Discernment - An Already Here Adventure

A choose-your-own-adventure practice book

An original temple welcome, complete practices, and choices you can follow on paper.

Begin at The temple garden on page 2.

Scenes are shuffled. Follow the page numbers at the end of each scene. You can stop or change direction whenever you choose.

The temple garden

An original fictional welcome

You step through a small gate into a well-kept garden. Beyond it stands a small but beautiful Theravada Buddhist temple. Inside, one man sits in meditation. His face resembles Siddhartha as you have seen him imagined in art. Incense is burning. Three meditation pads lie before him.

You may sit or move on. If you sit, he opens his eyes, smiles, and greets you: “Welcome. The path is wide. You may begin with your own ordinary experience, and see what it reveals.”

Your adventure

Discernment. Investigate feeling, recognition, intention, change, and appropriation.

“Try each invitation gently. You can question it, change direction, rest, or leave. Keep what helps and let the rest go. Ancient wisdom is an invitation to investigate, not a promise of an experience.”

Reading this book

Start using either choice below. After that, follow the page numbers rather than reading straight through. Scenes are deliberately shuffled; one scene may run over several pages. Choices appear at its end. In a PDF reader you can also click them. Keep a finger or bookmark at your current page when you pause. Two optional meetings with the man lead back to the exact scene you left.

Story and practice

This adventure is original fiction with modern practice pauses inspired by ancient wisdom. Choices and consequences are story devices, not historical events.

Detailed adaptation notes and gaps are available at the back of the book, so the telling can unfold without stopping for every editorial explanation.

Sources and wisdom

The not-self characteristic

Choose what comes next

Sit, listen, and begin - turn to page 49.

Move on and enter the adventure - turn to page 49.

Optional: read how this telling was made - turn to page 50.

Do not fill in a missed ending

A naturally occurring event can remain incompletely observed.

The old account moves toward disenchantment, fading attachment, and liberation. Our scene remains an introduction. You can be curious about how grasping weakens without making your identity disappear or deciding that every ordinary commitment has become meaningless. Care belongs in the room with inquiry.

Practice pause

Arriving, present, gone

1. Notice

Choose a naturally occurring sound or breath.

2. Distinguish

Notice its arrival, its presence, and any ending you can discern.

3. Watch

If you miss a stage, leave it missed. Do not reconstruct it as direct observation.

4. Release

Return to the room without waiting for another event.

5. Return

Let the exploration end. Notice your surroundings and the support beneath you. Resume ordinary activity when you feel ready.

6. Make It Yours

If this works for you, make it part of your practice. If it does not, let it go.

Notice, without grading

What did you miss rather than secretly recover?

Sources and wisdom

Establishing mindfulness

Mindfulness of breathing

The not-self characteristic

Choose what comes next

Continue - turn to page 14.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 32.

An optional cup, imagined and checked

Represent a familiar cup and check the available details against the real object.

The man distinguishes this doorway from the old teaching. A represented place or remembered experience may help someone explore attention; another person may find nothing useful in it. Neither response needs a defense. This part of the story gives you permission to experiment without treating a vivid image as evidence of an external event or a spiritual result.

Practice pause

Simple object

1. Prepare

Choose a safe ordinary moment with no task demanding your attention. Decide what you expect to notice.

2. Experiment

Represent a familiar cup through shape, orientation, texture, or words. Use whichever mode is available.

3. Compare

Compare with the real cup. Separate recalled details from invented ones.

4. Return

Let the experiment end. Return to your surroundings and ordinary activity. Keep observation separate from interpretation.

5. Make It Yours

If this works for you, make it part of your practice. If it does not, let it go.

An optional personal exploration

This modern method is not established as an instruction in the referenced teaching. Try it only if useful; its relationship and limits are explained in the adaptation notes.

Notice, without grading

Which parts were recalled, invented, or uncertain?

Sources and wisdom

Fruits of the contemplative life

The not-self characteristic

Choose what comes next

Continue with the story - turn to page 10.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 32.

Another way into this moment

You could compare recognition with intention, or distinguish what you hear from the source you name.

