



*Protections for Every Day Life  
Instructions on Kindness*

# Every Day Living with the Precepts: A Protection in Daily Living Contemplation

---

This practice is a contemplative practice of protection and instructions on kindness. It is a daily practice.

It is important to recite the precepts every day as a way to protect the mind and to cultivate kindness and compassion.

Don't skip this morning precept practice.<sup>1</sup> It takes about 10 minutes to recite the practice at the end of this book. (pp.9-13) if you do not know the precepts, it is impossible to recognize when you break them.

There is very little chance to awaken without following the precepts. This morning practice is essential to calm the mind.

The precepts are not commandments, but vows to train to keep. The training is to honor each precept by refraining to do certain things. You decide not to participate in certain activities in order to help the mind. And you practice with the other side of it.

---

<sup>1</sup> The declaration is a vow to train to practice the precepts.

The focus is to train in the affirmative and relinquish the activity that upsets the mind. Each precept offers an affirmative action of body, speech or mind as well as a renunciation of the negative action of body, speech and mind.

## **You're responsibility**

You are the one who decides how to participate in these precept activities. There is no punishment or reward police. There is, however, karma and cause and effect of the karma.

It is essential to know what your intention is when participating in the activities of everyday life. It is completely up to you how you act and how you train your actions with these protections and instructions on kindness.

Loving kindness and compassionate love are active responses towards all living beings. These emotions are two of the four emotional states on the spiritual path worth cultivating. They are part of the mundane world and therefore accessible to all spiritual aspirants.

Kindness and compassion are ways to love that offer a protection against our self-seeking desire to harm ourselves and other living beings. The precepts protect the mind in such a way as to allow you to be kind and compassionate.

You need to take this to heart in your practice in order to protect the mind from harming living beings.

Start with “not interfering” in the lives of others. Non-interference<sup>2</sup> releases you from involvements that may be harmful and bound to self-seeking desires. All living beings are included in this first protection of your heart.

Practice the precepts where you are. This includes protecting your mind and offering loving kind acts towards all the living beings in your environment; home, in the neighborhood, at work and in your community.

The precept practice is to protect your mind and heart not to *become* anything at all, i.e., a *good* person. It is much more difficult.

Releasing the desire to hate, dislike and repel requires constancy of attention. Kindness, gratitude and welcoming follow.

The practice begins by a vow to train to follow the precepts. It requires constant vigilance of body, speech and mind.

## **Consideration**

Please be extremely careful with the stuff that belongs to others. It does not belong to you so if you take it, it is stealing. Giving is the act that cultivates more protection for your mind and heart. Taking often causes suffering and makes it difficult to be grateful.

---

<sup>2</sup>To interfere is to encroach, to obstruct, to impede; mind your mind not the mind of another.

The world owes me a living is simply not true. No one owes you anything. Turn this around and begin to realize you owe gratitude to others. Thankfulness and appreciation are protections against doing harm. Cherish everything offered with a thankful attitude and appreciation. See if you are able to realize that you owe the world. Start with your parents, your childhood caretakers and thank them.

Generosity is the first virtue to develop because it requires that you forget what the self wants and look after other beings by giving. Letting go of the self desires is a gateway to liberating the mind. Dissatisfaction is constantly threatening your mind and heart and adds a sour taste to your heart and mind. Give your time, material goods, your thanks, and any goodness that you are able to offer. You do not own the things that you think you own. All of it will be given away when you die. Give it away now. The less you have the more freedom you have from the routine lures of life. Build a life that provides the basics of shelter, clothing, medicine and food. Accumulation is a way to build the self desires. Acquiring stuff makes you look bigger than you are and deludes you to think you are solid.

Give your gifts and offerings carefully and liberally.

Physical and emotional giving is also a practice of generosity.

Generosity seeks nothing from the other, seeks nothing in return. It helps to protect your mind and heart and opens your heart. It can, however, be fruitless if you seek

something in return or keep tabs on what you give and what you receive. Keeping tabs is part of the marketplace and not part of spiritual practice. When you give be thankful to have the opportunity to be generous. Spiritual insight and a calm mind are by far the best payment. Do not look for the results in the other or expect anything back. This is a gift with a string. Cut the strings and give freely.

Sharing and giving is what is important for your own protection. Rejoice when you give. Rejoice that others receive. Be grateful when you receive.

When you take what is not offered you think you are separate and have a right to take things that are not offered. Concentrate on giving and not on receiving; it is the best practice for your own heart.

Refrain from sexual misconduct, unfaithfulness is the primary misconduct that is implied. Be faithful and reliable around all aspects of your conduct with others whether it is sexual or not. Unswerving ways of goodness help your own heart and helps to protect and steady the heart and mind. Be reliable and unswerving in your promises. This is not easy to do when you allow yourself to veer away from your promises. It busts up the heart and mind and creates an unsteady mind. This leads to many troubles in the mind.

Tell the truth and refrain from harsh speech. Backbiting, stabbing in the back, idle chatter and gossip lead the heart

and mind to be darkened and heavy. Liberation is not helped by talking about others.

Suitable and true are the key ingredients to our speech. It is not agreeable or flattery that are the characteristics. Silence is more prominent and fosters carefulness. Explanation, uplifting, connections, kindness, understanding...not idle chatter...to show concern, to show we care and love the other. Heartfelt speech is very important. How you speak is very important. We connect with tone, body posture and care. Speech needs the most attention and is a critical way to give and be generous. A good word is cherished.

Do not offer any wine of delusion. Refrain from alcohol and drugs or any type of enchantment that clouds the mind and body. Attention is blocked by intoxicants and attention is the major dome of safety in any activity. Watching someone else is not important; it is important to watch and scrutinize your own actions. Detect what is going on with your heart and mind and keep it clear from poisons of intoxication.

