

relax

MINDFULNESS MEDITATIONS

& be

FOR CLARITY, CONFIDENCE,

aware

AND WISDOM

SAYADAW U TEJANIYA

EDITED BY DOUG MCGILL

Shambhala Publications, Inc.
4720 Walnut Street
Boulder, Colorado 80301
www.shambhala.com

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9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

First Edition

Printed in the United States of America

♻️ This edition is printed on acid-free paper that meets the American National Standards Institute Z39.48 Standard.

♻️ This book is printed on 30% postconsumer recycled paper. For more information please visit www.shambhala.com.

Shambhala Publications is distributed worldwide by Penguin Random House, Inc., and its subsidiaries.

Designed by Kate E. White

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Tejaniya, Sayadaw U, author.

Title: Relax and be aware: mindfulness meditations for clarity, confidence, and wisdom / Sayadaw U Tejaniya; edited with an introduction by Doug McGill.

Description: First edition. | Boulder: Shambhala, 2019.

Identifiers: LCCN 2019011075 | ISBN 9781611807905 (pbk.: alk. paper)

Subjects: LCSH: Buddhist meditations

Classification: LCC BQ5512.T45 2019 | DDC 294.3/4435—dc23

LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2019011075>

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FOREWORD

Steve Armstrong

Sayadaw U Tejaniya's truly defining quality as a meditation teacher is that he teaches by direct transmission. If you strike a tuning fork near a piano, strings in the piano will sound that same tone. If you listen to Sayadaw—how he talks, how he instructs—your mind starts to resonate with his. You feel an inner alignment with the understanding that he models, getting deeply interested in your life right down to the subtlest details. You notice more and more about the mind's root levels where stress starts, and where it can end. You begin to receive his transmission of the transformative art of meditation.

Some years before I met Sayadaw I'd had the privilege of meeting his own teacher, the renowned Burmese monk and meditation teacher Shwe Oo Min Sayadaw. I had just finished five years of living as an ordained monk in Burma, and I went to visit Shwe Oo Min Sayadaw at his monastery. I was deeply impressed by the elder monk, who despite his fame insisted on living in utmost simplicity and austerity. His monastery of simple wooden buildings was in a grove of trees that he refused to cut, despite being located in a bustling Rangoon suburb.

He received me quietly, gently, and with total attention. As we spoke, I felt a deep resonance with his words, as if he

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were perfectly articulating the very path I had chosen and that I aspired to walk in this life.

Some years later, after Shwe Oo Min Sayadaw had passed, I learned that a younger monk, Sayadaw U Tejaniya, was his successor, and I was eager to meet him.

I reached out, and Sayadaw agreed to see me privately, with his translator, Ma Thet. He also invited me to see him in daily, one-on-one interviews during a six-week retreat at his Rangoon meditation center. He usually sees students in groups, so I was very fortunate. He offered me a little introduction to the practice and a trifold brochure, and I started practicing.

At first I didn't get the gist of his approach. I had been practicing for thirty years, including, most recently, five years in another meditation tradition in Burma. In that tradition, the emphasis was on noticing details of every experience and reporting those observations to your teacher during check-ins. I knew that I was hearing something different from Sayadaw, but I couldn't understand how to do the practice as he instructed it. Instead, I would tell him in our daily meetings what I was noticing.

After two or three days, while I was doing my walking practice outside, Sayadaw sent Ma Thet to speak with me.

"Sayadaw wants to know," she asked, "why you are telling him about your experiences during the check-ins?" I responded, "That's how I understand practice." And she said, "Sayadaw doesn't really need to know what your experience is. He wants to know how you are practicing. He wants to know *how* are you being aware, not what you are you aware *of*."

This was really different for me. I realized right then that

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I didn't know how to speak about awareness without itemizing the experiences I was having—objects of awareness such as thoughts, feelings, sensations, and perceptions.

I really wanted to learn Sayadaw's approach, so I resolved that I would put aside everything I'd known before, including every technique I'd ever learned or used. From then on, every time I saw my mind going toward a well-worn, tried-and-true technique, I just dropped the technique and instead asked, "What is awareness doing right now?" After about two weeks, I felt like I'd gotten the hang of it; I was gaining momentum and could move on.

