**AWAKENING PRACTICES AT HOME**

Awakening is a process, through which the mind clearly comprehends the distress and confusion that arises due to craving and clinging--wanting pleasurable mind states, wanting to be rid of unpleasant mind states, and clinging to provisional, transient identifications in the mind that seem to define a permanent self—and instead realizing they are, in fact, just constructions of imagination. The underpinning of awakening is the development of ongoing self-awareness, typically best accomplished through intensive meditation retreat practice, accompanied by a commitment to daily meditation when not on retreat.

A key principle in Buddhism is *anatta* (ah-nah-tah), *the absence of an enduring and autonomous self*. As practice matures this will become more experientially understood through careful investigation of anicca, the ever-changing nature of self-state organizational processes. *If there is no enduring self, we are not compelled to re-enact dysfunctional beliefs and behaviors. Since the self is constantly re-created, commit to this prospect: Rather than believing there is a self who is kind, what if the principle of kindness organizes a self?* *Rather than a self who is mindful, cultivating mindfulness and the other Awakening Factors creates a wholesome self.*  Easier said than done, of course--however, diligent, mindful, and clear knowledge of the process of creating and sustaining wholesome self-state organizations is worth the time and effort when dukkha is overcome! What I’m attempting to do here is to point out how the investigative skills of introspection and impulse regulation developed during retreat experiences can be applied at home. The benevolence of Buddhist practices supports how to live successfully on a daily basis—what I call “Right Lifestyle”. It is hoped that the following will help in this way:

**Mindfulness:**

* Using body awareness (breath/body sensations).
* Vitakka & vicara (aiming & sustaining).
* Meditating daily at least 45 minutes to cultivate samadhi/passadhi.
* Four Clear Comprehensions (Sati Sampajanna):

1. Spiritually worthy goal
2. Spiritually suitable means to reach goal
3. Spiritual domain (monitoring body, feelings, mind, mental objects)
4. Spiritual integrity (impermanent, suffering, impersonal)

**Cultivate the Seven Awakening Factors:** *Mindfulness, Investigation of Mental Phenomena, Persistent Right Effort, Joyful Engaged Interest, Tranquility, Concentration* and *Equanimity.*

**Investigate** *how* self-states arise, *not the content* of the arising self-state.

**Right Effort** (Support arising of wholesome, non-arising of unwholesome).

**Compassionate Awareness:** “I’m witnessing suffering”.

**Equanimity & Patience**.

**Renunciation & Generosity**.

**Studying & talking** about the Dharma.

**Active involvement** in a spiritual community.

**Environmental Spirituality**.

**Right Speech:**

* Monitoring the selfing story
* Careful listening to others
* Considered, respectful, compassionate comments
* Situational appropriateness
* Regular gratitude inventory

**Right Action:**

* Purposeful, helpful action
* Harmonious to others’ needs
* Considerate use of resources & environment
* Avoiding impulsive, reactive behavior
* Routine acts of generosity
* Avoiding addictive substances & behaviors

**Right Lifestyle:**

* Avoiding over-stimulation
* Adequate rest & exercise
* Healthy food in moderation
* Not causing unnecessary environmental harm
* Not causing unnecessary cultural harm
* Time & effort dedicated to spiritual growth
* Proactive health maintenance
* Prudent financial management
* Voluntary simplicity

**Right Relationship:**

* Adequate social contact & support
* Interpersonal respect
* Active support for a wholesome community
* Balance between enmeshment and autonomy
* Making amends when appropriate
* Offering compassion & generosity
* Willingness to be influenced by others

**These are application of Buddhist “skillful means” which support life experience:**

**These are aspects of life experience that are relevant to spiritual development:**

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