

Dharma Study Session: Practicing with Intention

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Welcome

Zoom orientation

Individual introductions and intention for attending today (Chat)

Studying the Suttas

Four Times: The Simile of the Rivers -- *translated from the Pali by Ajahn Sujato*

Mendicants, when these four times are rightly developed and progressed, they gradually lead to the ending of defilements (greed, hate, and delusion). What four? A time for listening to the teaching, a time for discussing the teaching, a time for serenity, and a time for discernment.

It's like when it rains heavily on a mountain top, and the water flows downhill to fill the hollows, crevices, and creeks. As they become full, they fill up the pools. The pools fill up the lakes, the lakes fill up the streams, and the streams fill up the rivers. And as the rivers become full, they fill up the ocean.

In the same way, when these four times are rightly developed and progressed, they gradually lead to the ending of defilements. (AN 4.147)

About the Study Materials

Tipitaka – baskets, the earliest teachings (three baskets: sutta basket, poetry basket, basket of rules for monks/nuns). The sutta basket contains these groups of suttas, which number to nearly 2000):

- [Digha Nikaya \(DN\)](#) — the "long collection"
- [Majjhima Nikaya \(MN\)](#) — the "middle-length collection"
- [Samyutta Nikaya \(SN\)](#) — the "grouped collection"
- [Anguttara Nikaya \(AN\)](#)— the "further-factored collection" or the Numbered Collection (i.e. the Book of Ones, the Book of Twos, the Books of Threes, Fours,)
- [Khuddaka Nikaya](#) — the "collection of little texts":

Books and websites referenced for Commentary and:

- <https://www.accesstoinsight.org>
- <https://www.suttacentral.net>
- <https://www.buddhistuniversity.net>
- *Four Right Resolves*, Gil Fronsdal , 03/28/22, <https://www.audiodharma.org/speakers/1?page=4>
- *Life is Meditation - Meditation is Life: A Practical Guide to the "Emancipation Proclamation" of the Anapanasati Sutta and Loving-Kindness Meditation*, Bhante Vimalaramsi
- *Metacognition of intentions in mindfulness and hypnosis*, Peter Lush, Peter Naish and Zoltan Dienes. *Neuroscience of Consciousness*, 2016, 1-10.
- *Mindfulness: A Practical Guide to Awakening*, Joseph Goldstein
- *The Heart of the Buddha's Teaching*, Thich Nhat Hanh
- *The Heart's Intention*, Phillip Moffitt, <https://dharma wisdom.org/the-hearts-intention/>
- *The Issue at Hand*, Gil Fronsdal
- *The Three Kinds of Intention*, Sally Armstrong, <https://www.dharmaseed.org/talks/player/39449.html>
- *Transitions are Seeds*, Gil Fronsdal. <https://www.awakin.org/v2/read/view.php?tid=275>

Overview of Intention

Some Ways to Describe Intention

What words come to mind when describing intention? <share verbally or use Chat>

This is a list of words used by some contemporary Buddhist writers.

Foundation	Compass	Volition
Stand/Landing	Orientation	Aspiration
Special place to stand	Guiding Principle	Motivation
Heart's purpose	Directionality	Vow
	Filter	

These words illustrate how intention is a quality of mind that influences what comes next. It can be the can be a direction and an aspiration that occurs in the present moment. These words also show how intentions have a ripple effect over time. Each of these descriptions reflects an aspect of how intention shapes our lives by preceding and influencing action than a specific action or outcome.

How Intention Differs from Goal-Setting

We live in a very goal-oriented society that uses the words “Intention” and “goal” or “aim” interchangeably. Phillip Moffitt (www.dharmawisdom.com) says that seeing how these concepts differ in Buddhist teaching protects us from being discouraged when results are not immediately evident and allows more openness to how the practice unfolds. He clarifies the difference between intention and goals this way:

Setting intention, at least according to Buddhist teaching is quite different from goal-making. It is not oriented toward future outcome. Instead, it is a path or practice that is focused on how you are “being” in the present moment. Your attention is on the ever-present “now” in the constantly changing flow of life. You set your intentions based on what matters most to you and make a commitment to align worldly actions with your inner values.

Goals help you make your place in the world and be an effective person. But being grounded in intention is what provides integrity and unity in your life. Through skillful cultivation of intention, you learn to make wise goals and then to work hard to achieve them without getting caught in attachment to outcome.

