

Death is nothing to us

First argument:

1. If you should fear being in some particular state, then being in that state would make you worse off than you were before.
2. If you should fear being dead, then your being dead would make you worse off than you were when you were alive. (From 1 by instantiation.)
3. Being dead will not make you worse off than you were while you were alive.
4. Conclusion: You should not fear being dead. (From 2 and 3 by modus tollens.)

Understanding the first premise:

You are in state X. If you should fear being in state Y rather than remaining in state X, your being in state Y is worse for you than your being in state X.

For instance, if you should fear being impoverished, that would be because being impoverished is worse for you than having the income or socio-economic status you currently enjoy.

If living in an apartment on the ninth floor of your building rather than the tenth is *not* something you should fear, then your living in a ninth floor apartment is no worse overall for you than your living in a tenth floor apartment.

Understanding why being dead will not make you worse off than you were while you were alive.

5. When you are dead, you no longer exist.

6. Conclusion: When you are dead, there is no you to be worse off than you were before. (From 5.)

3. Conclusion: Being dead will not make you worse off than you were while you were alive. (From 6.)

Second argument:

1. You did not exist before you were conceived and you will not exist once you have died.

2. The state of your not existing because you have not been conceived and the state of your not existing because you have died are exactly the same: each is the state of your non-existence.

3. Conclusion: If it is right for you to be indifferent to your prenatal non-existence, then you should also be indifferent to your post-life non-existence. (From 1 and 2.)

4. You are, quite rightly, indifferent to the fact that you did not exist for eons and eons before you were conceived.

5. Conclusion: You should be indifferent to the fact that once you die you will forever not exist. (From 3 and 4 by modus ponens.)

6. You should not fear states to which you should be indifferent.

7. Conclusion: You should not fear being dead. (From 5 and 6.)

Comments and criticism: