

# How to Use This Workbook

**Welcome to your workbook towards liberation!** This booklet contains all the information you will need for the course. Read ahead if you like, or enjoy the material presented comprehensively during each class.

## **Included in this workbook:**

1. Summary sheets
  2. Self-reflection questions
  3. Powerpoint slides
  4. Meditations
1. The **summary sheets** contain a simple overview of the main points and topics discussed during the class.
  2. **Self-reflection questions** are a great way to integrate the teachings into your own life. The Buddha's wisdom may be interesting, but it becomes life-changing if you fill in the sheets!
  3. The **powerpoint slides** can be used during class and for review after.
  4. **There is a selection of meditations** to choose from. Do one a week, and get familiar enough that you don't need to read it any more.

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## Keep Yourself Nice

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## ***Overcoming Ignorance & Mistaken Views***

1. Regarding IGNORANCE, what happens when I am no good at something? How does it make me feel? What do I think my failure says about me? Is this true?

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2. Describe how you could cultivate curiosity and a joy in learning? For example, instead of "Oh no!", "How interesting!"

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3. Am I often disappointed? What assumptions lead to this, what expectations?

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4. Am I surprised when relationships change or don't turn out? What assumptions do I have that lead to this shock or surprise?

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5. What feedback did I get this week from friends or workmates? What makes it difficult to ask? What is stopping me asking?

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6. In regard to DISTORTED VIEWS, what opinions or beliefs do I hold to? What makes me inflexible about them?

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7. What kind of things am I superstitious about? What are these feelings based on?

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8. Do I have a prejudice towards certain types of people? (eg. criminals, police, dole-bludgers, millionaires etc.) How do these views affect me?

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9. What is my view of myself and my identity based upon at the moment?

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10. Describe a new approach you could use when you encounter new or unfamiliar ideas and situations:

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11. What DOUBTS do you have about your own development, about your ability to completely overcome disturbing emotions? What beliefs are these based on?

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12. What limits do you put on your own potential? How far do you cultivate your own qualities? What makes you give up?

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13. What steps can you take to clarify these doubts?

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## Overcoming Pride & Developing Self-esteem

### 1. Please tick how often you experience the 7 types of PRIDE

Superior to the inferior. Looking down on those less fortunate or able.  Often  Sometimes  Hardly

Superior to equals. Puffed up, feeling we are above average, the best, or suffering most.  Often  Sometimes  Hardly

Superior to the superior. Pointing out weaknesses in great people, discounting or ignoring the insight of others.  Often  Sometimes  Hardly

Egocentric. Pride in our identity, identifying with our looks, race, age etc.  Often  Sometimes  Hardly

Pretentiousness. Pride of thinking we have special knowledge or high realisations.  Often  Sometimes  Hardly

False humility. Thinking "here I am, so important, in the presence of a great person". Or "I am the most mixed up person here"  Often  Sometimes  Hardly

Wrong pride. Taking wrong methods to be correct, like shoplifting or cheating on tax.  Often  Sometimes  Hardly

### 2. Which of these qualities do you consciously try to cultivate pride in?

Pride in being human, and having the skills and circumstances to change our life.  Often  Sometimes  Hardly

Pride in our potential to attain buddhahood, in our fundament purity.  Often  Sometimes  Hardly

Pride in our positive actions, determination to speak and act ethically.  Often  Sometimes  Hardly

Pride in thinking we can destroy delusion and conquer our afflictive emotions.  Often  Sometimes  Hardly

### 3. Write a determination about what you can do to overcome negative pride

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4. What skills do you have that you can share with others?

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5. How do you encourage your friends when they are anxious or worried?

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6. When you are facing difficulties, what do you say to encourage yourself?

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7. When you are feeling alone or isolated, what does your loneliness say to you?

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8. How much of this is true? What are you not seeing about your own qualities, nature, abilities? What are you assuming about other people or society?

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9. Describe a time where you were able to overcome a negative mind-state. What was the disturbing emotion? What did you say to yourself?

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10. Describe a time where you were able to refrain from retaliating with your speech or actions. What was the situation? What did you do or say to yourself?

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## Overcoming Desirous Attachment

1. Throughout the following week, record your progress in applying the antidotes to desirous attachment (don't worry if they initially feel abstract or a little fake).

