

Texts used for this lecture series on The Eight-Fold Path:

Awakening the Buddha Within
A Buddhist Bible
Old Path White Clouds
The World's Religions
Zen is Eternal Life
Tricycle Magazine (Spring 1999)
Visuddhimagga (The Path of Purification)

Lama Surya Das
Dwight Goddard
Thich Nhat Hanh
Huston Smith
Rev. Master Jiyu Kinnett
Right Speech, various authors
Bhadantacariya Buddhaghosa

Samma Ditthi

Comprehension that dissipates delusion.

Right View, Right Understanding, Right Comprehension

The Radiant Buddha said:
Regard this fleeting world like this:
Like stars fading and vanishing at dawn,
like bubbles on a fast moving stream,
like morning dewdrops evaporating on blades of grass,
like a candle flame flickering in a strong wind,
echos, mirages, phantoms, hallucinations,
and like a dream.

-The Eight Similes of Illusion,
from the Prajna Paramita Sutras

Samma Ditthi Comprehension that dissipates delusion

Samma - means “whole” or “complete” - focuses us on ways that are **not** partial, biased or self-oriented

Why is comprehension necessary?

until reason is satisfied, the individual can not proceed in any direction
wholeheartedly

the mind needs a map it can trust

Here is the map: here it the truth you can turn to, you can follow, you can use for direction

A full perspective that arises from deepest knowing of the

Four Noble Truths

3 Characteristics of existence: transiency, suffering, no-self

Karma - cause and effect on a moral/ethical plane

Rebirth - all forms recycle

Samsara - conditioned existence leaving one superficial and compulsive; attached to samsara, we are hostages to our internal conditions, drives, impulses and needs.

These are not simply logical propositions - they point to precise and whole experiences we can have----- we can experience and witness this whole perspective. We do not have to continue to have a partial perspective..

One teaching uses the word **Renunciation** for comprehension, because we renounce things we were once attached to because we can see through them.

Buddha was clear about his view of this “saha” world - saha means impossible to grasp -

He does not mean in an intellectual sense of understand - he literally means that it is impossible to hold on to - to grasp something and say “This is mine.”

He means that all things - all phenomena - are insubstantial, floating, vaporous - that they will change any second now.

And in particular, he directs his teachings toward the transitory experiences that arise in us as humans. Our senses, our emotions, our logical thinking mind. He asked us to go way beyond the line in the country western song that says “That’s my story and I’m sticking to it.” He points to the “here now, gone tomorrow” nature for all formations.

He directs us to look from the broader perspective of wisdom - prajna - and to know fully, completely, wholly WHAT IS, to know HOW THINGS WORK, AND to know ONESELF as conditioned and reactionary.

We are guided to look at the world clearly, without delusion or distortion. When our wisdom eyes are open, we don’t necessarily get to choose what we see. We just see WHAT IS.

When the texts teach about merit, they specify deeds that have merit and deeds that do not. For instance, killing has de-merit (it yields harm and pain); not killing is meritorious action (“good” karma, i.e., not harmful or painful).

In relation to Comprehension, limited comprehension (also called False views) lacks merit and yields base attachments, lack of wisdom, dull wit,

chronic disease, and blameworthy ideas. False Views are dysfunctional. What are false views? “IF’s” & “if only’s”, mine, forever, rights (bill of rights).

Right Views - Comprehension that dissipates delusion - is meritorious action - it yields confidence, wisdom, happiness, service, emancipation, and higher knowledge.

Samma Sankappa

Aspiration that harms no one

Right Intention or Right Thought

The thought manifests as the word;
The word manifests as the deed;
The deed develops into the habit;
And habit hardens into character;
So watch the thought and its ways with care,
And let it spring from love
Born out of concern for all beings....

As the shadow follows the body,
as we think, so we become.

--From The Dhammapada
(Sayings of the Buddha)

Samma Sankappa

Aspiration that harms no one

Right Intention or Right Thought

The thought manifests as the word;
The word manifests as the deed;
The deed develops into the habit;
And habit hardens into character;
So watch the thought and its ways with care,
And let it spring from love
Born out of concern for all beings....

As the shadow follows the body,
as we think, so we become.

--From The Dhammapada
(Sayings of the Buddha)

Samma Sankappa
Aspiration that harms no one

Reminder: Samma - means “whole” or “complete” - focuses us on ways that are **not** partial, biased or self-oriented

2nd step on the Eight-Fold Path directs us toward the possibility and necessity of using our minds and firm determination or resolve to free ourselves from ignorance, delusion, negativity and selfishness.

This step asks us to purify our attitudes and thoughts. It asks us to become straight-forward and honest with ourselves. It asks us to develop a working loving-kindness, empathy and compassion toward all.

We can not deepen our spiritual understanding unless we develop these faculties and qualities of mind and heart.

Your future, your karma, your Dharma rests on the thoughts and intentions you form today. Read Percival quote.

What obstacles to aspiration can we look within ourselves for?

~Self-absorption is an obstacle - it is a veil that distorts. It manifests in a “What’s in it for me?” attitude, and it ranges from “What’s in this Dharma lecture for me” to “What can I buy in the mall?” to “How would a zoning ordinance be helpful or not for me?”