Ironically, by being in touch with and acting from your true intentions, you become more effecting in reaching your goals than when acting out of your wants and insecurities. (Phillip Moffitt, <https://dharmawisdom.org/the-hearts-intention/>)

Intention on the Eightfold Path

Intention is as the second aspect of the Eightfold Path. Here is a quick review of the Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path which are at the core of all Buddhist teachings. (See Elizabeth’s study guide on the Eightfold Path available on the Dharma Study Page at RedClaySangha.org)

The Four Noble Truths

1. Suffering/ stress exist
2. Craving is the cause
3. There is a way out of suffering
4. The way out is the 8-fold path

The Eightfold Path

1. Right (Wise) View
 2. Right (Wise) Intention
 3. Right (Wise) Speech
 4. Right (Wise) Action
 5. Right (Wise) Livelihood
 6. Right (Wise) Effort
 7. Right (Wise) Mindfulness
 8. Right (Wise) Concentration
- Wisdom / Discernment
- Ethical (*Sila*)
- Meditation

The Pali term for right intention, *sammā saṅkappa*, is sometimes translated as right thought or right resolve. Intention is a mind quality or perspective.

Bhante Vimalaramsi in *Life is Meditation - Meditation is Life: A Practical Guide to the "Emancipation Proclamation" of the Anapanasati Sutta and Loving-Kindness Meditation* chooses to use the word "Harmonious" instead of "Right."

In the *Mahācattārīsaka sutta*, the Buddha describes the relationships of aspects of the Path to each other, right/wise intention comes from right/wise view and is the cornerstone of right effort. We become aware of intention through mindfulness and can see choice points as we move with right action.

Mahācattārīsakasutta: The Great Forty – translated from the Pali by Bhikku Bodhi

Therein, bhikkhus, right view comes first. And how does right view come first? One understands wrong intention as wrong intention and right intention as right intention: this is one's right view.

And what, bhikkhus, is wrong intention? The intention of sensual desire, the intention of ill will, and the intention of cruelty: this is wrong intention.

And what, bhikkhus, is right intention? Right intention, I say, is twofold: there is right intention that is affected by taints, partaking of merit, ripening in the acquisitions, and there is right intention that is noble, taintless, supramundane, a factor of the path.

And what, bhikkhus, is right intention that is affected by taints, partaking of merit, ripening in the acquisitions? The intention of renunciation, the intention of non-ill will, and the intention of non-cruelty.

And what, bhikkhus, is right intention that is noble, taintless, supramundane, a factor of the path? The thinking, thought, intention, mental absorption, mental fixity, directing of mind,

verbal formation in one whose mind is noble, whose mind is taintless, who possesses the noble path and is developing the noble path: this is right intention that is noble...a factor of the path.

One makes an effort to abandon wrong intention and to enter upon right intention: this is one's right effort. Mindfully one abandons wrong intention, mindfully one enters upon and abides in right intention: this is one's right mindfulness. Thus these three states run and circle around right intention, that is, right view, right effort, and right mindfulness. (MN 117)

Pause for a moment. Take a few calming breaths. Notice your intention. Ask, "Is intention in harmony with this moment?" Be aware of the flow or interplay among intention, mindfulness and effort.

Questions and Comments?

These verses on the interplay of wisdom (right view, right intention) and meditation (right mindfulness and right effort) hold key points illuminated in other suttas we will be reading today such as:

- Intention is a change point (right effort) where there is free will (i.e., choice)
- Wrong intention: greed, ill-will, harm
- Right intention: renunciation, non-ill will, non-harming as qualities to cultivate
- Awareness of fetters and hindrances comes from mindful reflection on intention
- From this awareness we can remember and act in harmony with right intention
- Over time, there is a gradual arising of abiding or presence in which there is no intention which leads to cessation of suffering

Intention and Kamma

The Dhammapada begins with a description of how intention is the mental factor that most affects how we interpret what comes to mind. Note that some translations use the word heart and others use mind to mean the source of intention

Yamakavagga: Pairs -- translated from the Pali by Thanissaro Bhikkhu

Phenomena are preceded by the heart, ruled by the heart, made of the heart. If you speak or act with a corrupted heart, then suffering follows you – as the wheel of the cart, the track of the ox that pulls it.

