

**Ten Perfections of the Heart – A Year of Practice – Month 2 (2/17/25) Home Practices: Virtue- Non Harming**  
**Next class: Friday, 3/14/25 6:00 – 8:30pm ET**

[Click here](#) for a PDF version of the home practices

- 1) **Sit every day.** Try sitting for a minimum of 15-30 minutes per day (more if able). Please practice your meditation in silence. If you use an app- try silence several times a week.
- 2) **Ajahn Sucitto's book, Pāramī : Ways to Cross Life's Floods,** will be our shared text. **Please read,** "Crossing the Floods" starting on **page 40-45 & 50-53.** [Link here.](#)
- 3) **Review your year long Intention, Vow, Dedication**
- 4) **The Paramis- Read this list every day: Generosity, Virtue or morality, Renunciation or letting go, Discernment or wisdom, Energy, Patience, Truthfulness, Resolve, Loving-Kindness, Equanimity and Gratitude.**
  - **Ask yourself each day,** "What is going to take me you out of stress, discontent right now?" Listen for the answer
  - **Initially one brings the topic to mind-**this is helpful and useful-it means that the parami gets built-in as a frame of reference. ***Do your best to build in Virtue- non-harming***
  - **The gathering stage** is when you apply the parami in the face of its opposition. (Something in you doesn't want to bother, other people don't see the point, not convenient to do so) ***Do your best to apply Virtue- non-harming in the face of opposition.***
- 5) **Gratitude Parami Practice:** Text or email your buddies 3 things you are grateful for each day.
- 6) **Integrity the Second Parami: Precepts And Reflections & Practices**  
**Sila Is the Pali word for integrity, ethical conduct, non-harming. Non-harming is a distinguishing characteristic of the Dharma.** We are invited to do non-harm through wise speech, wise action, and wise livelihood. *We resolve to act in wholesome, skillful ways, consciously choosing to refrain from behaviors that cause fear, confusion, suffering. Instead acting in ways that promote goodness in general.* On wise livelihood, Buddha said: "These five trades should not be taken up: trading in weapons, living beings, meat, intoxicants, poisons." It also includes where we occupy our minds. The guidelines, precepts include wise action & wise speech. Take the precepts weekly or daily. The precepts are:

**Knowing the interwoven nature of our lives:**

- I undertake the commitment to refrain from harming living beings and to protect the well-being of all **AND** to practice compassionate actions.
- I undertake the commitment to refrain from taking that which is not freely given **AND** to practice generosity.
- I undertake the commitment to refrain from sexual misconduct **AND** to respect all beings.
- I undertake the commitment to refrain from false and harmful speech **AND** to be truthful, honest, kind and skillful in my speech.
- I undertake the commitment to refrain from taking substances that lead to heedlessness **AND** to treasure the clarity of my own body and mind.

**In early Buddhist teachings these commitments are referred to as the 5 gifts we offer to ourselves. They are the gifts each of us can offer to the world. \*\*\* (Larry Yang info at end)**

**Reflections for you and to discuss in Buddy Groups before next class:**

- Our attitudes towards ethics and virtue are often conditioned by how ethics was viewed and practiced in the family, the culture we grew up in. Spend some time considering how you may have been influenced by this conditioning. What are the formative influences that shaped your relationship to ethics? What ethical training and teachings did you receive growing up?
- When in your life do you feel you were most ethical and when do you think you were least ethical? What personal and social conditions existed that encouraged you to be ethical or unethical? What important lessons did you learn from times you were most ethical or most unethical?
- Which ethical virtues are strongest in you? Which are weakest for you? Create a list-To help, here is a list of some ethical virtues: compassion, caring, generosity, truthfulness, honesty, integrity, service, gratitude, unselfishness, justice, and morality.
- Spend time considering the ways you & others benefit when you are ethical.