~Subtle levels of self-deprecation are obstacles: preconceived notions and beliefs like “I’m not good enough” and “Nobody understands me” are examples of egoism that indicated limited thinking.

~Rationalizing and selfishness are obstacles: Read p. 132 (bottom)-
133(middle)

~Ill-will was in Gotama Buddha’s list of top 5 challenges for us humans

What are actual practices for Aspiration that Harms no one?

~Meditation! Slows down the thinking mind so we can hear it. Allows us to experience the gap - the space in which thoughts arise, so we can discover our judging, rationalizing, criticizing mental processes.

~Mahayana Mind-Training (Tibetan: Lo-jong) a series of slogans for contemplation and application into everyday events and interactions. (Read them some of these slogans - p. 153 - Pema). This includes Tonglen - receiving and sending breathing practice to open the heart of compassion.

~Determination toward Preceptual Living - which Precepts establish behavior that guides to to Aspiration that harms no one?

~Determination for a deep level of honesty of self - this requires conscientious attention, discernment, emotional intelligence, self-knowledge, and sincere internal scrutiny.

A final question you can ask yourself? Do you want to be compassionately awake...or do you prefer your conditioned emotions, affections, and thoughts? If you say yes to the 1st, then you train your mind in the Dharma. You must make up your heart as to what you really want, and practice being that diligently. In this way, you develop a “good heart” - with purified intentions which manifest as a loving, caring, generous spirit - a compassionate being.

Read p. 136 When sitting,...

Samma Vaca

Speech that Makes for Clarity
Right Speech

Better than a meaningless story of
a thousand words
is a single word of deep meaning
which, when heard, produces peace.

--From The Dhammapada
(Sayings of the Buddha)

Whenever I wish to move or to speak,
First I shall examine my state of mind,
And firmly act in a suitable way.

Whenever my mind becomes attached or angry,
I shall not react, nor shall I speak;
I shall remain mum and unmoved like a tree.

~Written by Shantideva

Samma Vaca

Speech that Makes for Clarity
Right Speech

Better than a meaningless story of
a thousand words
is a single word of deep meaning
which, when heard, produces peace.

--From The Dhammapada
(Sayings of the Buddha)

Whenever I wish to move or to speak,
First I shall examine my state of mind,
And firmly act in a suitable way.

Whenever my mind becomes attached or angry,
I shall not react, nor shall I speak;
I shall remain mum and unmoved like a tree.

~Written by Shantideva

Samma Vaca

Speech that Makes for Clarity

Samma - means “whole” or “complete” - focuses us on ways that are **not** partial, biased or self-oriented

1st and 2nd components of the Eight-fold Path are considered the “wisdom” aspects of the Path.

With this 3rd component, we look at one of three aspects that are the moral and ethical behavioral aspects of the Path. As we practice Speech, Self-Discipline, and livelihood, we take hold of three switches that manifest in behavioral actions and control our lives.

Right speech is easily explained as “abstaining from false speech, abstaining from malicious speech, abstaining from harsh speech and abstaining from idle chatter.” Here are Gautama Buddha’s words, as best we have them: p.33, Tricycle.

Let’s consider each point:

1. To abstain from false speech: to not knowingly deceive or manipulate, and to avoid lying. This is not permission to speak your thoughts, feelings, or impulses as they arise. This means being aware of the presence of your own experience and, if appropriate, articulating your experience without guile, without masked ego needs, without conflict or hidden agendas.

Here are some ulterior motives we use false speech to further:

~if we don’t want to appear weak or vulnerable, so we say things to make ourselves look strong, powerful and in-the-know.

~sometimes we use words to distance others; or to protect our true feelings.

~speech can manipulate rather than simply and clearly express (in recent personal work, this is called “impression management”)

~sometimes we use speech to hurt - externally, we hurt others; internally we hurt ourselves with judgmental speech.

2. Abstain from malicious speech - abusive language toward another is what is meant here. This involves speaking harshly or cruelly (judgement, criticism, condescension, barbed wit, subtle belittling, accidental tactlessness) to another being (human and other). Malicious speech is often borne of anger or annoyance.

The resulting threats and criticism sow seeds of discord between people. There's also abusive silence: the silence of withdrawal, of isolation, and abandonment. Susan Piver Browne in *Right Speech in Marriage* calls this is the silence of *f*____ *you*. Is it abusive? You betcha.

3. Right on the heels of abusive speech is slanderous speech. The guidance is to abstain from slandering. Here are some synonyms for slander: backbite, attack, impugn, vilify, and libel. Usually slanderous speech is not made directly to the person one intends to slander; it is made to a 3rd party, whom one intend to influence. This kind of speech creates divisions among us. One speaks against X to Y; if this increases Y's hostility toward X, then one has slandered. Period.

4. Abstain from idle chatter or gossip. One writer termed this "useless speech." Strictly speaking, this is any topic that is not related to the Buddha-Dharma. One teacher noted: "These day, we monks discuss many things when a large group of us gets together in the monastery grounds: the government, China, Tibet, Turkey, Kosovo and so on. This is idle gossip. Idle gossip is the least of the 10 virtues, but it is the best way to waste our human lives."