Phenomena are preceded by the heart, ruled by the heart, made of the heart. If you speak or act with a calm, bright heart, then happiness follows you, like a shadow that never leaves. (Dhp 1-2)

In his translation of the same verses, Suddhāso Bhikkhu uses the word "mind" instead of "heart." He comments:

This pair of verses begins the Dhammapada with a reminder of that which is most powerful: the mind. All of our experiences are filtered through our mind; this much most people can agree on.

The Buddha, however, takes it one step farther, and states that not only do we experience everything through the mind, the mind actually creates all of our experiences. Thus if we wish to take control of our lives, we must take control of our own minds. The Buddha continues by presenting a straightforward logical conclusion to this: if our mind is corrupted, tainted, or

flawed, then our experiences will also be tainted – and thus will be painful, disturbing, and unsatisfying. However, if our mind is pure, clear, and flawless, then our experiences will also be flawless – and thus will be pleasant, peaceful, and satisfying. (suttacentral.net)

Nibbedhika Sutta: Penetrative – translated from Pali by Thanissaro Bhikkhu

"Intention, I tell you, is kamma. Intending, one does kamma by way of body, speech, and intellect.

"And what is the cause by which kamma comes into play? Contact is the cause by which kamma comes into play.

"And what is the result of kamma? The result of kamma is of three sorts, I tell you: that which arises right here & now, that which arises later [in this lifetime], and that which arises following that. This is called the result of kamma. (AN 6.63)

From Gil Fronsdal's essay, *Karma*, in *The Issue at Hand*:

The teaching of karma is about intentional choices we make in the present. The present moment is to be appreciated mindfully and relaxed into, as we do in meditation. But it is also where we choose to step forward into the next moment. The more clearly we see the choice, the greater the freedom and creativity we have in making it.

The present moment is partly the result of choices unfolding in the present. Our experience of the next moment, the next day, the next decade is shaped by the choices in relationship to where we find ourselves right now. Intended acts of body, speech, and mind have consequences; taking these consequences into account offers important guidance in our choices for action.

In meditation we cease responding to the world habitually. Instead we watch the momentum of the mind: our desires, feelings, thoughts, and intentions. Instead of acting on them or reacting to them, we give them careful attention. When we don't reinforce them, they quiet down and no longer direct our lives.

What is given to us may not be to our liking. But even so, through mindfulness practice we can awaken the creative potential of choice in how we respond. To choose to respond with aversion, anger, fear, or clinging continues the creation of suffering. To respond with more attention, or without reference to our egoistic attachments, interrupts the cycle of suffering.

So the world of karma is the world of intentions, and the world of intention belongs in the world of right now...If you care for your intentions with love and care, as you would a garden, you intentions will flower beautifully and bear fruit in your life. (Gil Fronsdal, *The Issue at Hand*, pp. 27-29).

Meditation: Appreciating the Karmic Stream.

Questions and Comments.

How to Work with Three Kinds of Intention

The Pali Canon describes three kinds of intention:

- *Cetana* – Volition
- *Adhitthana* – Resolve
- *Sappo Sankappo* – Right Intentions

In her dharma talk, *The Three Kinds of Intention*, Sally Armstrong describes how these three types of intention form a flexible triangle to work together across time.

Cetana (Volition)

The Pali word *Cetana* is often translated as volition. Without volition nothing would happen.

Cetana Sutta: Intention – translated from the Pali by Thanissaro Bhikkhu

Staying at Savatthi... [the Blessed One said,] "What one intends, what one arranges, and what one obsesses about: This is a support for the stationing of consciousness. There being a support, there is a landing [or: an establishing] of consciousness. When that consciousness lands and grows, there is the production of renewed becoming in the future. When there is the production of renewed becoming in the future, there is future birth, aging and death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, and despair. Such is the origination of this entire mass of suffering and stress.

"If one doesn't intend and doesn't arrange, but one still obsesses [about something], this is a support for the stationing of consciousness. There being a support, there is a landing of consciousness. When that consciousness lands and grows, there is the production of renewed becoming in the future. When there is the production of renewed becoming in the future, there is future birth, aging and death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, and despair. Such [too] is the origination of this entire mass of suffering and stress.

"But when one doesn't intend, arrange, or obsess [about anything], there is no support for the stationing of consciousness. There being no support, there is no landing of consciousness. When that consciousness doesn't land and grow, there is no production of renewed becoming in the future. When there is no production of renewed becoming in the future, there is no future birth, aging and death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, or despair. Such is the cessation of this entire mass of suffering and stress." (SN 12.38)

Adhitthana (Resolve)

In the next passage, Gil Fronsdal describes how *adhitthana* or intention as resolve opens an opportunity for choice and how our choices, over time, condition further suffering or happiness.

