

## Mindfulness Practice 1: The Changing Nature of Things

*Just as we see in nature, the sun rises and sets, the seasons come and go, beautiful flowers grow and then become withered and brown, and people and other living beings are born, live for some time, and die, so the changing nature of things and the passing away of things is simply part of life, part of nature, a natural truth or reality.*

Throughout the day practice mindfulness of how the things around you—people, animals, nature, and man-made things—come into existence, change moment by moment, and eventually go out of existence.

Examine how cultivating this awareness affects your relationship with them.

## Mindfulness Practice 2: I am Definitely Going to Die

*It's very important that we accept and be aware of death, that we maintain some kind of awareness or mindfulness that our life is not going to last forever, that it's going to come to an end at some point, that we are definitely going to die.*

Throughout the day practice mindfulness of the inevitability of death, thinking, "I am definitely going to die. I could die very soon. I could die even today."

Examine how cultivating this awareness affects your priorities.

## Mindfulness Practice 3: Death Could Happen to Me at Any Time

*There's no certainty at all that we have a long way to go, a long time to live, before death happens. The reality is that we don't know when death is going to happen; it's completely uncertain and really it could happen anytime.*

Throughout the day as you go about your normal activities, such as eating, dressing, bathing, washing dishes, going to work, and so forth, practice mindfulness of how death can happen at any time, thinking, "I could die now before I finish (*insert whatever activity you are doing*)."

Examine how cultivating this awareness affects what you do and how much time you spend doing it.

## Mindfulness Practice 4: There are Many Causes of My Death

*It doesn't take something strange or extraordinary or tragic for death to happen. So death is something that can happen at any time and in any situation and in any circumstance.*

Throughout the day—in your home, while going places, at work, and so forth—practice mindfulness of the many things that could happen to cause your death. Think about this, without getting worried or afraid, in order to cultivate a realistic understanding that death could happen at any time, in any situation, and in any circumstance.

## Mindfulness Practice 5: What Won't Help Me When I'm Dying

*The help we can receive at the time of death from our family and our friends, our loved ones, from our possessions and enjoyments, and from our own body is very much limited, and as we go through the process of death and dying we will find ourselves alone, moving to the next life.*

Throughout the day practice mindfulness looking at how the things you usually consider to be important for your happiness—close relationships, money, possessions, your body, and so forth—will not be of any help to you when you are dying.

Examine how cultivating this awareness affects your priorities in life.

## Mindfulness Practice 6: How I Want to Live My Life

*Another very important powerful intention that we can generate and repeat to ourselves again and again is, for example, “I really want to free my mind from negative thoughts and emotions and make my mind more and more familiar with positive thoughts and emotions. I want to make my life as beneficial to others as possible.” It’s good to do this in the morning when we start our day—to remind ourselves of how we want to be, how we want to live, how we want to relate to others.*

Cultivate this thought in the morning when you first wake up and then throughout the day practice mindfulness of it by bringing it to mind from time to time, especially when you notice that negative thoughts or emotions are arising in your mind.

## Mindfulness Practice 7: Transforming Problems

*When we're stuck in a traffic jam, that experience could be a problem if we let ourselves become impatient, thinking about all of the things we'd rather be doing, blaming other people for the situation, and so forth. On the other hand, if we can recognize that such thoughts and attitudes, ways of reacting, are really quite useless and just make things worse, we can use the time to generate positive thoughts in our mind or do something like reciting mantras or prayers, or listen to a spiritual teaching. If we do these things, then the situation becomes bearable and maybe even enjoyable, and it also becomes spiritual practice, helping us progress along the path to enlightenment.*

Whenever you find yourself in a potentially unpleasant situation, practice mindfulness of how reacting with negative thoughts and emotions will only worsen the situation and then transform it into something positive and/or useful to yourself by, for example, practicing tonglen.

## Mindfulness Practice 8: Taking on Others' Suffering

*If we would like to do this practice [of tonglen] at the time of death, then it's good to start now making ourselves familiar with this practice. We can start by doing it with regard to smaller problems, the minor problems that we experience in life, and then gradually work on doing it with bigger and bigger problems. Then it will become kind of easy and natural to be able to do the practice with regard to what are probably the most difficult experiences of our life, the experiences that we have as we are approaching death.*

Whenever you encounter people who you know are unhappy or even people who just look unhappy (for example, people standing in a line, stuck in traffic, traveling on public transport, in the lunchroom at work, and so forth), practice being mindful of their suffering and then briefly imagine taking their suffering upon your self-cherishing and giving them whatever it is they need to be happy.



## Mindfulness Practice 9: Setting Aside My Own Needs and Wishes

*One of the most important skills in helping a dying person is to try to understand what their needs are and to do what we can to take care of these needs. The best way to do this is, when we are with a dying person, to put aside our own needs, wishes, emotional problems, and just make ourselves available, just make up our mind to simply be there for them, ready to do whatever has to be done, whatever will help them to be more comfortable, happy, and at peace.*

In order to prepare yourself to help someone who is dying, whenever you encounter someone with problems, practice mindfully setting aside your own needs, wishes, and emotional problems, and mindfully make yourself available to the other person and ready to do whatever will help them feel more comfortable, happy, and at peace.

## Mindfulness Practice 10: Praying for Help in Difficult Situations

*It's also very helpful if we have faith or devotion to some objects of devotion, such as the Buddha or other buddha figures, a spiritual teacher, or teachers that we have met and feel trust in, or whoever you feel confident in, enlightened beings, holy beings, saints, that have positive qualities such as wisdom and compassion and love, calling on them, making a mental connection to them, praying to them for help and guidance can be very helpful when you find yourself in a difficult situation and maybe do not know what to do or how to handle it. Making a prayer and making that mental or spiritual connection with a being that you feel trust in can give you the strength and even the wisdom that you need to be able to handle this difficult situation.*

Whenever you experience some difficulty in your life, even something small, practice being mindful of your objects of faith and devotion by bringing them to mind and praying to them for help and guidance. By practicing this now, you will easily remember these objects of devotion when you are dying.