

Eplerian Life Philosophy: Thinking and Feelings from Five Locations

Gary Epler

Pulmonary and Critical Care Medicine, Harvard Medical School, Boston, MA, USA

Email: garyepler@gmail.com

How to cite this paper: Epler, G. (2023). Eplerian Life Philosophy: Thinking and Feelings from Five Locations. *Open Journal of Philosophy*, 13, 336-341. <https://doi.org/10.4236/ojpp.2023.132023>

Received: April 11, 2023

Accepted: May 16, 2023

Published: May 19, 2023

Copyright © 2023 by author(s) and Scientific Research Publishing Inc. This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution International License (CC BY 4.0).

<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>



Open Access

Abstract

The Eplerian Life Philosophy is “know who you are moment by moment” which means knowing where you’re thinking from, and that is who you are. There are five locations to think and feel from including the head, heart, gut, body, and the mind. Limit thinking from the head anger and stress centers to less than ten seconds. Feel from the heart with kindness to yourself and others. Be in the mind to solve problems and help others. The Eplerian Life Philosophy is for people who want to improve their lives by being their true authentic self for living their best lives at home, at work, and in the community.

Keywords

Eplerian Life Philosophy, Authentic Self, Anger, Stress, Head, Heart, Gut, Body, Mind, Optimal Health, Productivity, Innovation, Success

1. Introduction

The Eplerian Life Philosophy (ELP) is “know who you are moment by moment” (Epler, 2020; Epler, 2021). ELP was developed in December 2019 after years of clinical research that culminated in the advent of functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI), which shows where you think from. The fMRI images showed independent brain regions each with distinct functions, and you can only think from one region at any given time. This means you can know who you are moment by moment because where you’re thinking from is who you are. If you’re thinking from the amygdala anger center, then you’re angry and that’s who you are.

Subsequent fMRI images showed that anytime you’re thinking about yourself, you’re thinking from the amygdala region. I call this region the stress center because any thoughts about yourself cause stress. The amygdala and cingulate re-

gions are the primitive reptilian brain functioning by instinct and not by thinking. Self-centered and egocentric thoughts from the stress center include thinking about your problems, thinking negative thoughts about yourself, trying to be someone else or your job title, and many more. Eliminate, or limit to a few seconds, self-centered thoughts to prevent harm from the cortisol-response to prolonged stress.

Early application of ELS involved limiting thinking from the amygdala anger center and the cingulate egocentric stress center to less than ten seconds so you can think from the heart with kindness and giving. As you can only think from one location at a time, if you're thinking from the heart, then you are living at zero-level stress because you're not thinking from the stress center.

In addition to thinking from the head, ELS has added four more locations to feel from, not think, that include the heart, gut, body, and the mind, which is outside the body. The rationale and purpose for this article is to understand the types of thinking and feelings originating from these five locations. Furthermore, ELP shows individuals how to be their true authentic selves.

2. Thinking from the Head

For the ELP, there are four brain regions for consideration. These are the primitive, reptilian amygdala anger center (Ozawa et al., 2022) and the cingulate self-centered stress center (Herrmann et al., 2022; Lieberman et al., 2023), the accumbens addiction pleasure center, and the advanced human prefrontal lobe region. The reptilian brain with the anger center and stress center functions on instinct with no thinking involved for saving people in life-threatening emergency situations. The accumbens pleasure center is for reproductive purposes and not for addiction to drugs, alcohol, or sugar. The prefrontal lobe functions through cultural and social norm conditioning, becoming automatic without thinking, for accepted social norm cultural judgment.

Limit thinking from the anger center and stress center to less than ten seconds because prolonged thinking from these regions causes the cortisol-stress response leading to inflammation and heart disease. Feel the anger or stress without thinking, let it peak in six to eight seconds, and it will subside as there is no perceived threat and the parasympathetic, stay and play, system neutralizes the, flee or fight, sympathetic response (Brown et al., 2022). If there is thinking about the person or the situation causing anger or stress, then a perceived threat leads to the sympathetic cortisol-stress response. Therefore, limit feeling from these two regions for less than ten seconds for optimal health.

3. Feelings from Your Heart

Feelings from your heart include kindness, love, giving, appreciation, forgiving, and gratitude (Zou et al., 2018; Kang & Luo, 2022). When you realize that you're angry or stressed from self-centered thinking about yourself, think from the heart with kindness and giving. Give your help. Be grateful for everything you have now and the positive people in your life.

4. Feelings from Your Gut

Fear is the feeling from the gut. There is also the emotional gut feeling (Anand et al., 2022; Ke et al., 2023). Unlike the negative thinking from the head anger center and stress center, fear is a healthy positive feeling because it tells you about risk to your health. The primal reason for this feeling is to prevent you from drinking or eating poison. A specific type of smell or appearance sends an instant message to stop. This has expanded to healthy foods in general as your gut sends you a feeling not to eat unhealthy foods or too much food. You need to listen. In addition, your gut feeling will help you with making risky investments or new ventures.