The man returns to another part of the lesson while the next choice has room to form.

Stay with the questions. Is this aspect of experience lasting or changing? Can what changes and brings strain serve as a secure identity? The listeners follow the inquiry across time, near and far, ordinary and refined experiences. The most beautiful state is not exempted because someone wants to keep it.

Notice, without grading

What did you discover, and what would you like to explore next?

Sources and wisdom

The not-self characteristic

Choose what comes next

The cup and the reach - turn to page 21.

Before the source becomes certain - turn to page 45.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 32.

Carry only what helps

An optional meeting - original fiction

You find the man beside the temple garden. He makes room for you to sit. This meeting is a pause in the adventure, not a required practice.

The man speaks

“Seeing that experience changes is not a reason to neglect ordinary responsibilities. Let careful looking make room for care, rather than becoming another argument to win.”

He smiles. “When you are ready, return to where you left the story.”

Sources and wisdom

The not-self characteristic

Choose what comes next

Return to “The cup and the reach” - turn to page 29.

A modest check for change

People who build waterways guide water, arrow makers shape arrows, and carpenters shape wood; wise people shape themselves.

Investigate a mild sensation without manufacturing change to satisfy an idea.

There is a temptation to turn the observation into a victory: now I understand. The man lets that sentence enter the same field of inquiry. An explanation can be useful and still be changing. It does not have to become the one possession placed beyond examination.

Practice pause

Look for what stays

1. Notice

Choose a mild, ordinary sensation.

2. Distinguish

Notice its location and quality now, then again.

3. Watch

Can you find a part that stays exactly the same? Do not invent changes or insist on certainty.

4. Release

Let the investigation end with what you actually noticed.

5. Return

Let the exploration end. Notice your surroundings and the support beneath you. Resume ordinary activity when you feel ready.

6. Make It Yours

If this works for you, make it part of your practice. If it does not, let it go.

Notice, without grading

What stayed, changed, or remained uncertain?

Sources and wisdom

The not-self characteristic

Choose what comes next

Continue - turn to page 4.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 32.

Before the source becomes certain

An ordinary sound offers another comparison between experiencing and explaining.

The man returns to another part of the lesson while the next choice has room to form.

Listen as the teaching moves from examination toward disenchantment, fading attachment, and release. In the account, the five listeners become liberated. That conclusion belongs to the source and its setting; it is not handed to a reader who agrees with the argument.

Practice pause

Sound, then hearing

1. Notice

While sitting somewhere safe and still, choose an ordinary sound. Notice where you think it comes from.

2. Invite

Let its location become less important for a moment. Attend to hearing: rhythm, texture, pauses, or changes.

3. Listen

Notice the difference between knowing a source and hearing a sound. You can still know where it is.

4. Respond

Locate the sound normally again, feel your feet, and look around.

5. Return

Let the exploration end. Notice your surroundings and the support beneath you. Resume ordinary activity when you feel ready.

6. Make It Yours

If this works for you, make it part of your practice. If it does not, let it go.

Notice, without grading

What did hearing reveal without settling the source?

Sources and wisdom

Establishing mindfulness

The not-self characteristic

Choose what comes next

Return to the shared stretch - turn to page 34.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 32.

An experiment with keeping

Explore a wish to hold a mild experience unchanged without tightening around it.

A real action waits outside the question. Someone may need an answer; the body may need food or movement. You can return to these things without betraying the investigation. A clearer view is useful partly because it can change how a life is lived, not because it suspends that life indefinitely.

Practice pause

Can this be kept?

1. Notice

Choose a comfortable, mild experience already present.

2. Distinguish

Notice any wish to keep it exactly as it is.

3. Watch

Without holding your breath or tightening, ask whether you can prevent every change.

4. Release

Let the experiment end. This says nothing you must believe about who you are.

5. Return

Let the exploration end. Notice your surroundings and the support beneath you. Resume ordinary activity when you feel ready.

6. Make It Yours

If this works for you, make it part of your practice. If it does not, let it go.

Notice, without grading

What did the experiment establish, and what did it not establish?

