

# ***Right Diligence***

Everyone suffers. So if you're having a hard time, there's nothing wrong with you.

Right Diligence can transform your suffering at its roots so that suffering arises less often and with less power. When it does reappear, you'll know how to meet it.

Use this 4-Step Right Diligence Practice to help you transform your suffering into peace and joy.

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## **Step 1: *Guard your Sense Doors***

We prevent suffering by cultivating **environmental and situational awareness**. You recognize the patterns that lead you into a downward spiral and choose a different path before the momentum builds.

- **Protect yourself:** Notice which social media apps, news outlets, or conversations leave you feeling ill at ease. Set boundaries.
  - **Mindful Check-Ins:** Regularly scan your internal state. When you feel early signs of irritability or dis-ease, embrace them with kindness.
  - **Sangha Support:** Spend time with people and practices that support wholesome mental formations.
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## **Step 2: *Let Go***

When a negative mental formation (like anxiety or anger) has already taken hold, use Right Diligence to let it go.

- **The "Not-Me" Technique:** Instead of believing that "I am angry," start realizing that "Anger is present." This 'not-me' practice helps you *let go of* the emotion rather than *identify with* the emotion.
  - **Embrace The Opposite:** If you're gripped by negative judgments, bring to mind something you appreciate. If you feel greed, remember that the object you want is impermanent.
  - **Relax:** It's often easier to change your body than it is to change your mind. Find where the suffering lives in your body. Care for that constriction by smiling to it kindly and consciously relaxing it.
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## **Step 3: *Water Good Seeds***

Fill the space left by the abandoned negative state with its positive counterpart.

- **Water Good Seeds:** Practice the **Four Brahma-viharas** (The Divine Abodes) to calm your negative mental formations:
    1. **Metta (Loving-kindness):** Transforms your hatred
    2. **Karuna (Compassion):** Transforms your judgments
    3. **Mudita (Sympathetic Joy):** Transforms your envy
    4. **Upekkha (Equanimity):** Transforms your anxiety and grasping
  - **Strengthen Your Mindfulness:** Right Diligence keeps your attention on the present moment. Every time your mind wanders back to a negative formation, gently bring it home to the here and now.
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## **Step 4: *Enjoy Your Garden***

When positive mental formations are present, Right Diligence helps you retain them.

- **Practice During the Easy Times:** When things are going well, we sometimes stop practicing. Right Diligence means maintaining your practice, even on the good days.
  - **Cultivate Happiness:** Take a moment to sit with the feelings of peace and joy that remain after a negative state has relaxed. Enjoying your happiness helps you trust your practice.
  - **Right Effort:** Practice diligently, but not fanatically. Balance effort with rest so that you don't turn practice into a futile self-improvement project. The present moment is a wonderful moment.
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## **The Three-R Shortcut**

### **Recognize, Release, Return**

1. **Recognize** the negative formation
2. **Release** your grip on it
3. **Return** to a wholesome focus