5. Feelings from Your Body

Feel strength from your body and the feel-good feelings in the muscles from exercising (Nummenmaa, 2022). Feel the strength from a healthy standing tall posture.

6. Feelings from the Mind

How does the mind relate to feelings? In the context of the Eplerian Life Philosophy, there's a difference between the brain and the mind. They're not the same. The brain is the physical organ system in the head that has several independent brain regions, two regions with feelings of anger and stress. Limit thinking from these two regions to less than ten seconds for preventing the cortisol-stress response.

The mind is outside the body. The mind contains all past, present, and future information and knowledge. Access to the mind requires slower brainwave states such as alpha brainwaves at ten cycles per second, theta brainwaves at seven cycles per second, or even the slow delta brainwaves at four cycles per second.

When in the slow brainwave state, the feelings from the mind include serenity, total calmness, universal acceptance and belonging, and unconditional love (Sweeney et al., 2022). These feelings include new feelings outside the body such as not always needing to do something. This is a feeling not experienced while in the normal waking brainwave state. Additional feelings from the mind include courage, attention, accomplishment, and success.

7. Being Your True Authentic Self

The concept of being your authentic self and knowing who you are dates to the ancient aphorism, "know thyself," inscribed in granite 3400 years ago. Socrates wrote "the unexamined life is not worth living," and Aristotle wrote "to know thyself is the beginning of wisdom" (LeDoux et al., 2018).

In 1932, Swiss psychiatrist Carl Jung had a conversation with Chief Ochwiay Biano (Mountain Lake) in Taos, New Mexico where the Chief told him that people are always seeking something or want something. They're uneasy and restless because "they think with their heads." Jung asked, "What do you think

with?” “We think here,” said Chief Mountain Lake, indicating his heart (Hridaya Yoga, 2023).

In addition to knowing thyself as the beginning of wisdom, knowing your true authentic self has many benefits including the freedom from listening to anyone telling you who you are. You’re not controlled by anyone. You don’t compare yourself to anyone. There is no need for blame, criticism, judgment, or excuses. There is no worry or guilt. People trust you because they know who you are, and they want to listen to you and be with you.

There are three reasons why people are not their true authentic selves. First, people are afraid to be their true selves because they fear the consequences of failure, criticism, or ridicule. They lack confidence in themselves. They need to decide. Live with stress trying to be someone else or take the short-time risk with lifelong benefits of freedom and living an extraordinary life.

Second, people know the benefits of being their true selves and want to be their true selves, but they don’t know how. The ELP is a guide for people to learn how to be their true authentic selves.

Third, people don’t want to be their true authentic selves because their self-centered behavior through deception and manipulation of others has always gotten everything they want. They’re not going to change.

Socrates and Aristotle did not have the technology to help them tell people how to be their true selves. The Eplerian Life Philosophy is based on functional MRI (fMRI) studies and helps people be their true selves. Stress is from people thinking about themselves, and as thinking and feeling can only be from one location at a time, this does not allow people to be their true selves. Therefore, the approach to being their true selves is simple, not thinking about themselves. The less people think about themselves, the more they are their true selves.

Limit thinking from the anger center and stress center to less than ten seconds before the harmful effects of the cortisol stress-response develop. There are several ways to limit thinking from these two brain regions to less than ten seconds including feeling the anger or stress without thinking, let it peak in six to eight seconds, and the adverse feelings are neutralized by the parasympathetic calming system.

Other ways to stop thinking from these two regions include recognize where you’re thinking from and change location, use the neuro-bypass technique by repeating “love and peace” for 30 to 60 seconds until you’re thinking from somewhere else. When you recognize you’re thinking self-centered thoughts, feel from the heart with kindness to yourself and others or be in the mind for creative ways to solve problems and help at home, at work, or in the community.

Two more ways to limit thinking from the stress center include triggering the parasympathetic system by taking three belly breaths, having a drink of water, going for a 12-minute walk, or specialized breathing (Ashhad et al., 2022) or one of the yoga breathing practices such as deep slow equal breaths in and equal breaths out, or trigger endorphins by doing ten seconds of freezing water at the end of your shower; working out with weights, spinning class, yoga, or Zumba

class; or going for a long run. Finally, use the distraction technique by listening to music such as Mozart or the rhythmic beat of electronic dance music, having a festive meal, laughing out loud, or enjoying positive social interaction with people.