Every mind-moment involves an intention. This suggests the phenomenal subtlety with which choices operate in our lives.

Few of us keep our bodies still, except perhaps in meditation or in sleep. Each of the constant movements in our arms, hands, and legs is preceded by a volitional impulse, usually unnoticed.

Intentions are present even in such seemingly minute and usually unnoticed decisions as where to direct our attention or which thoughts to pursue.

Just as drops of water will eventually fill a bathtub, so the accumulation of these small choices shapes who we are. Our intentions - noticed or unnoticed, gross or subtle - contribute either to our suffering or to our happiness.

Intentions are sometimes called seeds. The garden you grow depends on the seeds you plant and water. Long after a deed is done, the trace or momentum of the intention left behind it remains as a seed, conditioning our future happiness or unhappiness. If we water intentions of greed or hate, their inherent suffering will sprout, both while we act on them and in the future in the form of reinforced habits, tensions, and painful memories. If we nourish intentions of love or generosity, the inherent happiness and openness of those states will become a more frequent part of our life. (Fronsdal, Gil. *Transitions are Seeds*. <https://www.awakin.org/v2/read/view.php?tid=275>)

Thanissaro Bhikkhu describes *adhithana* (resolve) this way:

When you look at the qualities that lead to awakening—things like the ten perfections—they come under the headings of what the Buddha talks of as the *adhithana dhamma*, things that are willed.

There are actually four: discernment, truth, relinquishment, and peace or calming. All of these are things that we **have to will** in order to find them. (Thanissaro Bhikkhu E-Published Dharma Talks III –)

Gil Fronsdal (Dharma talk on 03/28/22 *Four Right Resolves*) describes how taking a stand in these resolves radically changes what we do. But we often need support to let go of clinging because the idea of self does not cooperate. It is easy to feel disoriented. He suggests, when in doubt, return to the four foundations with the following questions.

- How can I relate wisely?
- What is true here in this moment?
- What is appropriate to relinquish with generosity?
- Where is the peace here?

Meditation check in: Apply to situation where you feel a tension

Sappo Sankappo (Right/wise Intention)

Magga-Vibhanga Sutta: An Analysis of the Path – translated from the Pali by Thanissaro Bhikkhu

And what is right resolve? Being resolved on renunciation, on freedom from ill-will, on harmlessness: This is called right resolve. (SN 45:8)

Wise intention is also presented in the positive as generosity, loving-kindness, and compassion. (For more information about these qualities, see the *Brahmaviharas Study Guide* at on the Dharma Study Session home page redclaysangha.org.)

Resolving on Renunciation

In the next reading on renunciation from the *Anguttara Nikaya*, the Buddha teaches how he changed the question to refocus inquiry and gain deeper understanding.

Tapussa Sutta: To Tapussa -- translated from the Pali by Thanissaro Bhikkhu

Then Ven. Ananda, together with Tapussa the householder, went to the Blessed One and, on arrival, having bowed down to him, sat to one side. As he was sitting there he said to the Blessed One: "Tapussa the householder, here, has said to me, 'Venerable Ananda, sir, we are householders who indulge in sensuality, delight in sensuality, enjoy sensuality, rejoice in sensuality. For us — indulging in sensuality, delighting in sensuality, enjoying sensuality, rejoicing in sensuality — renunciation seems like a sheer drop-off. Yet I've heard that in this doctrine & discipline the hearts of the very young monks leap up at renunciation, grow confident, steadfast, & firm, seeing it as peace. So right here is where this doctrine & discipline is contrary to the great mass of people: i.e., [this issue of] renunciation.'"

"So it is, Ananda. So it is. Even I myself, before my Awakening, when I was still an unawakened Bodhisatta, thought: 'Renunciation is good. Seclusion is good.' But my heart didn't leap up at renunciation, didn't grow confident, steadfast, or firm, seeing it as peace. The thought occurred to me: 'What is the cause, what is the reason, why my heart doesn't leap up at renunciation, doesn't grow confident, steadfast, or firm, seeing it as peace?' Then the thought occurred to me: 'I haven't seen the drawback of sensual pleasures; I haven't pursued [that theme]. I haven't understood the reward of renunciation; I haven't familiarized myself with it. That's why my heart doesn't leap up at renunciation, doesn't grow confident, steadfast, or firm, seeing it as peace.'