Sources and wisdom

The not-self characteristic

Choose what comes next

Continue - turn to page 26.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 32.

One event, several lenses

Wise people guard their thoughts, which are subtle and quick to wander; well-guarded thoughts bring happiness.

Use the experiential categories lightly; they need not form five separate objects.

Recognition gives the moment a name. The name is helpful, and it also arrives with expectations. You notice how quickly an ordinary pattern becomes a complete object in the mind. The man lets the name remain usable while asking whether it tells the whole story of what is changing.

Practice pause

One moment, five questions

1. Notice

Choose a manageable moment, such as waiting for a reply.

2. Distinguish

Ask: what bodily experience, feeling tone, recognition, and intention are present? What is currently being consciously experienced?

3. Watch

Notice which distinctions are clear. Conscious experience here means seeing, hearing, or knowing this event, not a hidden observer.

4. Release

Set the categories down. You need not find five separate objects.

5. Return

Let the exploration end. Notice your surroundings and the support beneath you. Resume ordinary activity when you feel ready.

6. Make It Yours

If this works for you, make it part of your practice. If it does not, let it go.

Notice, without grading

Which distinction was useful and which remained unclear?

Sources and wisdom

The fourfold round

The not-self characteristic

Choose what comes next

Continue - turn to page 41.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 32.

An explanation is also thinking

An account can be useful without becoming direct observation.

Awareness of the detail changes with its conditions. The teaching does not offer awareness as an untouched thing to claim after the body and feelings have been questioned. The man keeps the inquiry practical: notice this meeting rather than manufacture an answer about the universe.

Practice pause

Recognize a thought

1. Notice

Sit comfortably and notice a thought when you become aware of one.

2. Distinguish

Is it a plan, a wish, an objection, or another kind of thinking?

3. Watch

Can you notice the thinking as well as its subject? There is no need to find a separate observer.

4. Release

Let attention return to the room. Nothing must be silenced.

5. Return

Let the exploration end. Notice your surroundings and the support beneath you. Resume ordinary activity when you feel ready.

6. Make It Yours

If this works for you, make it part of your practice. If it does not, let it go.

Notice, without grading

What kind of thought is present?

Sources and wisdom

The not-self characteristic

Two sorts of thinking

Choose what comes next

Continue - turn to page 39.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 32.

Certainty outruns the observation

In this fictional branch, a strong impression becomes a claim about another person. Contradicting details are ignored to protect the explanation. An avoidable accusation adds conflict, and the original uncertainty remains unresolved.

The man does not rescue the imagined situation with a sudden lesson that makes its cost disappear. Someone has been left unheard, a need has gone unmet, or attention has become a wall. This consequence belongs to the fiction. You can retrace the turn and consider another response without practicing harm in your own life.

Notice, without grading

This fictional branch leads to added suffering. It is not a verdict about you. Retrace it, choose another direction, or leave the adventure here.

Leaving the path

The man in the temple offers a quiet farewell. You can return to ordinary life now, or return to your bookmarked page another day. This pause is not a completed journey.

Sources and wisdom

The not-self characteristic

Choose what comes next

Try another direction - turn to page 42.

Visit the temple again - turn to page 2.

The cup and the reach

A visible object, its name, and an intention to use it may be distinguishable.

The man returns to another part of the lesson while the next choice has room to form.

Stay with the questions. Is this aspect of experience lasting or changing? Can what changes and brings strain serve as a secure identity? The listeners follow the inquiry across time, near and far, ordinary and refined experiences. The most beautiful state is not exempted because someone wants to keep it.

Practice pause

Recognition and intention

1. Notice

Look at an ordinary object such as a cup.

2. Distinguish

Distinguish its visible appearance, recognizing “cup,” and any intention to pick it up.

3. Watch

Is every part equally apparent? Does recognizing it immediately lead to doing something?

4. Release

Leave the cup alone or use it. Finish with ordinary activity.

5. Return

Let the exploration end. Notice your surroundings and the support beneath you. Resume ordinary activity when you feel ready.

6. Make It Yours

If this works for you, make it part of your practice. If it does not, let it go.

Notice, without grading

Which distinction was actually clear?

