

Practice Part 2: Cultivating Wholesome Volition

The energies of volition, intention, aspiration, and desire can be consciously channeled in many wholesome and beneficial ways in our lives—ways that are directed inwardly and are an expression of our deeply held values. Begin simply by asking yourself:

- How do I want to be in life?
- How do I want to show up?
- What kind of person do I want to be? Kind, compassionate, generous, patient, understanding?
- How do I want my mind to be? Awake, mindful, energetic, calm?
- What are the big aspirations for my life that I can begin to practice right now? To cause no harm? To awaken? To be wise and compassionate? To be of benefit to others? To care for others and the planet?

Setting Intentions Daily: There are many positive and laudable goals in life, and yet the setting of aspirations and intentions is a different process. A goal is something that one desires to achieve sometime in the future and may largely depend on the coming together of external circumstances which we may have little or no control over. We do not need to wait for the unforeseeable future to experience the happiness and nurturing that setting healthy and wholesome intentions can bring. Our intentions can be expressed as ways of being that we are able to manifest right in the present moment. They can begin to nurture our happiness right now. Each morning, take some time to ask yourself:

- What is my intention for today?
- What qualities and attitudes do I want to bring forth in my mind, in my speech and through my actions today?

In today's world of individualism, materialism and over-achievement these teachings of the Buddha on the Third Nutriment of Volition have profound implications for our lives. Discernment of whether we are consuming wholesome or unwholesome volition is key to cultivating happiness and nourishing our well-being.