It is so easy to influence someone's response with tiny remarks: "She's just after the money; he's not good in that job; she doesn't train hard enough." This quiet creation of one viewpoint of people and events must be approached with great care and without the intention of dividing the person from his/her own thoughts or approach. No one is to be used as a tool for our own comfort, without regard for his/her humanity.

To talk about Whole Speech is to talk about listening. As I have suggested to you many times, pure listening is an enlightened experience - there's no one with any opinion home; there's no self to react to what is said. There's simply pure hearing reception of what is said. Mirror-like awareness clearly reflects things just as they are, without distortion, coloring, or expectation. If you practice being open, still and aware of what others are presenting, you are practicing whole speech. If you plan your response while someone speaks, if your own feelings and thoughts grab your attention, if you gather your breath to respond before the speaker finishes talking, if you cant wait for them to stop speaking — then your ego is present - even if you are defending yourself.

Some very meritorious Whole Speech actions: (Thank goodness there's something we can do) Sacred Speech

Asserting our vows - some call this praying
reaffirm our intentions, cultivate benevolent intentions
this develops more loving, kind, warm, constructive, positive,
compassionate mental habits and behaviors.

What qualifies: Daily recitation, any sutra, Metta Prayer, etc.

Using a mantra - mantra = “something to lean the mind upon”
A quick, effective, powerful way of focusing, stabilizing and freeing
the mind
Mantra practice inculcates states of mind: it enhances basic
intelligence, wakefulness, concentration and present awareness.

Most effective to chant mantras in their original sounds. Just like you can easily feel the vibration of a deep gong in energy centers in your body, so do these places vibrate with the seed sounds within mantras. Om, O, AH, E, Ung, OO, LA, A, these cause energy centers in the body to vibrate - to awaken. In the mantra of Kanzeon - the Mantra of Great Compassion - Om mani pedme hung - om is the universal sound; mani means jewel; pedme means lotus; hung is there to complete the vibrational tone. It's called the consort of OM. This chant awakens the 5 wisdoms of Buddha-mind - energy, consciousness, directed attention w/thought, concentration, and intelligence.

End with p.34, Tricycle Jackson article

Samma Kammanta

Self Discipline that Brings no Regret

Right Action, Right Conduct, Right Karma

The thought manifests as the word;
The word manifests as the deed;
The deed develops into the habit;
And habit hardens into character;
So watch the thought and its ways with care,
And let it spring from love
Born out of concern for all beings....

As the shadow follows the body,
as we think, so we become.

--From The Dhammapada
(Sayings of the Buddha)

Samma - means “whole” or “complete” - focuses us on ways that are **not** partial, biased or self-oriented

1st and 2nd components of the Eight-fold Path are considered the “wisdom” aspects of the Path.

With the 3rd, 4th and 5th components, we look at the three steps that are the moral and ethical behavioral aspects of the Path. As we practice Speech, Self-Discipline, and Livelihood, we take hold of three switches that manifest in behavioral actions and control our lives.

As does the teaching of right speech before it, with Self Discipline we are directed in our worldly behaviors to **abstain**: to not kill, to not steal, to not covet (especially sexually). These behaviors are called wrong actions - they are not whole, they are partial, and full of self desires. They involve harmful karmic patterns, they beget demeritorious results.

In self-discipline, we are directed to understand our behavior more objectively (even before we try to improve it). We are asked to reflect on our actions with an eye to the motives that prompted them. How much generosity was involved? How much self-seeking? As for the direction in which change should proceed, the counsel is toward selflessness and charity.

The early Dharma texts are a little varied on this, but generally they say that Gotama Buddha asserted 3 Precepts to guide right actions in the world. And

adherence to these 3 is often required of trainees who attend retreats now a days. I am seriously considering having them stated as part of Retreat Guidelines our Sangha requires, especially when I realize I have assumed people will just know to behave these ways. You know the trouble assumptions get us into...

So the earliest texts (Anguttara-Nikaya) say the Buddha defined Right Action with 3 exact behaviors:

1. To avoid and abstain from killing: Without stick or sword, conscientious, full of sympathy, s/he is anxious for the welfare of all living beings.

2. To avoid and abstain from stealing: What another possesses of goods and chattels (personal, movable property) in the village or in the wood, that s/he does not take with thievish intent.

3. To avoid and abstain from unlawful sexual intercourse: S/he has no intercourse with such persons as are still under the protection of father or mother, brother, sister or relatives, nor with married women (men), nor female (male) convicts, nor even with engaged girls (boys). Huston Smith in *The World's Religions* words this precept as "Do not be unchaste." For monks and the unmarried, this means self-restraint. For the married it means restraint in proportion to one's interests in and distance along the Path. In *ATBW*, Lama Surya Das offers the following teaching: "while...p. 208 to 210." Refer them to section on Channeling sexual energy, p. 210.

Huston Smith also adds the directive of "Do not lie," and "Do not drink intoxicants." However, Lama Surya Das (*ATBW*) presents an excellent teaching on this admonition, beginning with its wording, which in itself is thought-provoking: "Refrain from intoxicants that cause heedlessness." (Read all section, p. 213 to 215.)