Then came a big revelation. Whenever my mind was going toward the technique, and I said "No," I noticed that a new space would open in my mind—a space I had been missing. I realized that whenever something like a distraction or a disturbance arose in the mind, and I went to a technique to deal with it, my mind was then with the technique rather than with the underlying mental state. This insight was a breakthrough for me.

Looking at experience in this way keeps us continually aware not of objects of perception but rather the state of the observing mind, where we are either creating stress or not. If we are, this mode of seeing offers a way to proceed wisely, because continuous awareness brings in the wisdom quality of mind.

This is one instance of Sayadaw's intensely practical approach to meditation, and I'll mention two others: awareness while walking and while talking.

With walking meditation, Sayadaw gives the instruction to maintain a normal pace, not focusing attention on any

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special sensations but rather staying continuously aware of the state of the observing mind. How is awareness receiving and processing what is known? Is the mind seeing experience clearly, or is craving, aversion, or delusion present? If you can be aware like this while walking, you'll be aware more often during the day, always learning about your mind.

We don't spend most of our life in silent meditation. It's mostly spent interacting with others—hence the importance of awareness while speaking. If we don't learn how to be aware of everything that's happening in our mind and body while talking, we'll be speaking from reactivity, not wisdom, and unconsciously ramping up stress. If you learn how to be aware as you talk, speaking becomes more meaningful and intentional. You can see your options and consciously choose language that supports harmonious and peaceful relationships within yourself and with others.

Recently, I've had a precious opportunity to use Sayadaw's practice in my life, along with other meditation approaches I've learned over the years. In February 2018, I was diagnosed with glioblastoma, a highly aggressive brain cancer. The disease is terminal, not a good prognosis. But from the first day, I honestly have never had fear, nor hope. Instead, I have been very interested in everything that's going on, including the pain and suffering that happens.

Some people react to a cancer diagnosis with "Oh, my God!" and "This is terrible!" But whenever I have seen fear or despair come into the mind—and they do arise from time to time—they just go by. I see them appear, but the entanglement is not

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there. Sayadaw's practice profoundly supports this kind of being interested in everything, while watching always for unskillful ways of reacting, then letting them go. With awareness comes wisdom, and wisdom always says: "This is not something to get entangled with." It accepts things the way things are.

After my first year of practicing with Sayadaw, I helped bring him to teach at meditation centers around the United States I'd accompany him from place to place, and I spent hours upon hours with him in the car, in the plane, everywhere.

What I noticed is that he is always interested in the mind. He sees all the activity going on around him—he listens, he hears, he sees. But his interest is always in the mind. This made a very powerful impression on me.

One time we were together on Maui, where I live. Everything here is very beautiful and sensuous—the sea, the mountains, the hibiscus flowers. It's all very enticing and entangling to the senses. As we were driving together in the car, he was taking it all in, but instead of rambling on about the beauty, he was describing how his mind was perceiving these new experiences. He said, "It's fascinating to watch my perceptions with all of these new objects the mind doesn't yet know." I remember thinking, "Wow, this is different from most people who are new to the island."

Rather than getting fascinated with things, Sayadaw was fascinated with perception—how the mind was making sense of all these new perceptions.

As a teacher, he wasn't telling me, "Look at it this way." He was just doing his life and sharing it from the awareness

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perspective. As a result, I started to see things the way he was seeing things. When you're with him, that's what happens. He's aware, and simply by staying with him and listening to him, you learn how to stay aware too.

The pages of this book resonate with the same alignment that one feels in Sayadaw's physical presence. Reading his words thus offers a chance to pick up and resonate with the same pure tone of wisdom that in Buddhism is called *dharma*, reality, or "the way things are." Sayadaw's transmission is available on each page and frequently, given his gift for ringing expression, in each individual sentence. Letting these pure tones suffuse one's being each day, in each moment, is the inner work of the daily meditations that are the heart of this book. They offer a taste of liberation itself.

RELAX AND BE AWARE

INTRODUCTION

from the moment we wake up
until the moment we fall asleep

Doug McGill

The aim of this short book is to help meditators practice meditation as it was originally taught by the Buddha, as an investigation into the true nature of reality—not just during regular daily sittings but in every moment of daily life.

