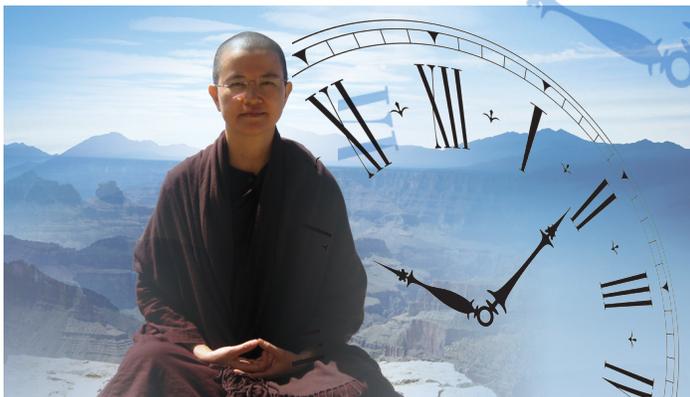


When the six sense bases come in contact with the six sense objects, an untrained person's mind chases its personal likes and rejects its personal dislikes. Every such reaction makes the mind and body agitated and creates new karma. So, how does one break this habitually conditioned chain? By practicing insight, and applying mindfulness and wisdom.

Mindfulness comes face-to-face with each object and does not forget the object of focus. It stays centered, does not react, and is free from judgment, prejudice, bias, and preference. Mindfulness recognizes and accepts – it recognizes what is arising, present, or ceasing in the body and mind at each moment, and accepts it calmly without reaction. For example, when anger is present, know that it is present. When the anger passes, know that it has gone. Mindfulness is like the brake system in a car. It protects the mind from accidentally becoming reflexive, which can create karma that hurts oneself and others.

Wisdom removes the darkness of ignorance that conceals the three common characteristics: impermanence, suffering, and the impersonal nature of the body and mind. The body and the mind are subject to clinging, which causes suffering. Once this truth is thoroughly known, one will get disenchanted and free oneself from clinging, thereby freeing oneself from suffering as well.

- Constantly being mindful and watchful allows wisdom to see the transient nature of mind and body. By experiencing the constant arising and passing away of mind and body, one feels the suffering of being oppressed by incessant change. Whatever is subject to change and suffering cannot be regarded as a permanent self.
- To know the suffering of mind and body, observe the mind and body. It is MOST IMPORTANT to watch the mind's reaction toward bodily sensations and mental emotions that manifest as pleasant or unpleasant feelings.



The Process of Observing

Whether observing the body, feelings, mind, or a mental object, use the following process:

R RECOGNIZE IT. Recognize what arises (anger, greed, joy, bodily pain, stiffness, heat, tension, remorse, sleepiness, depression, fear, or happiness) as it is – a mere physical and mental phenomenon.

A ACCEPT IT. Accept what is, just as it is. Do not try to resist it, which activates the underlying tendency of anger. Do not cling to it, which activates the underlying tendency of greed. Do not add stories to it, which activates fantasies and restlessness.

D DIS-IDENTIFY FROM IT. Do not identify any phenomenon as I, mine, or myself. Simply know it as a physical or mental state performing a function. See it as if you are a third party. Attend to it as alien and empty of self.

I INVESTIGATE IT. Investigate the causes of phenomena. For example, investigate why suffering arises. Through investigation, one understands that suffering is just the effect of causes and is not a permanent self.

C CONTEMPLATE IMPERMANENCE (Anicca). Mentally note impermanence many times. Why? 1) To undo and correct our distorted perception of permanence that block us from seeing things as they really are, 2) to tune the mind in with reality, 3) to prevent the arising of craving, and 4) to train the subconscious to let go, as the mind cannot cling to changing phenomena.

If contemplation of impermanence is not given attention, phenomena will remain concealed by the compactness of continuity that gives rise to the distorted perception of permanence. When one sees impermanence, the unsatisfactory and impersonal nature of phenomena also will become clear.

L LET IT GO. Do not cling to anything whatsoever, so that consciousness is not dependent on it. Let the phenomena come and go, as if watching passing clouds in the sky.

Once you are familiar with this moment-to-moment process, attend to the Five Aggregates in different ways: as impermanent, as unsatisfactory, a disease, a cancer, an arrow, painful, an affliction, alien, a dissolution, an emptiness, and not a self. In this way, you can become liberated from clinging.

The Goal of Dhamma Is Letting Go