Craving is one of the primary hindrances or challenges the Buddha warned seekers they would meet on the path to awakening. Implied here is psychological hunger and thirst, unhealthy desire, longing, attachment and psychological fixation. It is said that a thief's vision is so distorted that even when he meets a saint, all he can see is the saint's pocketbook. Ask yourself: Is there anything or anyone you crave so much that it clouds your judgment and vision? What do you hunger for? Is there anything that engenders feelings so intense that your pursuit of it becomes a substitute for furthering your inner development? It has often been said that everyone has a price: what is yours? It can be tempting to regard this particular

hindrance and rationalize it away, saying that it isn't really desire we're feeling, that it is really something else. Yet clutching at objects of our desire we get carried away and completely lose our perspective. Desire brings more desire. Incessantly going from one object of desire to another only perpetuates dissatisfying, addictive patterns in your lives.

On your spiritual path, be prepared to confront compulsive desires again and again. Watch what you desire; observe what attracts or repels you most; notice what buttons are pushed in you by external stimuli and how you conditionally respond to them. Just round up the usual suspects and honestly look them over - love, self-gratification, sex, pleasure, sensual pleasures, money, possessions, fame, security, power. Who among us is so completely fulfilled and content that s/he is above wanting of any kind?

When the Buddha gave the Fire Sermon to a thousand disciples at Gaya, he told them that , "All is burning...burning with the fire of lust, with the fire of hate, with the fire of delusion." The 3rd Zen Patriarch sang: "The great Way is not difficult for those who have no preferences."

Our actions are karmic seeds - when we behave positively we get positive results; when we cling to questionable values, we get questionable results. If we hurt others, we hurt ourselves and them; helping others, we serve ourselves as well. The practice of Self discipline that brings no regret is about cultivating goodness and virtue in the way we treat others; it's about creating harmony in our world, our home, our work, in this life, right now.

Now, in understanding wrong action as wrong, and right action as right, one practices Comprehension that dissipates delusion; and in making efforts to overcome wrong action and to arouse right action, one practices Endeavor that results in goodness; and in overcoming wrong action with attentive mind and dwelling with attentive mind in possession of right action, one practices Mindfulness that proves this path. Thus there are 3 things that follow upon Right Action: Comprehension, Endeavor and Mindfulness.

Samma Ajiva

Livelihood that brings no discredit.

Right Living

“Those who see worldly life as an obstacle to Dharma see no Dharma in everyday actions; they have not yet discovered that there are no everyday actions

outside of Dharma.”

~13th Century Zen Master Dogen

Reminder: Samma - means “whole” or “complete” - focuses us on ways that are **not** partial, biased or self-oriented. So in this session, we’re looking into “whole living.”

By now you probably recognize that, in Buddhism, a practice of any sort first points to behaviors of restraint. This holds true for Right Livelihood, too, in that first we are guided to abstain, to withhold, to refrain, to avoid unwholesome living. In particular, the guidance is to avoid vocations that harm others; that are deceitful, unwholesome, or corrupt; that encourage heedlessness, or are exploitative (of beings or of the environment). To exploit can mean to employ to the greatest possible advantage; here it means to make use of selfishly or unethically.

The Dhammapada offers that “Right Livelihood is said to be in tune with increasing helpfulness for beings and decreasing harmfulness.” It is work that is altruistic and furthers the spiritual life.

In one way or another, every Buddha needs to work. We all work; we all work at something. Right Livelihood is how Buddhas and Bodhisattvas work to make an enlightened life.

Lama Surya Das offers these questions to the Buddhist who lives in the 20th and nearly 21st century and seeks guidance about Right Livelihood: Can we use our hands, our heads and our hearts to help others? Can we transcend grasping and egocentric behavior, act with enlightened leadership and embody the impeccable values of sila (virtue, ethics)?

Our livelihood, then, provides a major opportunity to put our Buddhist practice into action. Our livelihood is our training made visible. In this way, how we live every aspect of our lives is our training made visible - not just the livelihood part of our lives.

Perfection is an ideal; perhaps for where you work, perfection in the workplace difficult to find. Most work places are a little flawed, a little fraught with hypocrisies, compromises, and egoism - maybe even our own! Our spiritual

paths often appear to be littered with hindrances. The workplace provides a rich arena for us to be more aware of our actions and intentions, as well as to help us take some concrete steps on the spiritual path. Working on ourselves as we work at our jobs can be self-transforming.

For a moment, think about what is known in Buddhism as the 4 poisons that veil and cloud what is: Ignorance, Pride, Jealousy, Enmity (deep-seated hatred, antagonism), and Desire. On some level just about every work situation is going to provoke at least some of these conflicting emotions in us. If someone gets what you wanted, you might feel jealous; if you get what you wanted, you might feel prideful. Please don't misinterpret the message of the dharma to mean that we should deny our feelings or become numb to the whole range of human experiences. Strong emotions are not the primary issue; the primary issue is grasping and attachment. When we cling to and grasp at passionate emotions, losing ourselves by too strongly identifying with them, they take over the mind, possess our thoughts, and obscure clear seeing - they poison our present awareness and clear vision.

