

Wise Effort Weekly Practice Guides

by Rebecca Dixon

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Week 1 – Ending Mind States that Cause Dukkha

- 1) During your daily meditation, practice turning your attention away from unhelpful thinking. Alternate techniques for doing this. One day, when you see your thoughts contain aversion or desire, turn your attention to metta or to renunciation: letting go. Another day, focus on the physical sensations caused by the greed or aversion and don't return to the thoughts. The next day, try stopping unwholesome thoughts by turning your attention to some joy that you or other beings have experienced. Next, concentrate harder on the breath. Then try any [other methods](#) you've learned.
- 2) As you go about your day, use the same technique as you practiced in your last meditation to try to stop thoughts that cause you dukkha.
- 3) Whenever you succeed at stopping an unskillful thought, notice how being rid of it feels different than it felt when you were thinking that thought.
- 4) Toward the end of the week, notice if these practices have had an overall effect on your ability to think clearly and evaluate things wisely, or on your peace of mind.

Week 2 – Avoiding Troublesome States of Mind

- 1) Identify thoughts, attitudes, intentions, etc., that you commonly experience and would be better off without. What situations usually give rise to (trigger) these mind states?
- 2) Form plans on how to avoid those triggers, or ways to deal with them if they occur.
- 3) Either avoid those triggering situations or try do deal with them according to your plan.
- 4) Note in your journal what the results are by the end of the week.
- 5) Continue trying various ways to abandon (or end) harmful mind states.

Week 3 – Arousing and Maintaining Wholesome Mindstates

- 1) Spend some time each day this week cultivating metta with phrases of your choice or other methods that work for you. Also cultivate generosity, equanimity, joy, patience, or other helpful states. What values, priorities and intentions support those skillful mind states and allow them to continue?
- 2) Notice what events or other mental activity undermine skillful states of mind that have been established.
- 3) Before entering situations likely to challenge a wholesome mind state, evoke and sustain that state of mind. Experiment with keeping that state going during the situation, perhaps applying the Seven Factors of Awakening. Afterward, reflect on the effort you made and what can be learned from it.
- 4) Continue trying to avoid harmful mind states or the conditions that trigger them, and exploring various ways to end them.
- 5) Note in your journal what practices have been helpful in watering the flowers and not the weeds, and discuss them with a friend.

Examples of Mind States

Containing/causing dukkha

Wholesome/skillful

Aversion
Anger
Annoyance
Anxiety
Blame
Craving
Desire
Despair
Discouraged
Dissatisfaction
Embarrassment
Envy
Fear
Hate
Hostility
Hurt
Indignation
Impatience
Jealousy
Loss
Lust
Panic
Pride
Regret
Rejection
Resentment
Sadness
Self-pity
Self-righteousness
Shame

Acceptance
Amusement
Anticipation
Appreciation
Bliss
Calm
Caring
Cheerfulness
Compassion
Contentment
Courage
Creativity
Curiosity
Delight
Determination
Empathy
Encouragement
Energy
Enthusiasm
Equanimity
Excitement
Forgiveness
Friendliness
Generosity
Gladness
Gratitude
Happiness
Interest
Joy
Kindness
Love
Passion
Patience
Peace
Renunciation
Serenity