**Practices for you and to discuss in Buddy Groups before next class:**

- **The first precept**, to refrain from harming living beings and to practice compassionate actions: Spend 5 days with a heightened commitment not to be involved in harming other living beings, including insects and to practice compassionate actions. After 5 days, reflect on how hard or easy it was to adhere to this commitment. How were you affected by living with greater than usual concern for the first precept? How important is the first precept for you? If you ever feel justified in not following the first precept, what justification do you use? What were compassionate actions did you engage in?
- **The second precept**, to refrain from taking what's not given and to practice generosity: Spend 5 days with a heightened commitment to not taking what is

*not given and to practice generosity.* Be careful not to take anything which has not been offered to you in explicit or in clear, implicit terms. What do you learn about yourself when you follow this precept? How can you follow this precept so it helps you be more peaceful? How did you practice generosity?

- ***The third precept, to refrain from causing harm with your sexuality and to respect all beings.:*** Dedicate yourself to 5 days, to not cause any, even minor harm with your sexuality. Follow this precept as it relates to increasing your respect of others and to not taking what is not given. If you are not sexually active, how can you view your relationship to your sexual or non- sexual nature so as not to harm yourself?
- ***The fourth precept, to refrain from false speech and harmful speech and to be truthful, honest, kind and skillful in my speech. Spend 5 days committed to being as impeccable as possible with speaking the truth and using honest, kind and skillful speech.*** Don't talk authoritatively about things you are not sure are true. Avoid exaggerating or pretending things are other than how they are. Don't speak the truth lightly if it is going to hurt someone. What were your biggest challenges in being truthful? How did you benefit from being truthful? Honest? Kind? Skillful in you speech?
- ***The fifth precept, to refrain from taking intoxicants that cloud the mind and cause heedlessness and to treasure the clarity of your own body and mind: If you drink alcohol or take recreational drugs, commit yourself to not consuming either for a period of 5 days and to find ways to treasure the clarity of your own body and mind.:*** What challenges does this avoidance have for you? What does this period of time of not drinking or taking drugs teach you about what motivates your use of drugs or alcohol? What ways did you treasure your mind and body? How does it benefit you and others when you don't consume drugs or alcohol?  
*If you don't normally drink or consume alcohol, follow this precept by avoiding some activity, such as watching television or bingeing or surfing the internet, which you might do to avoid being present with your life.*

**Below are some extra thoughts from Joseph Goldstein that you can use if helpful for you.**

**\*\*Some additional instructions:**

- Consider how you might re-define each precept
- What is your attitude when you are abiding or refraining?
- What attitude arises when you slip up?
- After a skillful or unskillful act, what thoughts or emotions linger?
- What are positive aspects of non-harming with each precept?
- Ask yourself what are you trying to escape from when indulging?
- When resistance arises, what is the attitude in the mind?

**\*\*As you go from the habit of breaking the precepts to the habit of honoring them consider:**

- What ramifications arise from this new habit?
- What benefits are you seeing as you refrain from acts of harm to yourself & others?
- What gratification and joy, or sorrow and remorse, do you notice as you do or don't follow your new intentions?

**\*\*Reflecting at the end of the day**

- Have I done anything that caused harm?
- Have I done anything that was helpful?
- Was there a time where I almost harmed but stopped myself?

**\*\*\*Larry Yang's Integrity:** When there is less or zero external accountability in our larger culture, there emerges an indispensable spiritual imperative to redouble our internal efforts and concentration to have a moral barometer: this is the Integrity of Mindfulness—to be of benefit to our collective humanness, not simply to our personal being.

***Remember "Integrity is doing the right thing, even when no one is watching."***

***Let's broaden the scope of integrity:***

- Integrity is doing the wise and compassionate action when no one agrees with us.
- Integrity is walking our highest path, even if it is painful, arduous & long.
- Integrity is acting on behalf of others when we do not have to because we have some benefit, privilege, power, or entitlement that protects us.
- Integrity is standing actively (& not "bystanding") in solidarity with those whose voices & abilities have less volume or impact than yours.
- Integrity is being kind when everyone & everything around you is not kind.
- Integrity is loving when you do not feel loved yourself.
- Integrity is having ethics in unethical & amoral times—having a moral compass when others around you do not have a clue to what that means and/or disparage the very intentions of ethical behavior.
- Integrity is placing a higher value on the greater good of all, rather than the gain of an individual or selected individual groups.
- Integrity is holding to these principles, even when there are an infinite number of distractions, seductions, & judgments that seek to weaken & obliterate those principles.