an olive press to make fine old-world olive oil and sell it in America at a handsome profit; he could be rich. "Then what," the old man asks. "Why, then you could do anything you want," says the young man. The old man replies, "You mean like sit and sip ouzo as the sun goes down?" Especially in your later years, maybe you've already got what you want. You should at least look and see.

If you haven't quite figured out that your path has been heading downhill for some time now, but you know you are increasingly feeling unsatisfied, this book is a must. It will change your perception and give you a new lease on a fulfilling life...

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