Contemplate impermanence and death. I may die today - is this really what I want to be doing? Am I prepared for things to change?  Often  Sometimes  Hardly

Recognise the impurities of the body. Will I still be attracted to them in 20 years? When they are sick or their body becomes a corpse?  Often  Sometimes  Hardly

See others as one's family. View the object of desire as family, (mother/sister/daughter), respect their hopes and fears, differences.  Often  Sometimes  Hardly

Meditate on emptiness/dependent arising. Does the object exist as it appears? What if I knew more about it? Is how they look who they are? Is how they act who they are?  Often  Sometimes  Hardly

Generate confidence in reality. Do I know where to look for advice? Where do I look for happiness? Do I understand how my mind works? Can I trust myself?  Often  Sometimes  Hardly

Generate love and compassion for others. When my partner hurts me, I am concerned for them, and don't take things personally.  Often  Sometimes  Hardly

2. Which of these antidotes did you find the most effective?

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3. Which antidote did you have the most resistance in applying?

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4. List some things you want. Are they worthwhile? Are they charged with fantasy? How will they make you happy? Is there an ethic underpinning what you want?

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5. Describe a time when it turned out better *not* getting what you wanted.

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6. Why do you want to be in a relationship? List 5 reasons.

- 1. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. \_\_\_\_\_
- 5. \_\_\_\_\_

7. What qualities can you bring to a relationship? List 5 attributes.

- 1. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. \_\_\_\_\_
- 5. \_\_\_\_\_

8. Do you have the strength of mind to keep clear from debts? If you have disposable income, what happens to it?

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9. What material things would you most hate to lose? What do you need to understand so as not to lose your peace of mind as well?

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10. What fills you with appreciative joy unrelated to goods, money, or success?

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### Heeding the Message in Anxiety

1. Regarding your LIFESTYLE, investigate how your usual diet and sleeping patterns could be contributing to your moods. On average:
  - a. How many sweets and foods with added sugar do you consume each day? (list)  
AM \_\_\_\_\_  
PM \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. How much caffeine do you have each day? \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. How many alcoholic drinks do you have each day? \_\_\_\_\_
  - d. How much sleep do you get each night? How many hours do you stay asleep for?  
\_\_\_\_\_
  - e. What time do you get up each day? Do you often sleep during the day? Why?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. Regarding ANXIETY, what do you habitually worry about the most? What kind of events or situations set this worry off?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Which part is exaggerated? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Is there a deeper truth to this worry? What is it? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. List the things you fear the most:
  - a. \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. \_\_\_\_\_
  - d. \_\_\_\_\_
  - e. \_\_\_\_\_
  - f. \_\_\_\_\_
  - g. \_\_\_\_\_
  - h. \_\_\_\_\_
  - i. \_\_\_\_\_
6. What can you do about them?
  - a. \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. \_\_\_\_\_
  - d. \_\_\_\_\_
  - e. \_\_\_\_\_
  - f. \_\_\_\_\_
  - g. \_\_\_\_\_
  - h. \_\_\_\_\_
  - i. \_\_\_\_\_

7. Which of the four misconceptions about the nature of things dominates this depressed world-view that you described?

- Things/people don't change
- Things/people bring us lasting happiness
- Things are pure/perfect
- Things have a real, findable essence (they are true)

8. What expectations, fears or doubts do you have that make your experience of reality painful? (these 4 misconceptions playing out on a personal level)

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9. Just as rain is a curse for picnickers but a blessing for farmers, how can you look at the situation differently in order to embrace this reality?

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10. Are you nervous or in anticipation? Describe an anxious event as if you were excited about it:

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11. When you get stressed or anxious, what's your favourite change of environment (to walk, relax)? \_\_\_\_\_

12. Complete this sentence: "I'll stop being stressed when \_\_\_\_\_ finishes/changes!"

13. We carry our stress with us. Going on holidays, wherever you go, there you are! What do you need to accept or understand to let go of your stress?

