

# Transforming Relationships through Mindfulness

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**Transformation Work**

# Definitions

## Transform

= change (usually denotes purposeful, conscious and positive outcomes)

## Relationships

= how one relates to life (nature), self, others  
- perspective, attitudes, beliefs, roles determine our experience

## Mindfulness

= constant, non-judgmental self-awareness  
- a powerful **tool** for transformation  
- Success depends on INTENTION, ATTENTION, ATTITUDE (compassion, child-like curiosity)



# Mindfulness

## Meditation

- Formal practice
- Intense, continuous
- Goal: attain concentration, tranquility of mind

## Daily Practice

- Informal practice
- Need not be continuous
- Goal: look inward, understand the mind

**Formal meditation practice and daily mindfulness practice enhance and support each other**



# Daily Mindfulness Practice

## 1. Change the way we EXPERIENCE life


- Change the way we think/perceive (paradigm shift)
- “Everything happens *to* me” versus “Everything happens *through* me”



## 2. Cultivate skillful MENTAL HABITS

- Look within, in an impersonal way
- Know yourself through understanding your thoughts, feelings, motivations, habits, states



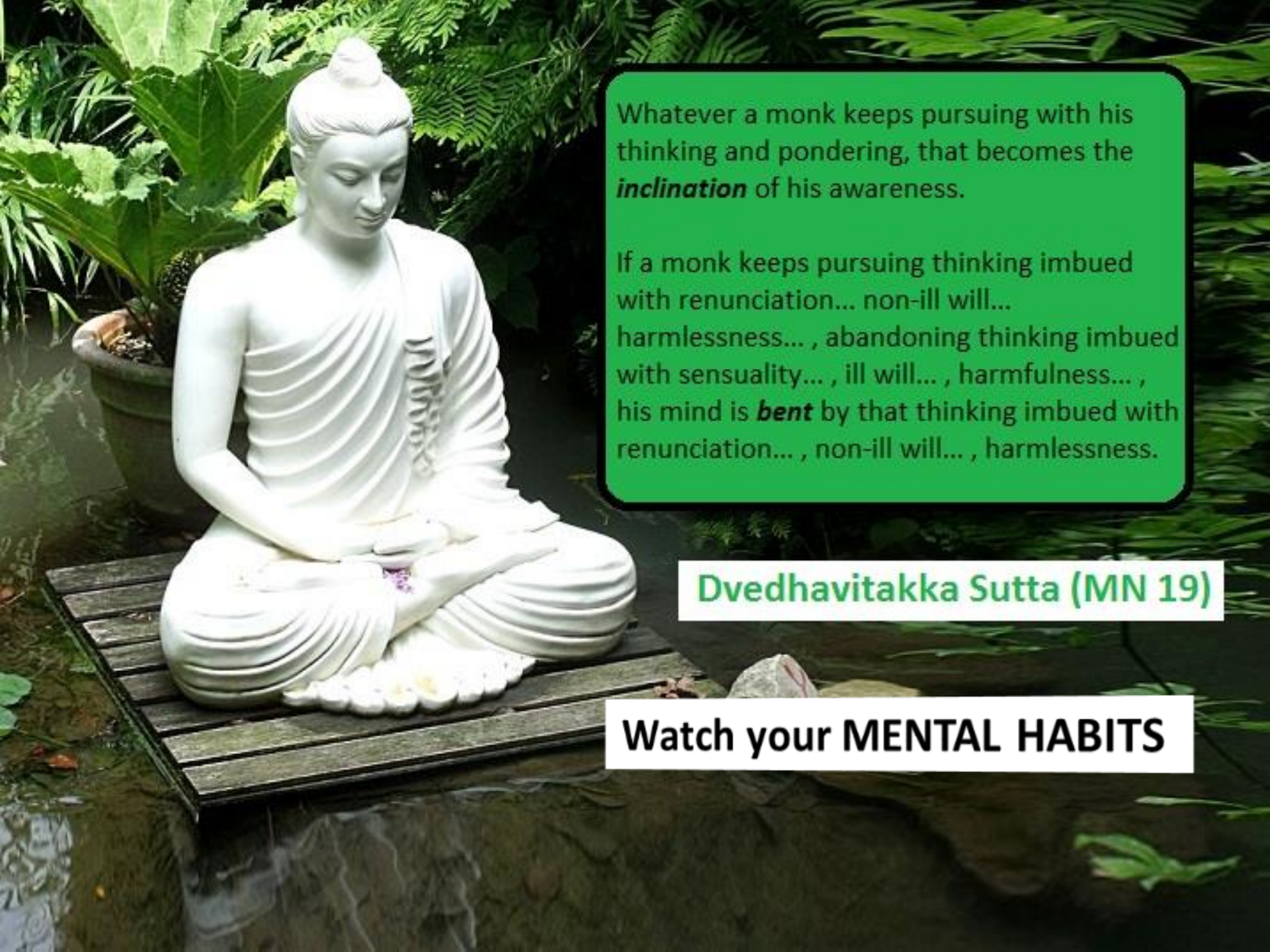


**Any mind with passion,  
aversion or delusion;  
That is the cause of  
unskillful habits.**

**Any mind without passion,  
aversion or delusion;  
That is the cause of  
skillful habits.**

**Watch your MOTIVATIONS**

**- Samanamundika Sutta (MN 78)**

A white Buddha statue is seated in a meditative posture on a wooden platform. The statue is positioned on the left side of the frame, with its hands resting in its lap. The background is filled with lush green foliage, including ferns and other plants. The statue is set against a backdrop of a pond, with some rocks visible in the water. The overall scene is peaceful and serene.

Whatever a monk keeps pursuing with his thinking and pondering, that becomes the *inclination* of his awareness.