Sources and wisdom

How elaboration gathers

The fourfold round

The not-self characteristic

Choose what comes next

Continue into the adventure - turn to page 43.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 32.

The garden does not hurry

An optional meeting - original fiction

You find the man beside the temple garden. He makes room for you to sit. This meeting is a pause in the adventure, not a required practice.

The man speaks

“A sensation, a description, and a conclusion can arrive so quickly that they seem like one thing. Give each a little room. An honest question can be more useful than a quick certainty.”

He smiles. “When you are ready, return to where you left the story.”

Sources and wisdom

The not-self characteristic

Choose what comes next

Return to “Discernment · Start with something describable” - turn to page 49.

Different arrivals

Compare an already present thought with deliberately thinking an ordinary word.

A small ending arrives without waiting for your approval. The source asks whether changing and vulnerable processes can provide the lasting refuge demanded of them. The scene is gentle enough to leave: a sound, a thought, a pressure that is already different from when you began.

Practice pause

An arriving thought and a chosen thought

1. Notice

Sit somewhere familiar and notice an ordinary thought that is already present. If none stands out, use a word you just read.

2. Distinguish

Now deliberately think the word “cup,” or choose another ordinary word. Compare deciding to think it with noticing the earlier thought after it appeared.

3. Watch

Describe what you can remember about each arrival. Did you notice an intention, the word itself, both, or neither clearly? Memory of the sequence can be incomplete. Do not infer a theory of free will from this brief comparison.

4. Release

Leave the question open and return to familiar surroundings.

5. Return

Let the exploration end. Notice your surroundings and the support beneath you. Resume ordinary activity when you feel ready.

6. Make It Yours

If this works for you, make it part of your practice. If it does not, let it go.

Notice, without grading

What can you remember about the arrivals without inferring a theory?

Sources and wisdom

The not-self characteristic

Choose what comes next

Continue - turn to page 38.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 32.

Bring the inquiry back to conduct

If you value yourself, watch over yourself carefully; a wise person remains attentive for at least part of the night.

A useful inquiry should not excuse treating others carelessly.

The five practitioners' reported liberation belongs to the old telling. You leave with one detail honestly observed and perhaps a little less need to defend a conclusion. The man does not offer you a rank. He opens the way back to ordinary surroundings and the next opportunity to learn.

A modern practice pause

After the choice

Before you begin

Choose a safe, ordinary situation. You may pause or finish at any time.

Take care

Repair does not require renewed contact with an unsafe person.

1. Invitation 1

Feel your support and recall one actual action from this adventure. If you only rehearsed it, keep that distinction clear.

2. Invitation 2

What effects did you observe on yourself and others? Separate observations from predictions, hopes, and bodily impressions.

3. Invitation 3

If you caused harm, acknowledge the specific action and consider a safe correction or repair. Ask a trusted person for guidance when needed; do not demand forgiveness.

4. Invitation 4

If the action was helpful, identify the conditions that made it easier and one way to repeat them. If the effects are unknown, leave them unknown and check later if appropriate.

5. Invitation 5

Set down the review. Return to an ordinary responsibility or rest; you do not need a verdict about your whole character.

After the practice

What will you keep, change, or check next time?

Notice, without grading

What will you check or do differently?

Sources and wisdom

Recognizing the direction

Reflection on action

The not-self characteristic

Choose what comes next

Continue - turn to page 36.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 32.

The cup and the reach

A visible object, its name, and an intention to use it may be distinguishable.

The man returns to another part of the lesson while the next choice has room to form.

Stay with the questions. Is this aspect of experience lasting or changing? Can what changes and brings strain serve as a secure identity? The listeners follow the inquiry across time, near and far, ordinary and refined experiences. The most beautiful state is not exempted because someone wants to keep it.

Practice pause

Recognition and intention

1. Notice

Look at an ordinary object such as a cup.

2. Distinguish

Distinguish its visible appearance, recognizing “cup,” and any intention to pick it up.

3. Watch

Is every part equally apparent? Does recognizing it immediately lead to doing something?

