

Third Foundation Practice Guides

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Pick a day to watch for one of the following mindstates until you've covered the list below. You don't need to do anything about the state of mind except avoid clinging to it, just recognize that it's one of these four and watch as it passes away when you don't cling. Stay alert for other mindstates in that category that arise throughout the day. Also notice when no version of that mindstate is present in the mind.

1) Desire

This includes a wide range of mental activity, from a whim to an irresistible craving. Some versions of "wanting" are mixed with other mental activity, like beliefs, opinions, aspirations, etc. Just note that it's a version of wanting.

2) Aversion

This also includes many states of mind, such as dislike, jealousy, resentment, anger, fear, worry and hatred, to name a few. Any feelings or thoughts of not liking or wanting something is a form of aversion.

3) Delusion

Delusion is hard to notice because it's a lie we have adopted for some reason. Sometimes it manifests as a "favorite story" we tell ourselves. Our assumptions, opinions, attitudes, beliefs, etc. may have an element of delusion if we haven't re-examined them for a while. Often delusions are most noticeable once we get some distance from them, and recognize that the mind is *not* deluded.

4) Restlessness or Sloth and torpor

a) It's usually apparent when the mind is restless, jumping from thought to thought, keeping us from focusing on any one thing. As with all the other mind states, the sutta just asks you to *notice* when the mind is restless and when it isn't.

b) Sloth and torpor make the mind dull. It often happens when we're tired. While restlessness can be caused by excess energy, sloth and torpor reflect low energy. With sloth, we feel disinterested in being active and with torpor the mind feels foggy or drowsy. We can notice the presence of this category of mindstates when we have trouble getting things done, and their absence by a greater ease in our undertakings.