Again from Lama Surya Das - on dealing with negativity in the workplace - he suggests we place these lines from the Metta Sutra somewhere in our workplace:

*Let none deceive another, or despise any being in any state.
Let none through anger or ill will wish harm upon another.
Even as a mother protects with her life, her child, her only child,
So with a boundless heart should one cherish all living beings,
radiating kindness over the entire world.*

Mindfulness of the Eight Worldly Winds

This ancient teaching can be applied to all of our interactions, yet can be especially helpful when sorting out livelihood. With a mindfulness practice, we learn to recognize when these influences or concerns are motivating us in any given situation, and of course to do whatever we can to get ourselves back to center, or back on the razor's edge of the Middle Way. The Eight Worldly Winds are actually 4 pairs, each pair representing opposite poles on a desire-aversion axis - in

other words, what we want and what we don't want, two different yet totally interrelated forms of desire.

*Pleasure and Pain

*Gain and Loss

*Praise and Blame

*Fame and Shame

Attachment to pleasure, gain, praise and fame are powerful forces that can seize us with hurricane ferocity and blow us about like leaves in the wind. And it is sometimes easy to respond to these driving forces with knee-jerk reactions, losing sight of our inner intentions. Regarding the consequences of instant gratification, a Weight Watchers slogan says, "A moment on the lips, a lifetime on the hips." This is Dharma wisdom, the practical ethics of conscious restraint.

The market place can be designed to stir up the Worldly Winds in us. The marketplace is built upon knowing about our reactive conditioning: that we want, we like, we're distractable, we need, we fear, we're lonely, we're stuck, we're impulsive, we're easily deflated (or inflated!), we long, we're offended. Buddhism reminds us that nothing lasts, not even our successes and defeats, or our desires and thoughts. Our pursuit of worldly successes and pleasures in the transitory world can be no more satisfying than the pursuit of a mirage in the arid desert.

Making Money: Toward a Buddhist Theory of Economics

Classical Buddhists held a certain disdain for money, and some Asian monks still do not touch money, surviving on the laity's meritorious practice of generosity (dana). In our western culture, a Buddhist theory of economics is still evolving. Certainly **simplicity** is central to Dharma values. Also understanding that wealth - like energy - can not be created or destroyed, but moves around, according to **karmic causality**. Additionally, Buddhist economics would disagree that "money is the root of all evil," and would assert that **ignorance is the underlying problem**. How we relate to money can either further good or further harm; it is helpful or harmful depending upon whether we use it or abuse it, and whether we possess it or it possesses us.

Reading ATBW - p. 250 to end of section

Now, in understanding wrong living as wrong, and right living as right, one practices Comprehension that dissipates delusion; and in making efforts to overcome wrong living and to arouse right living, one practices Endeavor that results in goodness; and in overcoming wrong living with attentive mind and dwelling with attentive mind in possession of right living, one practices Mindfulness that proves this path. Hence, there are 3 things that accompany and follow upon Right Living: Comprehension, Endeavor and Mindfulness.

Endeavor that Results in Goodness

Samma Vayama

Right Effort

“With sustained effort and sincerity
Discipline and self-control
The wise become like islands
Which no flood can overwhelm.”

--From The Dhammapada
(Sayings of the Buddha)

This 6th fold of the Eight-Fold Path begins the **training** aspect of the Path. Specifically, this means mind training, as you will see from the kinds of effort we are guided to make. Remember: Comprehension and Aspiration are the **Wisdom** aspects; Speech, Self-Discipline and Livelihood are the **moral/ethical** aspects of the Path.

Samma - whole, complete

In *The Dawn of the Dhamma*, Venerable Sucitto describes Right Effort as the training "...to avoid or abandon unwholesome states of mind; and to cultivate and maintain wholesome states of mind." These four verbs - avoid, abandon, cultivate and maintain - are found consistently throughout dharma readings when this 6th Fold is presented. This lecture will offer the perspective of Lama Surya Das' wording - the Four Great Efforts. First, tho, attention will be given to unwholesome states of mind, so we know that which toward we make efforts.

Unwholesome mind states are those mental arisings that have roots in greed, anger and delusion. In the *VisuddhiMagga (Path of Purification)*, there are 11 states of mind toward which effort is to be directed: fetters, defilements, wrongnesses, worldly states, kinds of avarice, perversions, ties, bad ways, cankers, floods, bonds, hindrances, adherences, clingings, inherent tendencies, stains, unprofitable causes of action and unprofitable thought-arisings. At the end of these lectures notes, there is a description of each of the 11 unwholesome states of mind. Notice that all these are conditions of our minds, and that all thoughts and their subsequent emotions fall into these categories. The teachings offers that 1) when we abandon the unseemliness of these states, we 2) bring about improvement in the mind, and 3) this reveals bliss - bliss is the name of the energy that remains when defilements are abandoned.

Now, let's explore each Great Effort.

The First Great Effort is to avoid any new unwholesome, negative thoughts or actions. Lama Das offers that this is the easiest because it does not require giving up established ways of being. It asks that we be aware and alert to the ways that new negative patterns might establish themselves. (Read 3 para, p. 270 ATBW).