“Meditation is so important we need to do it all the time,” says Sayadaw U Tejaniya,* a modern meditation master from Myanmar (Burma) who teaches how to use life’s most ordinary moments as the very fuel of awakening.

“Forget the idea that meditation happens only on a cushion or in the meditation hall,” Sayadaw says. “The right time to meditate is all day long, from the moment you wake up until the moment you fall asleep.”

Why would one want to do this? For the obvious reasons, mainly: to calm and settle the mind, to awaken the joyful heart,

* “Sayadaw” is an honorific title given to senior monks in Myanmar; “U Tejaniya” is a given monastic name that means “the venerable one who brightens, or enlightens, others.”

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and to develop wisdom deep enough to dissolve mental stress and suffering at its roots.

But the momentum of our compulsive mind is very strong. If our practice is limited to only one or two formal daily sittings, it's hard for stress-dissolving wisdom to break through and do its transformative work. We really need to meditate full time to build up the momentum of awareness and wisdom necessary to escape the gravitational pull of our stress-making mental activity, once and for all.

But is meditating all day, every day a realistic goal? Not just for contemplative monks and nuns, or for laypeople while on retreats, but for people right in the midst of living busy modern lives?

It is the amazing contribution of Sayadaw U Tejaniya to offer just such a straightforward and practical method for staying conscious, continually learning about the nature of the body and mind, and allowing us to peer into the subtlest origins of our happiness and stress, around-the-clock.

It's a method to enlighten people while they are doing the laundry, riding the escalator, talking with others, sipping tea, or taking just one conscious breath. In this way, every activity, no matter how small, can yield insights into how we create our own suffering and thus how we can stop it.

"What the Buddha wanted was for people to meditate all the time," Sayadaw says. "I'm just advertising the Buddha's words. Sitting can still be part of the practice, but I emphasize daily life mindfulness because people neglect it so much. It's

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a very helpful, valid practice, especially when there's not that much time to sit."

Over the past two decades, more and more people have embraced Sayadaw's encouragement to take meditation off the cushion and into daily life. His own personal story is itself a powerful testimony to the Dhamma's healing power.

Sayadaw U Tejaniya grew up in Yangon, the capital of Myanmar, as the son of a successful clothing merchant. Free-spirited and a bit of a rebel, he was the black sheep in a large family of high achievers. By the eighth grade he'd fallen behind in his studies and was hanging out with a rough crowd. By his late teens he and his friends were skipping class and getting high on a popular opioid cough syrup, comethazine, to which he became addicted.

A bright spot through this period was his close relationship with a revered senior monk in Myanmar, Shwe Oo Min Sayadaw, whom he had met as a young boy while on family visits to the elderly monk's monastery. On those visits, the boy came to view Shwe Oo Min Sayadaw as a father figure and trusted guide. Thus, through his difficult teenage years, U Tejaniya was able to visit the monastery, often spending summers there meditating and imbibing the Buddha's ancient wisdom from his beloved teacher.

Once back at home, however, he would usually backslide, and troubles would resume. For a time in college he stabilized, but crisis struck in his early twenties when his eldest brother died, and U Tejaniya was forced to quit school and go

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to work full time in the family's shop in Yangon's busy central market.

As adult life closed around him, three depressions set in, each one deeper than the last. The first one dwindled away by itself; the second he overcame by anger-fueled force of will. The third depression, however, which began around age twenty-six, became paralyzing. Simply being around other people, either at home or at the market, filled him with agitation and anxiety.

He wanted to flee to the monastery, but that was now impossible given his family and business duties. In desperation and out of necessity, he finally turned to bringing the practice of meditation to every moment of his daily life at home and at work. In this way he slowly trained himself to stay mindful in every circumstance—whether eating a meal with his family, chatting with customers, taking walks, bathing, attending social gatherings, or any activity throughout his waking day. Without this continuous awareness, he learned, the agitation and mental suffering soon returned.

This continuous awareness, Sayadaw discovered, when coupled with interest to explore and discover the mental roots of his suffering, dissolved his depression and released the mind's natural wisdom and healing powers.

“As mindfulness becomes more continuous, wisdom starts coming in more quickly to do its work,” he says. “Gentle awareness eventually gains momentum to become natural and continuous. It really feels like you're aware while doing everything. You are actually living in this awareness.

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“This is when I understood the true nature of meditation and started to believe it possible to become enlightened in daily life.”