Refuge is in the enlightened mind and is the only safe place in the world. There is safety in enlightenment potential, always ready to find and practice. Take refuge in the highest ideals of enlightenment, purity, truth and knowing all that is to be known that is true. This is the destination of the mind and is the safest place to go. All help and protection is here. This is the most important destination that you can turn towards. You are going to die so all that you provide for physical survival is unstable and will give way at some point. The safe

place is in your heart-mind and needs to be protected. The more protection you seek the more sure and stable you feel.

Those that are enlightened are a place of refuge. Emulate those who are enlightened and who plant the dharma. This needs to be your main force in your life. Spiritual ideals are the Way and the ways of the world are often distractions away from this destination.

## **Build an Altar in Your Home**

Place a Buddha statue to remind you of the enlightenment standard; he represents the standard. It is there to rouse you to practice. Candles are a symbol for light in the mind, the light within. Flowers are cut to show impermanence. The smoke and fragrance of virtue of incense comes and goes.

## **Bowing**

Bow in humility; reminding you how little you are, how little you know.

“I don’t know.” Bow.



## **Basic Stuff**

This is a clear and simple practice to do every morning and evening.

Begin with gratitude that you have found this practice path.

Call out your own name, i.e., Your Name, What luck!  
Remind yourself of how lucky you are to find the Way and that you are willing to practice these protections.

Chant or recite out loud the following poem by Hsu Yun.

### ***I am lucky to receive***

The chance to practice the Supreme Dharma of Emptiness  
(those poor in spirit)

Without fear of being invaded by the foolish affairs of  
outside life!

Set the time of sitting! Make it just as long as it takes one  
fragrant incense stick to burn down. In that time you can  
thread the basic principles of Dharma into a lovely string  
of pearls.

*One by one those marvelous concepts came from the East  
to encircle our hearts here in the West.*

*Here in this place we touch these sacred pearls and sing  
their praises like the sound of ocean waves.*

**Do 3 prostrations of Letting Go of any preoccupation.**

**Light a candle and incense.**

**Offer 3 bells.**

**Offer Purification- Use a leaf and some water and sprinkle the water on the crown of your head. Offer communion.**

Every moment is fresh and new. Everything arises and ceases; everything is dissolving.

**Notice the changes in your own body without the storyline. Aging, sickness and death arise and cease everywhere; this includes you and your body, speech and mind.**

**Nothing escapes the laws of nature, the laws of God.**

## **Underlying Truth**

Some of us do not understand that we are perishing here.

Those who understand this bring to rest their quarrels.

[Dhammapada]

**Renounce doing harm, ask for forgiveness from those you have harmed, forgive yourself.**

**Avowal of karma –Confess your actions; Chant this 3X**

All my ancient twisted karma, (strike the bell after each line)

From beginningless greed, hate and delusion,

Born through body, speech and mind,

I now fully avow.

## **WELCOME THE THREE UNIVERSAL PRECEPTS**

**I vow to do no harm. I cease from harmful actions.**

*Do No Harm – Cease from Evil It is the great teaching of all Buddhas everywhere.*

**I vow to cultivate goodness in all conditions.**

*Cultivate goodness-The moon is in the dewdrop no matter what the circumstance. In all situations I return to the*

*Dharma within. I train not to be swayed by external circumstances.*

**I vow to purify the mind.**

*Purify the mind, let go of the non-essential. Realize that likes, dislikes and indifferences of the mind are hindrances to the pure mind.*

**I let go of the non-essential. MY likes, dislikes and indifferences are the non-essential.**

## **WELCOME THE 10 GRAVE PRECEPTS**

1. I vow not to kill life. I refrain from killing and destroying life. I vow to protect living beings from the dangers of greed, hate & delusion. I vow to train to keep this precept.
2. I vow not take anything not given to me; I vow not to take anything that isn't mine. I vow not to steal. I offer what I have to others. I vow train to keep this precept.
3. I vow not to misuse sexuality. I vow not to lure, coerce, or force others with sexual allurements. I am careful with sexual power. I vow to train to keep this precept.
4. I vow to tell the truth. I vow not to lie. I vow to train to keep this precept.
5. I vow not to peddle the wine of intoxication and enchantment. I vow not to cloud the mind with charm. I cultivate composure and clarity of body, speech and mind. I do not abuse my mind and body. I vow to train to keep this precept.
6. I vow not to discuss the mistakes of others. I vow not to hurt with words. I vow not to gossip. I vow to train to keep this precept.
7. I vow not to praise myself over others. I train to keep this precept.
8. I vow not to hold back and be stingy particularly with the teachings of the Dharma. I give them freely. I vow not to be possessive. I vow to train to keep this precept.
9. I vow not to harbor ill-will. I vow not to hold grudges. I vow to train to keep this precept.
10. I honor being awake, I honor the Truth over self-absorption and small-mindedness, and I honor the community of all sentient beings. I vow to train to keep this precept.

***These precepts are my protection***

I do my best to keep them.

**3 Refuges ~ When Trouble Strikes I take refuge here -Chant**

I take refuge in Buddha\*. I take refuge in Dharma, I take refuge in sangha.

I take refuge in Buddha as the perfect teacher.

I take refuge in Dharma as the perfect teaching.

I take refuge Sangha as the perfect life.

Now I have completely taken refuge in Buddha,

Now I have completely taken refuge in Dharma,

Now I have completely taken refuge in Sangha.

These three refuges are my great abodes, my great teachers, my great grandfather and great grandmother.

Final 3 prostrations and bells.

\*Buddha – awakened one, Dharma – manifested truth  
Sangha-awakened spirit