Second is the effort to overcome (abandon) any existing unwholesome thoughts or

actions. This is the effort to change entrenched thought-behavior patterns, like gossip, ill-will, negativity, etc. We all carry around negative habits, old angers, resentments, obsessions, vendettas - from past lives and from earlier in this very life. And we can change these mind habits with a spiritual effort to chip away at unproductive mental behaviors. Once we see them in ourselves, we can choose to let go of what isn't helpful either to us or to those around us. What's past is past. Here and now is the turning point upon which our future existence revolves. Take a breath, and think about those 11 states of mind. Which ones are you aware that you do? Which are you working right now to overcome or abandon?

The Third Great Effort is to develop only good and wholesome thoughts. Reflect upon what it means to live an enlightened life. We Buddhists practice the Six Paramitas (or Perfections - six transcendent virtues that Lama Das calls Six Principles of Enlightened Living. Do you strive to lead an enlightened life by developing these Six Paramitas?

Generosity - giving, yielding, boundless, unconditional love - open hands, open mind, open heart.

Virtue - ethics, honesty, morality, integrity, helping others,

Patience - tolerance, forbearance, acceptance, forgiveness,

Effort - energy, diligence, courage, enthusiasm, endurance

Meditation - concentration, focus, self-inquiry, reflection, presence of mind, mindfulness.

Wisdom - discernment, sagacity, sanity, centeredness, understanding.

The Fourth Great Effort is to maintain the goodness and wholeness that already exists. Here we direct our willingness to maintain the meritorious conditions that have arisen, and not to let them disappear, but to bring them to growth, to maturity and to full perfection.

Here are some familiar forms that Right Effort takes: renunciation - as in giving up and giving away; relinquishing our grasping and clinging; meeting the challenge of spiritual laziness; meditation on the Four Divine Abodes:

loving kindness and friendliness

Compassion and empathy
Joy and rejoicing
Equanimity and peace of mind

Two readings to end:

TWOTB, p. 45

Boorstein, p.55

From: Visuddhimagga (The Path of Purification; XXII, 47-63)

Kinds of (mental) states to be abandoned:

Fetters - greed for fine-material, so called because they fetter aggregates (in this life) to aggregates (of the next), or karma to its fruit, or beings to sufferings. For as long as the ones exist, there is no cessation of the others. And of these fetters, greed for the fine-material, greed for immaterial, conceit (pride), agitation, and ignorance are called the Five Higher Fetters because they fetter beings to aggregates; while false view of individuality, uncertainty, adherence to rites and rituals, greed for sense desires, and resentment, are called the Five Lower Fetters.

Defilements - there are ten: greed, hate, delusion, conceit (pride), false view, uncertainty, stiffness (of mind), agitation, consciencelessness, shamelessness. They defile any state associated with them.

Wrongnesses - there are ten: wrong view, wrong thinking, wrong speech, wrong action, wrong livelihood, wrong effort, wrong mindfulness, wrong concentration, wrong knowledge, wrong deliverance. They are so called because they occur wrongly.

Worldly states - gain/loss, fame/disgrace, pleasure/pain, praise/blame.

Kinds of avarice (an extreme desire to amass wealth) - avarice about dwellings, families, gain, Dharma, and praise. These occur as an inability to share with others any of these five things.

Perversions - perversion of perception, of consciousness, and of view. These occur when one apprehends objects that are impermanent, painful, not self, and foul (ugly), as permanent, pleasant, self, and beautiful.

Ties - there are four, beginning with covetousness, so called because they tie the

mental body and the material body. They are described as “The bodily tie of covetousness, the bodily tie of ill will, the bodily tie of adherence to rites and rituals, the bodily tie of insisting (misinterpreting) that “This only is the truth.”

Bad Ways - Bad ways is a term for doing what ought not to be done and not doing what ought to be done, out of desire, delusion, hate, and fear. They are called bad ways because they are not traveled by the Noble Ones.

Cankers - This is a term for greed for sense-desires, greed for becoming, wrong view, and ignorance, because of the exuding of these defilements from unguarded sense-doors like water from cracks in a pot in the sense of constant trickling, or because of their producing the suffering of the round of rebirths.

The *Floods* are so called in the sense of sweeping away into the ocean of becoming, and in the sense of being hard to cross.

The *Bonds* are so called because they do not allow disengagement from an object and disengagement from suffering.

The *Hindrances* are the five - namely, lust (desires), ill-will, stiffness and torpor, agitation and worry, and uncertainty (doubt). These hindrances obstruct and conceal reality from consciousness.

Adherence is a term for wrong view, because it occurs in the aspect of missing the individual essence of a given state (dharma) and apprehending an unactual individual-essence.

The *Clingings* are the four beginning with sense-desire clinging, false-view clinging, rite and ritual clinging, and self-doctrine clinging, as described in the Dependent Origination.

The *Inherent Tendencies* are seven: namely, the inherent tendency to greed for sense-desires, the inherent tendency to resentment, the inherent tendency to conceit, the inherent tendency to false views, the inherent tendency to uncertainty, the inherent tendency greed for becoming, and the inherent tendency to ignorance. For it is owing to their inveteracy (deep-rooted; firmly established by long standing; persisting in an ingrained habit) that they are called inherent tendencies since they inhere (remain fixed) as cause for the arising of greed for sense desires, (etc.) again and again.

The *Stains*: greed, anger (hate), delusion. They are so called because they themselves are dirty like oil and mud, and because they dirty other things.