At the meditation retreats he leads around the world, Sayadaw minimizes structured time for formal sitting and walking meditation in order to create conditions for practicing continuous awareness more as people would do at home. The thirty-one daily guided meditations in this book are based on guided meditations Sayadaw offers to begin each day of the retreats.

The goal of the retreats is to ingrain the wholesome habits of continuous awareness and investigation so that people naturally will take them home when the retreat is over. It's in the application of the process to the uniquely particular details of each individual life that real progress is made.

“In the process of being mindful and conscious of ourselves, we learn about the nature of the mind and body,” Sayadaw says. “When we really understand something, it's like an epiphany. The mind suddenly understands and then becomes free of what was encumbering it. That's what the ultimate goal is. Being conscious leads to the awakening of understanding, which leads to peace.”

As you practice your way through the thirty-one daily guided meditations that are the heart of this book, remember this guideline from Sayadaw: “The aim of practice is to develop wisdom through direct experience.”

What's pointed to here is the difference between conceptual and experiential understanding. Meditation is ultimately about

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the latter, but concepts, such as the ones you are absorbing right now, can be powerful pointers to direct experience.

What you want to avoid is mistaking concepts for reality.

Take, for example, the word *sweet* in relation to the experience of it. In order for practice to work, you need to be able to clearly distinguish between *sweet* as a concept and as a pure and direct experience.

As a concept, the word *sweet* usually summons only more concepts about sweetness, including all of your memories of sweetness. If you aren't careful, the next time you bite into an apple and call it sweet, you won't actually be tasting the apple but rather only remembering earlier thoughts about sweetness.

This happens much more than you can imagine, across all domains of experience. It means that it's all too easy to miss most of our life because we never really experience it. Instead, we are in a mental movie, experiencing feelings but only those arising in response to our thoughts and not to life itself.

What is the actual experience of sweetness, really, right now? What is it truly?

What's its reality? Just one true taste will open insight into the nature of that reality.

As you read each day's meditation from Sayadaw, read it then not to gather concepts but rather to experience the indelible tastes the concepts point to.

Those tastes are the real thing.

Dive into each taste deeply with wise awareness, to explore its reality.

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The concepts that initially guided you will disappear as you face forward to the mystery of reality, as known through the actual taste of it.

What is that taste?

“You’ll be surprised, you’ll be amazed,” Sayadaw U Tejaniya says.

“Just as the great ocean has one taste—the taste of salt—so also this teaching has one taste, the taste of liberation,” the Buddha says.

May it be so!

PART ONE

the
watched
mind brings
happiness

ONE

the path of wisdom

A meditator's job is to remember to be aware.

Whether you are standing, sitting, lying down, or walking, if you remember that you are aware, then you are meditating, and you are cultivating this wholesome quality of mind.

We always start with awareness. It is that quality that grounds us and allows all the wholesome mind-states to arise, especially the quality of wisdom. When awareness and wisdom are working together like this, we gain the confidence and the motivation to keep exploring and moving into the uncharted regions of our minds, where wrong view starts the cycle of suffering at a subtle level.

What the mind is aware of—the objects of awareness such as sensations, thoughts, perceptions, and emotions—isn't really important. What's important is the quality of the observing mind that is always working in the background to be aware. The more we remember to be aware, the more we nourish the wisdom that dissolves stress and suffering.

Wisdom is what this practice is about. It is the quality of mind that understands the true nature of reality. It becomes the compass that points the way as we try to understand and

remove the mind's three unwholesome roots of craving, aversion, and delusion.

These unwholesome roots are the three primary mind-states that all compulsive and destructive emotions, thoughts, and actions spring from. By combining in different patterns, modes, and levels of intensity, these unskillful qualities create the nearly infinite range of painful emotions that afflict humanity with so much suffering.

As individuals we don't really know how to deal with the three unskillful root qualities of mind. That's why the right thing to do in practice is to grow the wisdom quality of mind, which knows how to remove the unwholesome roots. Awareness grows wisdom. So, rely on wisdom; it will stand by you.

Forget the idea that meditation happens only on a cushion or in the meditation hall. Meditation is so important that we need to do it all the time, whenever we can remember. We should meditate from the moment we wake up until the moment we fall asleep.