4. Release

Leave the cup alone or use it. Finish with ordinary activity.

5. Return

Let the exploration end. Notice your surroundings and the support beneath you. Resume ordinary activity when you feel ready.

6. Make It Yours

If this works for you, make it part of your practice. If it does not, let it go.

Notice, without grading

Which distinction was actually clear?

Sources and wisdom

How elaboration gathers

The fourfold round

The not-self characteristic

Choose what comes next

Return to the shared stretch - turn to page 34.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 32.

Optional: visit the man in the temple - carry only what helps - turn to page 9.

Seeing, naming, reaching

Explore an ordinary object without requiring separate mental substances.

Feeling colors the detail. Before the mind explains why it is agreeable or unwelcome, there is the felt leaning itself. In the old teaching, feeling is another aspect examined rather than installed as a reliable owner. You can recognize its movement without trying to erase the person who feels.

Practice pause

Recognition and intention

1. Notice

Look at an ordinary object such as a cup.

2. Distinguish

Distinguish its visible appearance, recognizing “cup,” and any intention to pick it up.

3. Watch

Is every part equally apparent? Does recognizing it immediately lead to doing something?

4. Release

Leave the cup alone or use it. Finish with ordinary activity.

5. Return

Let the exploration end. Notice your surroundings and the support beneath you. Resume ordinary activity when you feel ready.

6. Make It Yours

If this works for you, make it part of your practice. If it does not, let it go.

Notice, without grading

Was recognizing it the same as deciding to act?

Sources and wisdom

How elaboration gathers

The fourfold round

The not-self characteristic

Choose what comes next

Continue - turn to page 16.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 32.

Leaving can be part of this path

Rest, company, another practice, or an ordinary responsibility may be the next part of the walk. You do not owe the adventure a return.

The man leaves the gate unlatched. The imagined scene can remain unfinished while you answer a person, move your body, eat, or rest. Leaving the path is not made into a flaw in your character. A bookmark is an invitation, not a debt; the story can meet you again if returning is useful.

Notice, without grading

Your previous place remains available in your account when signed in, or in this browser for guests when storage works. Return only if it is useful.

An ordinary pause

You may close the book, explore ordinary life, and return to this page whenever you choose. Leaving can be part of walking the path.

Leaving the path

The man in the temple offers a quiet farewell. You can return to ordinary life now, or return to your bookmarked page another day. This pause is not a completed journey.

Sources and wisdom

The not-self characteristic

Choose what comes next

Visit the temple again - turn to page 2.

A different direction is possible

You can follow another detail, continue with the shared stretch, or explore the fictional shortcut and its consequences.

The man returns to another part of the lesson while the next choice has room to form.

Listen as the teaching moves from examination toward disenchantment, fading attachment, and release. In the account, the five listeners become liberated. That conclusion belongs to the source and its setting; it is not handed to a reader who agrees with the argument.

Notice, without grading

What did you discover, and what would you like to explore next?

Sources and wisdom

The not-self characteristic

Choose what comes next

Before the source becomes certain - turn to page 12.

Continue with the next practice - turn to page 34.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 32.

What the moment feels like

The wish to be correct can arrive beside an ordinary feeling tone.

An intention appears: keep this, improve that, return to the pleasant part. Mental activity has joined the scene, shaping what happens next. The source's question now has another place to land. Does the appearance of a wish make the wished-for result something you can command?

Practice pause

The first lean

1. Notice

Notice an ordinary sound, contact, or sight.

2. Distinguish

Is its quality pleasant, unpleasant, or neither? Unclear is an acceptable answer.

3. Watch

Does wanting more or less follow? Is that the same as the original quality?

4. Release

Let the moment continue without completing an analysis.

5. Return

Let the exploration end. Notice your surroundings and the support beneath you. Resume ordinary activity when you feel ready.

6. Make It Yours

If this works for you, make it part of your practice. If it does not, let it go.

Notice, without grading

What followed pleasantness or irritation?

Sources and wisdom

Establishing mindfulness

The not-self characteristic

Choose what comes next

Continue - turn to page 18.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 32.