The *Unprofitable Courses of Action* are killing living things, taking what is not given, sexual misconduct, false speech, malicious speech, harsh speech, gossip, covetousness, ill will and wrong view. They are so called because they are both unprofitable actions (karma) and courses that lead to unhappy destinies.

There are 12 *Unprofitable Thought-arising*s -

8 are rooted in greed: delusion, envy, worry, wrong view, conceit (pride), avarice, stiffness, torpor

2 are rooted in hate: resentment and grief

2 are rooted in delusion: uncertainty and agitation,

Mindfulness That Proves This Path

Samma Sati

Right Mindfulness, Right Attention

I dreamt I was a butterfly,
Flitting around in the sky;
then I awoke.
Now I wonder:
Am I a man who dreamt of being a butterfly,
Or am I butterfly dreaming that I am a man?

--Chuang Tsu

I want to begin with a quote from Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche's
Journey to Enlightenment:

"The whole thrust of Buddha's teaching is to master the mind. If you master the mind, you will have mastery over body and speech...Mastery of the mind is achieved through constant awareness of all your thoughts and actions...Maintaining this constant mindfulness in the practice of tranquility and insight, you will eventually be able to sustain the recognition of wisdom even in the midst of ordinary activities and distractions. Mindfulness is thus the very basis, the cure for all samsaric afflictions."

Meditation is how we train in mindfulness and awareness. At the heart of your meditation is a technique and an effort. This technique – whichever one you are applying right now in your meditation – is to develop focus and concentration. When we can focus and concentrate, we can see the conditioned layers of self arise, yet remain in pure mindfulness – open, lucid, moment-to-moment, present awareness.

It does not matter which focusing technique you use. We have created the impression that counting the breaths is a meditation technique for beginners, but this is not so. Breath counting is simply a great technique for developing focus and concentration. Mindfulness of breathing cuts off applied thought. If you have not use this technique in a while, I suggest you use it again for 3 months, and see for yourself how deeply valuable it is. You'll quickly discover the quality of your focus and concentration.

Because meditation slows us down and creates more spaciousness, it allows exploration, investigation, unveiling, and illumination of what is hidden within and all around us. The contemplative, introspective experience of meditation helps us awaken from our illusions about how things are and moves us beyond our subjective (read conditioned) view of the world to what actually IS.

Here is the Buddha's lesson in mindfulness, taken from the original Mindfulness Sutra. He presented this teaching in what he called the Four Foundations of Mindfulness, and he directed monks to become intimately, deeply aware of their bodies, their feelings and emotions, their thoughts, and their consciousness (here he meant the mental objects they experience or the events happening around them).

(Ask group to sit in meditation, eyes lowered hands in lap quiet and still. Take in several deep breaths... guide them through TWOTB, p. 48 – 51)

Is this really meditation, people ask? Is it really this simple? Even though these mindfulness instructions reflect the essence of simplicity, they are not always so easy to follow. Have you ever had the experience of

picking up a brimming hot bowl of soup? Do you remember the vigilant state of mind you maintained until you were able to put the bowl down? This is the intensity Buddha intended. You've heard us say "Sit as if your hair were on fire". In mindfulness meditation, we effort the present moment in this same way – with the intention of carrying this vigilance with us into every moment of our lives. We learn to approach everything we do with attention and mindfulness. Living a mindful life is a sacred, extraordinary way of being in the world. Knowing things as they are, knowing how they function, is enlightened wakefulness.

Hidden between the lines of mindfulness teaching is one of the most important Dharma lessons; Meditation is a simple, direct way of coming home to "now." As we meditate, we begin to relinquish our fascination and attachment to both the past and the future. We stop living in fantasies and fears; we learn to recognize and let go of conditioning and preoccupations with what was or what might be. And all that wonderful energy that was being expended and leaked out in fantasy, bitterness, anger, in regretting, in worrying and wishing – all that energy is once again, ours! We are returned to our natural state of pure nowness. This is authentic being – the joy of now.

Most of us have spent our entire lives, including previous lifetimes, fixated on our attachment to either what was or what will be. Because we're not accustomed to present-moment awareness, we need retraining to stay in this immediate nanosecond. To more fully develop the power of mindfulness, we begin by becoming more completely and lucidly conscious of individual bodily activities, like breathing and walking. In walking, for example, we take a step, and then another step, totally consciously. Piece by piece, we break down each step into further microcomponents like lifting the foot, moving it forward, and placing it down. If I say this so often that it sounds repetitive, that's because it is repetitive. That's the point. It's a training, and like all trainings, we need to keep reminding ourselves of the basics, going over it again and again. We learn to be aware step by step, breath by breath, thought by thought, feeling by feeling.

"But what do I do with my thoughts?"

This is a very familiar question. Since meditation is about bringing awareness to whatever is, when a thought arises, it IS. The thought is

present in this present moment. Now several things could happen: if there is no attachment to this thought, one might simply acknowledge it and let it go. One could apply Endeavor that results in goodness, and abandon the thought. Thoughts arise all the time; you can just notice them. This is the attitude we maintain in formal meditation regarding our thoughts – we watch them arise, we watch them pass. We observe the thinking process. As meditation deepens, the breath gets more still, the body quiets, and thoughts become calmer. This is not the primary goal of meditation, but it is a beneficial side effect and a sign of progress along the way.