It is the nature of mind to arise and pass away every moment, but each moment leaves a legacy for the next moment. That's why it's important to cultivate the mind's wholesome qualities such as patience, perseverance, joy, and equanimity—so that they become the legacy that is passed on. Once we learn how to be continuously aware with wisdom, all of the positive qualities of mind will naturally follow. Cultivating the wholesome and positive qualities of mind is the aim of meditation. These, not “I,” are the qualities at work in meditation.

The Buddha said there is no “self.” Self is just a designation

people use. But the Buddha also said, “Rely on yourself.” What he meant was that when we rely on ourselves, we rely on the positive qualities of mind like awareness, selfless love, compassion, joy, generosity, patience, truthfulness, and equanimity.

Five of the mind’s positive qualities, called the “spiritual faculties,” are especially important to cultivate in meditation. When these five qualities are in balance, they develop wisdom, the fifth quality of mind, considered the foremost because wisdom dissolves suffering.

The five spiritual faculties are:

Confidence (trust in the practice)

Energy (perseverance)

Mindfulness (remembering to be aware)

Stability of mind

Wisdom (understanding the nature of reality)

When meditation is going well, these five qualities work together in a virtuous cycle that strengthens the mind’s wholesome qualities over and over again. First, confidence in the practice inspires perseverance, which in turn strengthens mindfulness, stability of mind, and wisdom. Each new glimpse of wisdom further strengthens confidence in the practice, and the cycle continues.

The qualities of our mind—whether they are positive or negative in any given moment—will grow stronger and stronger if you allow them to remain. We must practice nonstop to make what’s in the mind positive in every moment, because if

it's not positive, it's going to be negative. Practicing in this way, we incrementally displace the old cycle of craving, aversion, and delusion with a new cycle of natural awareness, clarity, and wisdom.

Now let's consider three basic principles of meditation practice.

PRINCIPLE #1 | RIGHT EFFORT

persevere in a relaxed way

We don't need to use too much effort or too much energy to be mindful.

Every day we wake up, we open our eyes, and seeing begins to happen. But how often do we consciously notice this? When we do, that is awareness. It is the realization of our present moment experience. That's all.

Simple awareness isn't tiring at all. Do you need to concentrate or focus to know that you are seeing? No. So long as you are aware of something in your being, you are aware. Whatever you know is fine. It can be any of the six sense perceptions—seeing, hearing, tasting, touching, smelling, or thinking.

In the Buddha's teaching, thinking is considered to be a sixth sense perception. Each time a sense is perceived, a "sense door," which is an organ of perception (eye, ear, nose, body, tongue, mind), meets the object that is perceived (sight, sound, smell, touch, taste, thought). Each meeting at a sense door gives rise to a moment of consciousness in which the object of perception is known.

THE WATCHED MIND BRINGS HAPPINESS

Effort directed at remaining aware does not require much energy. It isn't difficult to be aware; it's just difficult to do it continuously! You do not need to know every detail of your experience.

Just be aware and know what you are aware of.

How much effort do you think it requires to be aware? Let's try a live demonstration with ourselves as guinea pigs. You are sitting. Are you aware you are sitting? You are seeing. Are you aware that you are seeing? Yes? Are you sure? When did you begin to notice that you are seeing, that seeing is happening? It was just now when I asked you, wasn't it?

When we aren't skilled enough at practicing with right effort, then we will either put in too much effort or not enough effort.

It is important, especially when you are beginning a meditation practice, that you don't overexert, such as by trying hard to focus on an object or to create a pleasant state of mind.

RELAX THE MIND

The meditating mind is relaxed. We never need to focus too much nor try too hard. Right effort isn't about intensely focusing attention on something.

Meditation shouldn't make the mind or the body tired. If you are practicing correctly with right effort, it will bring peace and joy. But if you are putting in wrong effort, you will feel tired and unhappy when you practice.

Whenever we strive to experience something pleasant or

RELAX AND BE AWARE

to avoid something unpleasant, we get tired. The meditating mind, the mind that is doing the work of meditation, must be a wholesome mind. In a wholesome mind the qualities of confidence, energy, mindfulness, stability of mind, and wisdom are at work replacing desire, aversion, and delusion, at least to some degree.