"Then the thought occurred to me: 'If, having seen the drawback of sensual pleasures, I were to pursue that theme; and if, having understood the reward of renunciation, I were to familiarize myself with it, there's the possibility that my heart would leap up at renunciation, grow confident, steadfast, & firm, seeing it as peace.'

"So at a later time, having seen the drawback of sensual pleasures, I pursued that theme; having understood the reward of renunciation, I familiarized myself with it. My heart leaped up at renunciation, grew confident, steadfast, & firm, seeing it as peace. Then, quite withdrawn from sensuality, withdrawn from unskillful qualities, I entered & remained in the first jhana: rapture & pleasure born from withdrawal, accompanied by directed thought & evaluation..." (AN 9.41)

Joseph Goldstein suggests several ways to practice with wise restraint in his book *Mindfulness*.

It's possible, though, to relate to desire in an altogether different way, a way of much greater freedom. We can practice developing a wise restraint, where we settle back and allow the desires to arise and pass away without feeling the need or compulsion to act on them. In this practice of renunciation, we can taste for ourselves that there is greater ease in not wanting than in wanting. Here we get a glimpse of the third noble truth, the end of craving, even if, at first, it's just for a few moments. As an experiment, pay careful attention to those moments when you go from being lost in wanting, lost in some enjoyment of sensual pleasures, including your mental fantasies, to being free of the wanting. Or notice the transition from moments of being lost in and identified with pleasant feelings to being mindful of them. (p. 346)

Other practices include:

- Practice changing up daily habits. Practice renunciation of complexity.
- Practice seeing the wisdom in “no.” Ask the questions, “Is this necessary?” and “Is this helpful?” Often something is not, and we can practice letting it go. “No, I don’t need to do this.” “No, I don’t need to carry on with this thought.”
- Practice the precepts. Commitment to the precepts can stop the impulse before it leads to action. This is the practice of letting go of clinging.
- Practice renunciation of identifying with whatever arises so the mind remains steady.

Achaan Chah puts this even more simply:

Do everything with a mind that lets go. Do not expect any praise or reward. If you let go a little, you will have a little peace. If you let go a lot, you will have a lot of peace. If you let go completely, you will know complete peace and freedom. Your struggles with the world will have come to an end. (*A Still Forest Pool*, p. 74)

Resolving on Freedom from Ill-Will (Metta)

Joseph Goldstein’s description of the benefits of Mettā Practice illustrates how devoting time and energy to cultivate renunciation, loving kindness, and compassion lays a foundation for intention to naturally align with heart’s purpose.

As these feelings of goodwill and kindness soften us, our minds and hearts become smooth, gentle, more pliable. Because of this softening, there is a lessening of our many reactive judgments and comments, about ourselves as well as others. We become more patient and caring with difficulties and disturbances. As we’re less reactive, not so caught up in immediate likes and dislikes, there is more space for discerning wisdom. We can then see more clearly what is truly skillful and unskillful in our lives, and so we make wiser choices. This, in turn, leads to more happiness, more joy, and more mettā. It’s an upward spiral. (*Mindfulness*, p. 437).

Resolving on Harmlessness

When cultivating wholesome responses to suffering, Joseph Goldstein directs us toward reflection on our intention.

It is important to understand that in situations where it is possible to stop the harmful behavior, we need to take appropriate actions, set proper boundaries, and do whatever is necessary to prevent further harm. But can we do this with a wise attention to our own motivations? Is our motivation anger or resentment? Is it compassion? The great lesson here is that how we feel and respond to the situation is up to us.

Being willing to come close to suffering takes empathy a step further. Compassion is not only feeling what others are going through, but also being motivated to act on that feeling. As compassion grows in us, we begin to actively engage with the suffering in the world, responding to the various needs of beings in whatever way is appropriate and possible. (*Mindfulness*, p. 352)

Caring for Intentions with Reflection and Discernment

The principle of kamma places a lot of emphasis on the need to act on skillful intentions to get the good results you want, the basic question becomes: How can you tell whether an intention is skillful or unskillful?

The Buddha's teaching to his seven-year-old son, Rahula, shows us how to monitor our intentions and learn to adjust as necessary. There are 5 key components to keep in mind when reading this sutta.