If a monk keeps pursuing thinking imbued with renunciation... non-ill will... harmless... , abandoning thinking imbued with sensuality... , ill will... , harmfulness... , his mind is *bent* by that thinking imbued with renunciation... , non-ill will... , harmless.

Dvedhavitakka Sutta (MN 19)

Watch your MENTAL HABITS



**‘Venerable sir, what kind of bodily... , verbal... , mental behaviour... has unpleasant results?’**

**‘Great king, bodily... , verbal... , mental behaviour... that is hurtful to oneself, hurtful to others and hurtful to both, and on account of which unwholesome state increases and wholesome state decreases.’**

**‘Venerable sir, what kind of bodily... , verbal... , mental behaviour... has pleasant results?’**

**‘Great king, bodily... , verbal... , mental behaviour... that is not hurtful to oneself, not hurtful to others and not hurtful to both, and on account of which wholesome state increases and unwholesome state decreases.’**

**Watch your MENTAL STATES**

When in following after **happiness** I have perceived that bad qualities (*akusala*) developed and good qualities (*kusala*) were diminished, then that kind of happiness was to be avoided.

And when, following after happiness, I have perceived that bad qualities were diminished and good qualities developed, then such happiness was to be followed.

Now of such happiness as is accompanied by pre-occupation and travail of mind, and of such as is not so accompanied, the latter is the more excellent.

Sakkapanha Sutta (DN 21)

The **principle of mental cultivation** is to choose those mental practices that lead to the **increase in wholesome qualities** (*kusala*) and the reduction of unwholesome qualities (*akusala*)





## **LOVE VERSUS FEAR**

**Once there was an old man who was dying. At his death bed, he summoned his son to give him a precious advice.**

**"Son," said the old man, "in my heart, there are two tigers that constantly fight each other. One is called LOVE, and the other is called FEAR."**

**The son asked, "Which one will win?"**

**And the old man replied, "The one I feed."**

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# Key Messages

1. Look Within
2. Do not personalise (judge)
3. Focus on the wholesome

**Right Effort**

**Right Orientation**

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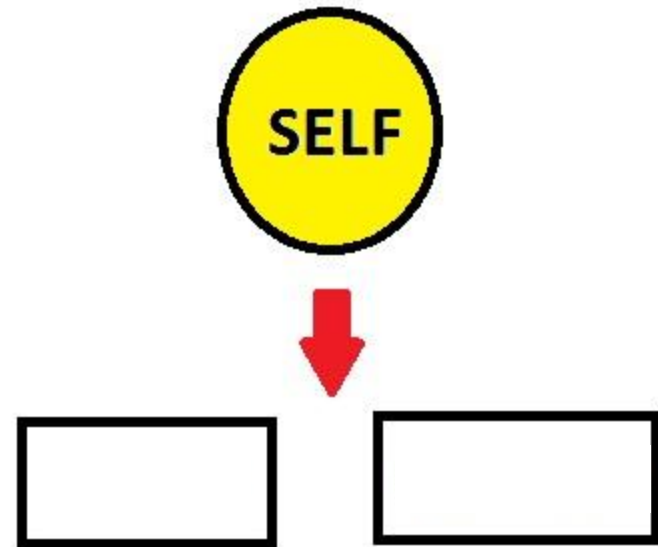
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# Transforming Relationships

Do you have a  
**healthy mature self**  
or an **unhealthy**  
**immature self?**

When your **needs**  
are met, you are  
happy (contented)



**Basic Human Needs**

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# There is a GURU in every relationship



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# Mental Habits

Anger

**Assumptions**

Beliefs

**Belittling**

Criticism

**Denial**

Dramatization

**Envy**

Fear

**Generalization**

Greed

**Hatred**

Ill-will

**Identification**

Judgment

**Suspicion**

Worries


**Proliferation**

Mental habits are there because they have been useful to us in the past.

Mental habits are neither good nor bad.

The question is whether they are **APPROPRIATE** and **SKILLFUL** in achieving our goals.





**Judging**  
**Belittling, Criticising**  
**Unresolved emotions**  
**The issue of trust**

# Communication in Relationships

- Can easily make or break a relationship
- **Mindfulness** is a powerful tool to transform a relationship

Make the words you speak today,  
Tender, Warm, and Sweet.  
For tomorrow they may  
well be, the words you  
have to Eat!



# Triple Filter Test

1. Is it TRUE?
2. Is it GOOD? Beneficial? Useful?
3. Is it APPROPRIATE?





# Attentive Listening

1. Clear your thoughts
2. Create a SAFE space
3. Eye to Eye contact
4. Empathy – Put yourself in other person's shoes
5. Don't assume – verify facts



# How to Self-Sabotage a Relationship

1. Focusing on what's wrong instead of what's right
2. You'd rather be right than be loving – leads to resentment, stonewalling, arguing, denials
3. Take things personally
4. Did not create a safe space to speak openly
5. You expect your partner to think like you or to read your mind



# Two Traits / Attitudes

- **Contempt (-ve)**
  - criticism, focusing on the negative; vicious cycle
  - 4 horsemen of apocalypse: contempt, criticism, excessively defensive, stonewalling
- **Kindness / Generosity (+ve)**
  - in thoughts, words, actions; virtuous cycle
  - 4 good traits: humour, gratitude, forgiving, emotional disclosure



# In a Conflict...

## DOs

- Focus on the PROBLEM
- Seek SOLUTION
- Create a SAFE space
- Be HONEST and transparent
- Get all the FACTS
- Let the person SAVE FACE
- Give LOVE



# Forgiveness is essential for healing



The weak can  
never forgive.  
Forgiveness is  
the attribute of  
the strong.

-Mahatma Gandhi

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**No one saves us  
but ourselves. No  
one can and no one  
may. We ourselves  
must walk the path.**

**Buddha**