However, sometimes when we make an effort, we do so unskillfully. At these times, when one or more of the three unwholesome roots come into the mind and stays unnoticed, our effort becomes wrong effort.

Whenever craving, aversion, or delusion is present and motivating the practice, we begin to overexert. When we want experience to be a certain way, that's craving, and we start to strive and to put in too much effort. When we are dissatisfied with something, that's aversion, and we try to avoid it or make it go away. Focusing hard makes us tired. It's happening because of craving, aversion, or ignorance of the practice. We need to soften our focus and relax. There should be continuous effort but not exertion.

BE COOL, CALM, AND INTERESTED

Instead of using energy to focus, use intelligence and wisdom by waiting and watching. Right effort is called "right" because wisdom is present.

Be cool and calm. Be interested. Accept, examine, and study whatever is happening as it is. Don't interfere with what is happening. Notice when the mind is trying to make something

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unwanted disappear or stop, notice that it is trying to create preferred experiences, and notice the effort of this on the mind.

Notice that the mind is doing its own work through recognizing, being aware, knowing, thinking about the practice, and being interested. We're just seeing and acknowledging the work that the mind is already doing.

It's easy to be aware, because all we can truly be aware of is our six senses—seeing, hearing, tasting, touching, smelling, or thinking. So in any moment, all we need to do to be aware is to ask questions like “What is being known now?” “What is being seen now?” “What sounds are being heard?” “What thoughts are being known?”

If we remember to recognize that “knowing is happening” at any one of the six sense doors at any given moment, then awareness is present. If we remember continuously in this way, we will be continuously aware, and we will be continuously developing the mind's positive qualities.

CONSERVE ENERGY

Big bursts of effort make us run out of steam. Conserve energy so you keep going all day.

It is very important to keep trying to maintain the intention to remain aware all the time, whether awareness is actually continuous or not. This points to the essential quality of right effort: persistence. It's not a forceful effort but rather an inner determination to sustain the tiny bit of energy you need in each moment to know you are aware and to keep that going.

RELAX AND BE AWARE

Keep up the intention and the commitment, and don't give up. Persevere throughout the day. It takes some practice because in order for awareness to become constant it needs to become a habit. For something to become a habit, we have to keep after it all the time.

In the beginning, awareness is always on and off, on and off, and we just persevere. When we remember, we keep going. We forget, we remember, we keep going. We need to be aware of ourselves continuously in all postures, whether standing, sitting, walking, or lying down.

When we lie down, we must exercise the mind more, otherwise we'll fall asleep. The mind doesn't have to support the body in an upright posture, so all the effort must be geared toward being aware. If we become too relaxed, we'll doze off. It certainly is okay to practice lying down—just be careful not to fall asleep! Check in frequently to notice the energy you are using and to make sure you are practicing with right effort.

OBSERVE IN EVERY SITUATION

Formal meditation moments can happen at all times of the day when we are alone and not occupied, such as when we are in the bathroom. After some practice, we can meditate when we are talking and interacting with other people as well. It's very possible to consciously observe and investigate the mind and body in every situation.

We should use all moments of life in this way as much as possible. In fact, all the time if possible. If we are determined

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to do this over and over again, even in the course of one day we will get many, many minutes of formal meditation.

If you're able to set aside time to do a sitting practice each day, you are welcome to do that as well. But don't let go of the rest of the other bits of formal meditation. Every minute that we do this we accumulate the power of mindfulness.

CHECK FREQUENTLY FOR THE WHOLESOME AND UNWHOLESOME ROOTS

Automatic liking and disliking of objects in awareness tends to compel most of the actions in our daily life. It's the habit of our minds. So it's not a surprise that this habit shows up in meditation and tries to run the show there too.

We need to thoroughly understand how much the three unskillful root qualities of mind are torturing and tormenting us. We haven't learned this lesson fully yet. We don't learn our lesson the first time, the second time, the third time.

When the unwholesome roots arise, we usually welcome them into our homes as guests and serve them tea and biscuits. Isn't that true? Our lists of likes and dislikes, for example, form a large part of our personalities that we are attached to. We'll only turn for help from wholesome qualities when we realize the unskillful qualities are running our lives and we can no longer stand them.