- Importance of truthfulness
- Actions, speech, thoughts mirror intention and are the basis for self-reflection
- Reflect before, during, and after actions, speech, and thoughts
- Evaluation leads to learning where we are clinging, avoiding, or confused
- Asking the questions from right view

Ambalattika-rahulovada Sutta: Instructions to Rahula at Mango Stone -- translated from the Pali by Thanissaro Bhikkhu

I have heard that on one occasion the Blessed One was staying near Rajagaha, at the Bamboo Grove, the Squirrels' Feeding Ground.

At that time Ven. Rahula was staying at the Mango Stone. Then the Blessed One, arising from his seclusion in the late afternoon, went to where Ven. Rahula was staying at the Mango Stone. Ven. Rahula saw him coming from afar and, on seeing him, set out a seat & water for washing the feet. The Blessed One sat down on the seat set out and, having sat down, washed his feet. Ven. Rahula, bowing down to the Blessed One, sat to one side.

Then the Blessed One, having left a little bit of water in the water dipper, said to Ven. Rahula, "Rahula, do you see this little bit of left-over water remaining in the water dipper?"

"Yes, sir."

"That's how little of a contemplative there is in anyone who feels no shame at telling a deliberate lie."

Having tossed away the little bit of left-over water, the Blessed One said to Ven. Rahula, "Rahula, do you see how this little bit of left-over water is tossed away?"

"Yes, sir."

"Rahula, whatever there is of a contemplative in anyone who feels no shame at telling a deliberate lie is tossed away just like that."

Having turned the water dipper upside down, the Blessed One said to Ven. Rahula, "Rahula, do you see how this water dipper is turned upside down?"

"Yes, sir."

"Rahula, whatever there is of a contemplative in anyone who feels no shame at telling a deliberate lie is turned upside down just like that."

Having turned the water dipper right-side up, the Blessed One said to Ven. Rahula, "Rahula, do you see how empty & hollow this water dipper is?"

"Yes, sir."

"Rahula, whatever there is of a contemplative in anyone who feels no shame at telling a deliberate lie is empty & hollow just like that."

"Rahula, it's like a royal elephant: immense, pedigreed, accustomed to battles, its tusks like chariot poles. Having gone into battle, it uses its forefeet & hindfeet, its forequarters & hindquarters, its head & ears & tusks & tail, but keeps protecting its trunk. The elephant trainer notices that and thinks, 'This royal elephant has not given up its life to the king.' But when the royal elephant... having gone into battle, uses its forefeet & hindfeet, its forequarters & hindquarters, its head & ears & tusks & tail & his trunk, the trainer notices that and thinks, 'This royal elephant has given up its life to the king. There is nothing it will not do.'

"In the same way, Rahula, when anyone feels no shame in telling a deliberate lie, there is no evil, I tell you, he will not do. Thus, Rahula, you should train yourself, 'I will not tell a deliberate lie even in jest.'

"What do you think, Rahula: What is a mirror for?"

"For reflection, sir."

"In the same way, Rahula, bodily actions, verbal actions, & mental actions are to be done with repeated reflection."

"Whenever you want to do a bodily action, you should reflect on it: 'This bodily action I want to do — would it lead to self-affliction, to the affliction of others, or to both? Would it be an unskillful bodily action, with painful consequences, painful results?' If, on reflection, you know that it would lead to self-affliction, to the affliction of others, or to both; it would be an unskillful bodily action with painful consequences, painful results, then any bodily action of that sort is absolutely unfit for you to do. But if on reflection you know that it would not cause affliction... it would be a skillful bodily action with pleasant consequences, pleasant results, then any bodily action of that sort is fit for you to do."

"While you are doing a bodily action, you should reflect on it: 'This bodily action I am doing — is it leading to self-affliction, to the affliction of others, or to both? Is it an unskillful bodily action, with painful consequences, painful results?' If, on reflection, you know that it is leading to self-affliction, to the affliction of others, or to both... you should give it up. But if on reflection you know that it is not... you may continue with it."

"Having done a bodily action, you should reflect on it: 'This bodily action I have done — did it lead to self-affliction, to the affliction of others, or to both? Was it an unskillful bodily action, with painful consequences, painful results?' If, on reflection, you know that it led to self-affliction, to the affliction of others, or to both; it was an unskillful bodily action with painful

consequences, painful results, then you should confess it, reveal it, lay it open to the Teacher or to a knowledgeable companion in the holy life. Having confessed it... you should exercise restraint in the future. But if on reflection you know that it did not lead to affliction... it was a skillful bodily action with pleasant consequences, pleasant results, then you should stay mentally refreshed & joyful, training day & night in skillful mental qualities.