Then, through meditation, we discover that we are not our thoughts. We learn that we have a life apart from our thoughts. We get it that we are not our thoughts. We do create and are responsible for our thoughts, but we are not limited by them or enslaved by the thinking process.

And we don't judge our thoughts, either. We simply label them as "thinking". If you have a mean, angry thought about another person, you don't tell yourself "I am a mean, angry person." We all have all kinds of wild thoughts; this does not mean we must define ourselves by them.

We also do not build upon our thoughts or their resultant feelings. We drop the story line, as Pema Chodron says. We're just aware of thoughts and let them go. In meditation, we mind our mind, so we can better know ourselves. We don't hang onto our thoughts, react out of them, or use them to manipulate what is taking place.

If you stay present and open yourself to thoughts, you'll begin to discover the layers of conditioning within yourself that particular thoughts arise from. Images from past events, past lives, past relationships begin to surface, often with the intense emotions that accompany them. Still the mindfulness practice is to allow all this to arise, to stay present to all these layers without indulgence or denial. To let all layers arise and let them go. To heal the self. To undo each knot of conditioning that manifests in thoughts that arise.

Big Mind, Small Mind

This teaching is offered to help us understand that we are not what we are thinking. Small mind is the ordinary mind, often referred to a deluded mind. This is our finite mind, our limited conceptual mind. It is buzzing and unpredictable, it is our rational, discursive, thinking mind. This deluded mind has many impulses and needs; it wants so many things; It's frequently confused; it is subject to moon swings; it's restless, it's angry, it gets depressed, it becomes hyper. Ancient texts refer to this ordinary mind as

“monkey mind.”

What is meant by Big Mind is the essential nature of mind itself. We call this Buddha-nature or natural mind. It is not ours personally, although we often use the language of wanting to experience “our” true nature, like it was a possession of mine. And it is each of our’s true-nature – the pure boundless awareness that is at the heart of all of us. Gotama Buddha described it as still, clear, lucid, empty, profound, simple (as in uncomplicated), and peaceful. It is the luminous, most fundamental clear light nature of our ground of being. Tibetans call this Rigpa – the heart of enlightenment. Zen Buddhist call this original mind. This is what we awaken to – and it is already here. Awakening to this is what mindfulness training is all about.

End by reading p. 300, ATBW

Samma Samadhi

Awareness that leads to Nirvana.

Right Concentration, Right Meditation

”If you become thus utterly free
You will be as the water wherein the dragon dwells
Or as the mountain whereon the tiger roams.”

--Dogen From Shasta Abbey Midday Service

Collecting the mind so it becomes focused, centered and aware.

The Buddha taught that in order to concentrate we need a combination of Right Effort and Right Mindfulness. Concentration thus integrates all the

factors and aspects of mindful awareness into a coherent and vividly present, functioning whole. Right Concentration involves recollection, mindfulness, vigilance, alertness, and perseverance. It thus brings us full circle back to the wisdom of Right View and authentic understanding.

Concentration implies a unification of spiritual intentionality, focus, mental discipline, energy and attention.

Although your mind can only have one thought at a time, awareness can take in much more. Focusing your mind through concentrative exercise can access and free up more and more intrinsic awareness. By placing the mind on breathing, awareness becomes heightened and brighter. It's like using a magnifying glass to focus the sun's rays to start a fire.

Natural concentration unites the heart with non-dual awareness. This achieves oneness and completeness.

The important thing to remember is that this is a training. We are honing and developing our capacity to concentrate. We build our concentration until it is enough to allow us to penetrate further into the practice of wisdom and insight. It does not matter how long you can control your thinking mind without having a thought – that's mind control, not Buddhist meditation. Concentration is being fully present with what is, whatever is. It means being right here, not scattered, not pulled away by fear (emotions), judgment (mental activities), or itches (body sensations)! When your concentration abilities are fully developed, you can achieve super focus, complete absorption, and total oneness.

With concentration practices, the mind becomes so one-pointedly absorbed that we are beyond thought, feelings, sensory perception, or external stimuli of any kind. There are beautiful descriptions of this experience: infinite consciousness, infinite light, boundless bliss. Yet this alone is not enlightenment. In order to attain enlightenment, this super focused, laser beam-like concentrated attention must be directed toward insight and wisdom practices. And we first have to work with the mundane – this discursive mind, these reactive feelings, and this body of sensations that constantly arise. So we participate in concentration practices. We assign the small restless mind the concrete task of focusing on an object.

The ability to focus and intentionally bring back our wandering

attention over and over again is at the root of mental discipline, willpower and even character development. You will gradually learn to sit like a mountain. Remember in Midday Service: “If you become thus utterly free you will be as the water wherein the dragon dwells or as the mountain whereon the tiger roams.” Though thoughts will arise, they are merely clouds passing by the mountain. Clouds do not perturb mountains. Clouds pass on, and the mountain continues to sit – observing all, grasping at nothing.

Do concentration meditations:

Breath counting

Walking in step with breath

Candle flame concentration

Read: A Buddhist Bible, p. 55-56