

# Wise Livelihood Weekly Practice Guides

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Alameda Sangha, March 3, 2019

Consider the first four parts of the Path in practicing with the following exercises. For the first week, think about ways you obtain the means to live, whether it's through employment or other sources of income, such as investments or other payments. There may be ways you are supported that aren't monetary, such as help from friends or organizations. Note in your journal any insights you have during the following explorations.

## **Week 1 – Our Means of Support**

- 1) What are your feelings and attitudes toward whatever work you do, or other means of support you have? What are your feelings and attitudes toward what your work produces?
- 2) Are you diligent in fulfilling whatever duties your livelihood involves for you? Do you engage willingly and carefully with your work? This may involve filling out paperwork, etc.
- 3) How do you interact with people at your job, or others involved in your means of support? Do you treat them with due respect and consideration?
- 4) If you are engaged in work that harms you or other beings, what would it take to find work that doesn't?

## **Week 2 – How We Spend**

- 1) Look at the money you have to support yourself and how you spend it. Do you spend more than you have, or live within your means?
- 2) How do you feel about the things you spend money on? Do you buy things you don't need? Do you waste money in other ways?
- 3) How do you interact with people as you shop?
- 4) Do you buy things that can be harmful, or helpful to you and others?

## **Week 3 – How We Relate to What We Have**

- 1) Spend this week looking at your feelings about the things you possess. Do you take care of your things? Do you own stuff that isn't useful, that you don't want to have? What impact does your trash have on the economy and the Earth?
- 2) What is your attitude as you prepare and eat your food, choose and wear your clothes, and use items that help you work, connect with others or be entertained?
- 3) Do you take any medications as directed with an awareness that you are taking care of your own well-being? Are you careful how you dispose of unused medicines?
- 4) Consider any other "things" you have and your relationship to them.

Weeks 4 & 5 – over

#### **Week 4 – How Our Non-monetary Activities Affect Others**

- 1) Think about any ways you help others without being paid, such as keeping house for your family, or helping them or friends in other ways, or volunteering. How do you feel about spending time this way? Do you focus on what it costs you, in time or other ways?
- 2) Is there satisfaction in trying to lessen the suffering of others?
- 3) Have any of your other activities possibly affected others, even if they didn't involve your getting or spending money?
- 4) Did those activities benefit, or harm any living beings or the planet's ecology? Does considering this change your attitude toward these activities?

#### **Week 5 – Making Changes**

- 1) Look back over what you have learned in the past four weeks. What, if anything, do you want to change?
- 2) As you contemplate possible alternatives, what thoughts and feelings come up?
- 3) Do those thoughts and feelings help you decide what to do, or just lead to feeling stuck?
- 4) If those thoughts and feelings just lead to dukkha, can you stop or divert them, by focusing your attention on the physical feelings they cause, or by practicing metta?