"Whenever you want to do a verbal action, you should reflect on it: 'This verbal action I want to do — would it lead to self-affliction, to the affliction of others, or to both? Would it be an unskillful verbal action, with painful consequences, painful results?' If, on reflection, you know that it would lead to self-affliction, to the affliction of others, or to both; it would be an unskillful verbal action with painful consequences, painful results, then any verbal action of that sort is absolutely unfit for you to do. But if on reflection you know that it would not cause affliction... it would be a skillful verbal action with pleasant consequences, pleasant results, then any verbal action of that sort is fit for you to do.

"While you are doing a verbal action, you should reflect on it: 'This verbal action I am doing — is it leading to self-affliction, to the affliction of others, or to both? Is it an unskillful verbal action, with painful consequences, painful results?' If, on reflection, you know that it is leading to self-affliction, to the affliction of others, or to both... you should give it up. But if on reflection you know that it is not... you may continue with it.

"Having done a verbal action, you should reflect on it: 'This verbal action I have done — did it lead to self-affliction, to the affliction of others, or to both? Was it an unskillful verbal action, with painful consequences, painful results?' If, on reflection, you know that it led to self-affliction, to the affliction of others, or to both; it was an unskillful verbal action with painful consequences, painful results, then you should confess it, reveal it, lay it open to the Teacher or to a knowledgeable companion in the holy life. Having confessed it... you should exercise restraint in the future. But if on reflection you know that it did not lead to affliction... it was a skillful verbal action with pleasant consequences, pleasant results, then you should stay mentally refreshed & joyful, training day & night in skillful mental qualities.

"Whenever you want to do a mental action, you should reflect on it: 'This mental action I want to do — would it lead to self-affliction, to the affliction of others, or to both? Would it be an unskillful mental action, with painful consequences, painful results?' If, on reflection, you know that it would lead to self-affliction, to the affliction of others, or to both; it would be an unskillful mental action with painful consequences, painful results, then any mental action of that sort is absolutely unfit for you to do. But if on reflection you know that it would not cause affliction... it would be a skillful mental action with pleasant consequences, pleasant results, then any mental action of that sort is fit for you to do.

"While you are doing a mental action, you should reflect on it: 'This mental action I am doing — is it leading to self-affliction, to the affliction of others, or to both? Is it an unskillful mental action, with painful consequences, painful results?' If, on reflection, you know that it is leading to self-affliction, to the affliction of others, or to both... you should give it up. But if on reflection you know that it is not... you may continue with it.

"Having done a mental action, you should reflect on it: 'This mental action I have done — did it lead to self-affliction, to the affliction of others, or to both? Was it an unskillful mental action,

with painful consequences, painful results?' If, on reflection, you know that it led to self-affliction, to the affliction of others, or to both; it was an unskillful mental action with painful consequences, painful results, then you should feel distressed, ashamed, & disgusted with it. Feeling distressed, ashamed, & disgusted with it, you should exercise restraint in the future. But if on reflection you know that it did not lead to affliction... it was a skillful mental action with pleasant consequences, pleasant results, then you should stay mentally refreshed & joyful, training day & night in skillful mental qualities.

"Rahula, all those brahmans & contemplatives in the course of the past who purified their bodily actions, verbal actions, & mental actions, did it through repeated reflection on their bodily actions, verbal actions, & mental actions in just this way.

"All those brahmans & contemplatives in the course of the future who will purify their bodily actions, verbal actions, & mental actions, will do it through repeated reflection on their bodily actions, verbal actions, & mental actions in just this way.

"All those brahmans & contemplatives at present who purify their bodily actions, verbal actions, & mental actions, do it through repeated reflection on their bodily actions, verbal actions, & mental actions in just this way.

"Thus, Rahula, you should train yourself: 'I will purify my bodily actions through repeated reflection. I will purify my verbal actions through repeated reflection. I will purify my mental actions through repeated reflection.' That's how you should train yourself."

That is what the Blessed One said. Gratified, Ven. Rahula delighted in the Blessed One's words. (MN 61)

[Wrap-up/ Comments/Questions?](#)