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## Patience to Overcome Anger

1. Regarding often do these situations trigger your anger on a weekly basis?

- |                                                |                                |                                    |                                 |
|------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Having my desires thwarted                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Often | <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes | <input type="checkbox"/> Hardly |
| Taking things personally, feeling hurt         | <input type="checkbox"/> Often | <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes | <input type="checkbox"/> Hardly |
| Feelings of helplessness, not being in control | <input type="checkbox"/> Often | <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes | <input type="checkbox"/> Hardly |
| Dwelling on the faults of others               | <input type="checkbox"/> Often | <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes | <input type="checkbox"/> Hardly |

2. On a weekly basis, how often do you...

- |                                                                             |                                |                                    |                                 |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Feel hurt or afraid and then retaliate?                                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Often | <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes | <input type="checkbox"/> Hardly |
| Assume people control their reactions?                                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Often | <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes | <input type="checkbox"/> Hardly |
| Blame society, parents or your childhood?                                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Often | <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes | <input type="checkbox"/> Hardly |
| Set yourself apart, morally or emotionally separating yourself from others? | <input type="checkbox"/> Often | <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes | <input type="checkbox"/> Hardly |
| Feel under attack from people or events?                                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Often | <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes | <input type="checkbox"/> Hardly |

3. Name 3 situations that elicit your anger. How do you normally react?

- Scenario 1: \_\_\_\_\_
- Scenario 2: \_\_\_\_\_
- Scenario 3: \_\_\_\_\_

4. What are the drawbacks of reacting like this? How could you think about the situation constructively? What could you do instead?

- Scenario 1: \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- Scenario 2: \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- Scenario 3: \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

5. What is it that I am attached to, but that I am not getting, that most commonly elicits my anger?

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6. Does my aversion "this is not good", "I don't want this" judge the situation realistically? Is there anything good, any benefit, that can come of this?

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7. Describe a situation where you started to react with anger, but stopped yourself. What was the result?

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8. Describe a time when you used the patience of voluntarily bearing suffering.

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9. What method do you find the most useful in overcoming anger?

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10. This week, how often did you...

- |                                          |                                |                                    |                                 |
|------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Reflect on the drawbacks of anger?       | <input type="checkbox"/> Often | <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes | <input type="checkbox"/> Hardly |
| Remove yourself before retaliating?      | <input type="checkbox"/> Often | <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes | <input type="checkbox"/> Hardly |
| Prevent full-blown anger from arising?   | <input type="checkbox"/> Often | <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes | <input type="checkbox"/> Hardly |
| Practice any of the 3 types of patience? | <input type="checkbox"/> Often | <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes | <input type="checkbox"/> Hardly |

11. Set a goal for yourself regarding overcoming anger. "At the end of this month I will/will no longer..."

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## ***Listening to the Wisdom in Depression***

1. Begin a GRATITUDE JOURNAL. List 5 things that made you happy yesterday, things for which you are grateful for. They can be big, small, profound or ordinary.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

2. Describe what your DEPRESSION tells you about yourself and the world?

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What percentage do you believe to be true? \_\_\_\_\_%

What percentage do your friends agree with? \_\_\_\_\_%

3. On a scale of 1-10, how easily do you find yourself dwelling on your own problems? (where 1 is difficult and 10 is easy) \_\_\_\_\_

On a scale of 1-10, how easy is it for you to contemplate or enquire after the problems that other people face, especially those closest to you? \_\_\_\_\_

4. Which of the four misconceptions about the cause of suffering dominates this depressed world-view. Briefly describe...

- Causeless \_\_\_\_\_
- Wrong cause \_\_\_\_\_
- Once cause \_\_\_\_\_
- Permanent \_\_\_\_\_

5. What does your attachment want that it is not getting?

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6. What is it that your aversion cannot bare?

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7. What are you depressed about? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

8. Who do you blame? \_\_\_\_\_

9. What are two things you doing about the situation?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

10. Who could you experience this depression for? Who are 'your people'?  
\_\_\_\_\_

11. If you only had THREE YEARS to live, what would you spend your time thinking about? What would you focus your mind on?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

12. What thoughts or habits would you put aside?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

13. What are you feeling or thinking just before the "pity-me" ego arises (the DISGUISE of this worst of terrorists)? Write three warning signs, or thoughts:

a. \_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_

c. \_\_\_\_\_

14. How would you encourage a dear friend to remain at ease in a difficult situation?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

15. What is a good reason to voluntarily bare suffering? What are some benefits you can get from this experience?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_