Return with what is useful

The story can finish while ordinary life remains unfinished. Let the practices end, recognize your actual surroundings, and choose a practical next action.

The place you have been exploring continues beyond your part in it. There is still work to do and information nobody possesses yet. The man is waiting at the temple to receive an ordinary person, not an example of a completed teaching. A useful direction can be carried without making the story's ending settle the rest of your life.

Notice, without grading

Keep what helps and let the rest go. Completing this adventure records participation, not concentration, insight, or release.

Back at the temple

You return through the well-kept garden to the small temple. Incense drifts past the three meditation pads. The man opens his eyes, smiles, and welcomes you back.

The man speaks

You looked at details, interpretations and the wish to call something yours. The questions can remain open while ordinary care continues.

"You are welcome to walk another adventure, or return to ordinary life. There is nothing you need to prove before you go."

An ending

To return to ordinary life, close the book here. Finishing marks participation, not an attainment.

Sources and wisdom

The not-self characteristic

Choose what comes next

Sit in the temple and begin a fresh visit - turn to page 2.

An optional personal exploration

The library includes practices developed through William’s personal exploration. Their usefulness can be explored even when their precise textual correspondence is uncertain.

The man distinguishes this doorway from the old teaching. A represented place or remembered experience may help someone explore attention; another person may find nothing useful in it. Neither response needs a defense. This part of the story gives you permission to experiment without treating a vivid image as evidence of an external event or a spiritual result.

Notice, without grading

What did you discover, and what would you like to explore next?

Sources and wisdom

The not-self characteristic

Choose what comes next

Try an optional cup, imagined and checked - turn to page 6.

Leave this exploration and continue - turn to page 10.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 32.

How much was added?

Even a brief encounter with a wise person can help a thoughtful person recognize the truth, as the tongue recognizes the taste of soup.

Notice how a small event acquired a motive, a prediction, or a familiar complaint.

The most convincing claim is often the quiet word mine. It can attach to discomfort, an insight, or an unfinished argument. You do not have to ban the word from ordinary speech. The question is what happens when the grip behind it is treated as necessary for safety.

Practice pause

How a story gathers

1. Notice

Notice a mild irritation or expectation.

2. Distinguish

Separate what was seen or heard from recognition, feeling tone, and subsequent thinking.

3. Watch

Where do memory, prediction, and an urge join in? Do not assume you can recover the exact sequence.

4. Release

Leave the unfinished map and choose a useful next action.

5. Return

Let the exploration end. Notice your surroundings and the support beneath you. Resume ordinary activity when you feel ready.

6. Make It Yours

If this works for you, make it part of your practice. If it does not, let it go.

Notice, without grading

Which additions can actually be checked?

Sources and wisdom

How elaboration gathers

The not-self characteristic

Choose what comes next

Continue - turn to page 24.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 32.

Which invitation fits now?

You could compare recognition with intention, or distinguish what you hear from the source you name.

The man returns to another part of the lesson while the next choice has room to form.

Stay with the questions. Is this aspect of experience lasting or changing? Can what changes and brings strain serve as a secure identity? The listeners follow the inquiry across time, near and far, ordinary and refined experiences. The most beautiful state is not exempted because someone wants to keep it.

Notice, without grading

What did you discover, and what would you like to explore next?

Sources and wisdom

The not-self characteristic

Choose what comes next

The cup and the reach - turn to page 28.

Before the source becomes certain - turn to page 12.

Look at another possibility - turn to page 33.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 32.

A fictional turn

Explore this as a story only. The character could turn an impression into proof. What direction would you like to follow?

A shortcut offers to remove the uncertainty that has made the journey human. You can hear why the offer is attractive without accepting its terms. The man leaves the fictional consequence available to inspect, and leaves another direction open. The point is discovery, not catching a reader in a mistake.

Notice, without grading

What did you discover, and what would you like to explore next?

Sources and wisdom

The not-self characteristic

Choose what comes next

Follow that fictional direction - turn to page 20.

Try the shared stretch instead - turn to page 43.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 32.

Start with something describable

People who recognize truth as truth and falsehood as falsehood follow sound intentions and find what matters.