The unwholesome root qualities are tough to understand. That's why you must always, always be interested in the mind and continually learn about it. We're not trying to get rid of

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unskillful qualities but instead working to notice them and to learn about them. We want to know the true nature of both the skillful and unskillful qualities of mind.

Meditation is the recognition of gross and subtle forms of all wholesome and unwholesome qualities of mind, and all of their relatives that are present in the mind while it is observing objects.

Check the mind frequently and notice if the skillful or unskillful qualities are leading your practice, and their effect on the mind.

BUILD MOMENTUM

As we persevere, momentum builds, and eventually we notice awareness taking on a life of its own. It gets to the point that awareness isn't just kicking in once in a while for short periods but starts to become continuous.

When awareness has this momentum you can really feel that it's not "you" who is practicing anymore, but rather that meditation is just happening. At this point the understanding of "not-self" becomes very strong. We'll look at the understanding of "not-self" more closely in a moment; it is a liberating insight into reality. This is why continuity of awareness, or at least the intention to keep it that way, is so important.

Remember, it's not about exerting yourself. It's about being steady, so keep going steadily. The Buddha said the energy of right effort is "ardent and resolute." Try to bring forth these

qualities while remaining completely relaxed, steady, and calm. That's right effort.

PRINCIPLE #2 | RIGHT VIEW

the mind is nature, not "me"

Right view is the understanding that the mind is nature, not an "I" or "me."

The mind is not a self. It is not personal; it's not me, not mine. No one is there. This is right view, and we practice to discover this nature.

Right view needs to be present in the mind even before awareness, because if your awareness lacks right view, you will become entangled in craving, aversion, and confusion.

When we look clearly at "what is" by practicing awareness with right view, wisdom begins to arise. This begins to give us a clear picture of the way things are, which is the nature of reality toward which the Buddha pointed. This is how to develop right view.

Our conditioned and habitual view of our world is that the process of mind and matter is "me." I'm looking at "me." I know "me." But we can't meditate to develop wisdom using this point of view.

If we think of the body or the mind as "me," then craving, aversion, and confusion will arise. If we think we are having a good experience, we will start attaching to it or try to create more of it; that's craving. If we think we are having a bad

experience, we will start denying it, avoiding it, or pushing it away; that's aversion. If the mind is spaced out and missing everything or busy rationalizing and defending our craving and aversion, that's confusion.

Looking at the mind doesn't always bring good news! When we look at our minds, mostly we see a lot of negative stuff running around. If we think it is "my" mind, we start feeling depressed. On the other hand, if we think we have good qualities of mind, we start feeling proud.

We need to remind ourselves frequently that both healthy and unhealthy states of mind, and both clear and confusing mental processes, are all nature. In this way we can learn how to observe them instead of getting entangled in them. You want to remind yourself that the sense of "me" actually is a process of mind and matter coming together. We want to understand this process, and that's why we are observing it.

When we practice awareness with right view, we come into intimate contact with life. We begin to understand what it is really like to live life as a human being. Understanding right view cannot be achieved by the ego, the sense of "me." Instead, with a calm and clear mind, we simply watch every experience just as it is. Then the understanding of right view—the not-self nature of experience—will unfold.

WHAT KNOWS VS. WHAT IS KNOWN

When we are practicing there are always two things involved: objects that are known and the mind that is knowing these ob-

jects. Together these two—what is known and what knows—form a unity of experience that arises moment after moment. This is important to remember.

The mind is that which knows. We call things that are known “objects.”

Objects include any of the six sense perceptions: sights, sounds, tastes, touch, smells, and the sixth perception, the mind, which consists of feelings and thought, usually in the form of words or images.

Objects appear spontaneously. When we know an object, we don't have to change it or improve it, nor could we do so anyway. An object doesn't have to be anything other than what it is. It is just what it is, and it can't be altered or changed.

But what we can do in the present moment is work with the mind that knows. We can make sure the mind has right view and that it is working in the right way. We can bring these qualities of mind to bear in the present moment by being aware.

The body doesn't know, only the mind knows. This is an initial insight realized through meditation, and as practice continues, this understanding deepens. We experience the body primarily through physical sensations, and this experience of sensations is known only by the mind. It is the same awareness that knows all the perceptions of the senses, including thoughts and emotions.

The work of meditation is thus the work of the mind that knows all objects of awareness. Meditation is the work of the mind.