8. Conclusion

The Eplerian Life Philosophy serves as a model for people to live their best life at home, at work, and in the community. This means knowing where you're thinking from and that's who you are. There are five locations to think and feel from including the head, heart, gut, body, and the mind. You can only think from one location at a time. Limit thinking from the head anger center and stress center to less than ten seconds. Feel from your heart with kindness and giving. Be in the mind with creativity to solve problems and help others, and with courage to be your true authentic self. Thrive on your uniqueness. Social and practical implications of the Eplerian Life Philosophy include optimal health, better relationships, increased productivity and creativity, improved decision-making, increased resilience, more effective communication, and a positive impact on society.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest.

References

- Anand, N., Gorantla, V. R., & Chidambaram, S. B. (2022). The Role of Gut Dysbiosis in the Pathophysiology of Neuropsychiatric Disorders. *Cells*, *12*, Article No. 54. <https://doi.org/10.3390/cells12010054>
- Ashhad, S., Kam, K., Del Negro, C., & Feldman, J. L. (2022). Breathing Rhythm and Pattern and Their Influence on Emotion. *Annual Review of Neuroscience*, *45*, 223-247. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-neuro-090121-014424>
- Brown, R. L., Chen, M. A., Paoletti, J., Dicker, E. E. D., Wu-Chung, E. L., LeRoy, A. S. et al. (2022). Emotion Regulation, Parasympathetic Function, and Psychological Well-Being. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *13*, Article ID: 879166. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.879166>
- Epler, G. R. (2020). Eplerian Philosophy Model for Managing Stress at Home and in the Community. *Preventive Medicine and Community Health*, *3*, 1-2. <https://doi.org/10.15761/PMCH.1000139>
- Epler, G. R. (2021). Eplerian Philosophy for a New Way of Life. *Open Journal of Philosophy*, *11*, 171-177. <https://doi.org/10.4236/ojpp.2021.111013>
- Herrmann, L., Kasties, V., Boden, C., Li, M., Fan, Y., Van Der Meer, J. et al. (2022). Ns4 Attenuated Stress-Induced Activity of the Anterior Cingulate Cortex. A Post-Hoc Analysis of a Randomized Placebo-Controlled Crossover Trial. *Human Psychopharmacology*, *37*, e2837. <https://doi.org/10.1002/hup.2837>
- Hridaya Yoga (2023). <https://hridaya-yoga.com/sayings-of-mystics/carl-jung-thinking-with-the-heart>
- Kang, Q., & Luo, A. (2022). The Efficacy of Mindfulness-Based Intervention for Heart

- Diseases: A Meta-Analysis of Randomized Controlled Trials. *Medicine*, 101, e29649. <https://doi.org/10.1097/MD.00000000000029649>
- Ke, S., Guimond, A. J., Tworoger, S. S., Huang, T., Chan, A. T., Liu, Y. Y., & Kubzansky, L. D. (2023). Gut Feelings: Associations of Emotions and Emotion Regulation with the Gut Microbiome in Women. *Psychological Medicine*, 1-10. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0033291723000612>
- LeDoux, J., Brown, R., Pine, D., & Hofmann, S. (2018). Know Thyself: Well-Being and Subjective Experience. *Cerebrum*, 1-15.
- Lieberman, J. M., Rabelliono, D., Densmore, M., Frewen, P. A., Steyrl, D., Scharnowski, F. et al. (2023). Posterior Cingulate Cortex Targeted Real-Time fMRI Neurofeedback Recalibrates Functional Connectivity with the Amygdala, Posterior Insula, and Default-Mode Network in PTSD. *Bain Behavior*, 13, e2883. <https://doi.org/10.1002/brb3.2883>
- Nummenmaa, L. (2022). Mapping Emotions on the Body. *Scandinavian Journal of Pain*, 22, 667-669. <https://doi.org/10.1515/sjpain-2022-0087>
- Ozawa, S., Nakatani, H., Miyauchi, C. M., Hiraki, K., & Okanoya, K. (2022). Synergistic Effects of Disgust and Anger on Amygdala Activation While Recalling Memories of Interpersonal Stress: An fMRI Study. *International Journal of Psychophysiology*, 182, 39-46. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijpsycho.2022.09.008>
- Sweeney, M. M., Nayak, S., Hurwitz, E. S., Mitchell, L. N., Swift, T. C., & Griffiths, R. R. (2022). Comparison of Psychedelic and Near-Death or Other Non-Ordinary Experiences in Changing Attitudes about Death and Dying. *PLOS ONE*, 17, e0271926. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0271926>
- Zou, L., Sasaki, J. E., Wei, G. X., Huang, T., Yeung, A. S., Neto, O. B., Chen, K. W., & Hui, S. S. C. (2018) Effects of Mind-Body Exercises (Tai Chi/Yoga) on Heart Rate Variability Parameters and Perceived Stress: A Systematic Review with Meta-Analysis of Randomized Controlled Trials. *Journal of Clinical Medicine*, 7, Article No. 404. <https://doi.org/10.3390/jcm7110404>