Before explaining the cup’s absence, let an ordinary contact be known.

The man tells of five practitioners listening to a question about ownership. If the body were entirely at the command of an enduring owner, could that owner simply forbid it to change or trouble them? The question reaches into the room before any answer is required. There is a body here, and care for it remains real.

Practice pause

Hands at rest

1. Notice

Place your hands on a comfortable surface. Notice their temperature and points of contact.

2. Invite

Notice the contact of your palm and fingers separately. If moving is comfortable, lift one finger a little and set it down; otherwise compare two points of contact.

3. Listen

Compare the pressure before and after, or between the two points. Which details can you describe? Temperature or pressure may stay unchanged.

4. Respond

When ready, pick up an ordinary object and notice its contact with your hands.

5. Return

Let the exploration end. Notice your surroundings and the support beneath you. Resume ordinary activity when you feel ready.

6. Make It Yours

If this works for you, make it part of your practice. If it does not, let it go.

Notice, without grading

Which details can you describe directly?

Sources and wisdom

Establishing mindfulness

The not-self characteristic

Choose what comes next

Continue - turn to page 47.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 32.

Before the source becomes certain

An ordinary sound offers another comparison between experiencing and explaining.

The man returns to another part of the lesson while the next choice has room to form.

Listen as the teaching moves from examination toward disenchantment, fading attachment, and release. In the account, the five listeners become liberated. That conclusion belongs to the source and its setting; it is not handed to a reader who agrees with the argument.

Practice pause

Sound, then hearing

1. Notice

While sitting somewhere safe and still, choose an ordinary sound. Notice where you think it comes from.

2. Invite

Let its location become less important for a moment. Attend to hearing: rhythm, texture, pauses, or changes.

3. Listen

Notice the difference between knowing a source and hearing a sound. You can still know where it is.

4. Respond

Locate the sound normally again, feel your feet, and look around.

5. Return

Let the exploration end. Notice your surroundings and the support beneath you. Resume ordinary activity when you feel ready.

6. Make It Yours

If this works for you, make it part of your practice. If it does not, let it go.

Notice, without grading

What did hearing reveal without settling the source?

Sources and wisdom

Establishing mindfulness

The not-self characteristic

Choose what comes next

Continue into the adventure - turn to page 43.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 32.

Qualities before a conclusion

Resistance, warmth, and movement can be noticed without settling a theory.

A sensation is found where a finished idea had been. It shifts with posture, attention, and contact. The story has not proven anything grand. It has supplied one detail that does not behave like a possession guaranteed to remain as ordered. The inquiry can begin at that modest size.

Practice pause

Physical qualities

1. Notice

Notice ordinary resistance at a contact point, temperature, and movement with breathing.

2. Distinguish

If already apparent, include moisture such as saliva. Fluidity and cohesion may be something you infer rather than directly feel.

3. Watch

How much can these qualities describe? Where does a name or explanation enter?

4. Release

Let the categories go. Nothing needs to fit neatly.

5. Return

Let the exploration end. Notice your surroundings and the support beneath you. Resume ordinary activity when you feel ready.

6. Make It Yours

If this works for you, make it part of your practice. If it does not, let it go.

Notice, without grading

Where did inference enter?

Sources and wisdom

Cultivating care and steadiness

The not-self characteristic

Choose what comes next

Continue - turn to page 30.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 32.

Discernment · Start with something describable

An ordinary cup is not where you expected it. Before a whole story about memory, control, or another person forms, there is something small enough to inspect.

The man begins a telling that will accompany the choices ahead. Its ancient lesson is larger than these brief exercises; the present-day scene is our invented doorway into it.

Five practitioners listen while the Buddha begins with the body. If bodily form were a self under complete command, it would not so often trouble its supposed owner. A person could simply direct it never to be like this and always to be like that. Ordinary life gives another answer.

Notice, without grading

What did you discover, and what would you like to explore next?

Sources and wisdom

The not-self characteristic

Choose what comes next

Begin with the first practice - turn to page 43.

Explore another way in - turn to page 8.

In the story, turn an impression into proof - turn to page 42.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 32.

Optional: visit the man in the temple - the garden does not hurry - turn to page 23.

How this telling was made

Original telling and modern practice

The temple man, present-day settings, connective descriptions, and reader choices are original literary framing. Historical stories retain their recorded direction. Dialogue is modern paraphrase, not a claimed historical quotation. Practice pauses are modern invitations; reading an outcome does not establish that outcome in the reader.

Inquiry and its limits

Short comparisons cannot establish a complete theory of self, consciousness, causality, or free will. Unknown stages and incomplete memory must remain unknown.

Liberating discernment

Noticing changing aggregates and limits of control introduces themes from the sources. Intellectual agreement or an unusual viewpoint is not realization of release.

Recognition and intention

adaptation. Recognition and intention: This invitation adapts an operation from the cited discourse: distinguishing experiential categories. Changes in viewpoint, naming, or boundaries do not establish not-self, nonduality, or release.

Sound, then hearing

supporting. Sound, then hearing: Attending to ordinary physical experience can prepare bodily mindfulness. This modern sensory comparison omits the full mindfulness framework and does not establish insight.

Hands at rest

supporting. Hands at rest: Attending to ordinary physical experience can prepare bodily mindfulness. This modern sensory comparison omits the full mindfulness framework and does not establish insight.

Physical qualities

adaptation. Physical qualities: This invitation adapts an operation from the cited discourse: knowing the body. This modern sensory comparison omits the full mindfulness framework and does not establish insight.

Can this be kept?

adaptation. Can this be kept?: This invitation adapts an operation from the cited discourse: investigating change and control. Changes in viewpoint, naming, or boundaries do not establish not-self, nonduality, or release.

After the choice

adaptation. After the choice: New practice addressing: Conduct in daily life. Original contemporary script. It introduces part of the cited training and requires real-world repetition; no attainment is inferred.

One moment, five questions

adaptation. One moment, five questions: This invitation adapts an operation from the cited discourse: distinguishing experiential categories. Changes in viewpoint, naming, or boundaries do not establish not-self, nonduality, or release.

The first lean

adaptation. The first lean: This invitation adapts an operation from the cited discourse: recognizing feeling and response. Acceptance, soothing, or reduced distress alone does not establish source-based steadiness of mind or require accepting harm.

Recognize a thought

adaptation. Recognize a thought: This invitation adapts an operation from the cited discourse: recognizing and not feeding unhelpful thought. Regulation or preference alone does not establish ethical skillfulness; all four efforts and consequences need consideration.

How a story gathers

adaptation. How a story gathers: This invitation adapts an operation from the cited discourse: recognizing and not feeding unhelpful thought. Regulation or preference alone does not establish ethical skillfulness; all four efforts and consequences need consideration.

An arriving thought and a chosen thought

adaptation. An arriving thought and a chosen thought: This invitation adapts an operation from the cited discourse: investigating change and control. Changes in viewpoint, naming, or boundaries do not establish not-self, nonduality, or release.

Look for what stays

adaptation. Look for what stays: This invitation adapts an operation from the cited discourse: noticing change. Changes in viewpoint, naming, or boundaries do not establish not-self, nonduality, or release.

Arriving, present, gone

adaptation. Arriving, present, gone: This invitation adapts an operation from the cited discourse: noticing change. Changes in viewpoint, naming, or boundaries do not establish not-self, nonduality, or release.

Simple object

uncertain. Simple object: An imagined form has a thematic resemblance to the mind-made-body passage; it may also be explored for its practical value. The uncertainty concerns textual correspondence, not a verdict on personal usefulness. Fruits of the contemplative life places the described a body represented in the mind after extensive conduct and concentration. These modern constructions are optional personal explorations, not evidence of that attainment. Keep what helps and let the rest go.

Sources and wisdom

Cultivating care and steadiness

Establishing mindfulness

Fruits of the contemplative life

How elaboration gathers

Mindfulness of breathing

Recognizing the direction

Reflection on action

The fourfold round

The not-self characteristic

Two sorts of thinking

Choose what comes next

Return to the temple garden - turn to page 2.