Steadiness of mind - 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

Steadiness of mind. Practice steadiness while remaining responsive to people and circumstances.

“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

Cultivating care and steadiness

Choose what comes next

Sit, listen, and begin - turn to page 32.

Move on and enter the adventure - turn to page 32.

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

A fictional turn

Explore this as a story only. The character could turn steadiness into not caring. 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

Cultivating care and steadiness

Choose what comes next

Follow that fictional direction - turn to page 9.

Try the shared stretch instead - turn to page 47.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 42.

A boundary still matters

Greed brings grief and fear; freedom from greed brings freedom from that grief and fear.

Steadiness can include a clear no.

An image of protection may help, or may begin to close the world out. The man leaves the choice with you. A useful representation should make practical life more available, not require constant maintenance against every change of feeling or every other person.

Practice pause

Say no and let it stand

1. Notice

Choose a low-stakes request you genuinely want to decline. Silently rehearse “No, I cannot take that on.” Notice your ordinary posture and where you hesitate.

2. Invite

Say the sentence at a comfortable volume. Compare the effort, pace, and posture with silent rehearsal. If speaking is unavailable, write or use your usual communication method.

3. Listen

Leave a short silence afterward. Notice an urge to add an excuse; try repeating the same sentence once instead. Firmness does not require tension, and nervousness does not cancel your no.

4. Respond

Use the sentence when appropriate. If refusal could expose you to retaliation or danger, prioritize a safety plan and support over direct confrontation.

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 action is yours to control?

Sources and wisdom

Analysis of the path

Cultivating care and steadiness

Reflection on action

Choose what comes next

Continue - turn to page 18.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 42.

The change and the argument

Let us live happily, even when we claim nothing as our own.

The facts may require action even if an extra argument can rest briefly.

Care comes into the telling so that steadiness does not turn cold. Someone else's difficulty matters even when you cannot arrange its ending. The man asks whether a response can remain available without promising control. A hand offered and a result commanded are different gestures.

Practice pause

The event and the objection

1. Notice

Use a mild annoyance, such as a short wait, after immediate demands are handled.

2. Distinguish

Distinguish the situation from the thought that it should be different.

3. Watch

What happens when the objection receives no additional argument for a moment?

4. Release

Take any useful action. Accepting a moment for inspection does not require accepting a harmful situation.

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 part is the situation and which part is the objection?

Sources and wisdom

Cultivating care and steadiness

How elaboration gathers

The arrow

Choose what comes next

Continue - turn to page 17.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 42.

A quiet surface, an unattended responsibility

In this fictional branch, the character calls withdrawal steadiness of mind and leaves an agreed task unexplained. Someone else carries the burden. The avoided conversation returns as confusion and resentment. Numbness has not settled the responsibility.

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

Cultivating care and steadiness

Choose what comes next

Try another direction - turn to page 4.

Visit the temple again - turn to page 2.

Someone else is affected too

No fire burns like craving, no loss cuts like hatred, no pain compares with bodily pain, and no happiness is greater than peace.

Consider an ordinary difficulty without taking over another person’s experience.

Something neutral nearly disappears beneath the judgment that nothing is happening. The room has texture, sound, and support even without a strong feeling. An ordinary detail can loosen the rule that experience must entertain or trouble you before it deserves to be known.

Practice pause

Meeting difficulty with care

1. Notice

Bring to mind an ordinary difficulty someone is having.

2. Distinguish

Notice judgment, if present, and the possibility of wishing them relief.

3. Watch

Offer care without taking over their experience. What changes, if anything?

4. Release

Choose practical kindness if appropriate, or leave the intention there.

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 care would fit the actual situation?

Sources and wisdom

Cultivating care and steadiness

Choose what comes next

Continue - turn to page 37.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 42.

Act, then learn

Consider a practical choice and any effects you can actually know.

The review is brief. What added strain, what helped, and what remains outside your control? A judgment about being a calm person would take the story back into the old demand. A particular observation may be more useful than another identity to protect.

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 needs doing, checking, or repairing?

Sources and wisdom

Cultivating care and steadiness

Recognizing the direction

Reflection on action

Choose what comes next

Continue - turn to page 26.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 42.

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

“Care for what you can influence and acknowledge what you cannot command. The next ordinary action may matter more than maintaining a particular feeling.”

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

Sources and wisdom

Cultivating care and steadiness

Choose what comes next

Return to “No trial for having a feeling” - turn to page 29.

No trial for having a feeling

A reaction can be described without adding a prosecution for having it.

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

Sit beneath the tree while the teacher speaks through images of the elements. Earth receives things regarded as clean and things regarded as filthy without becoming personally offended. Water washes them; fire burns them; air moves among them. Space does not offer a place on which an injury can get a grip. These images invite a steadiness not built from demanding agreeable contact.

Practice pause

No second argument

1. Notice

Notice the feeling and any added thought such as “I should not feel this.” Find one stable point of contact beneath you.

2. Invite

Describe it plainly: “That was annoying. I am angry.” Compare that description with “I should not feel this.” Neither sentence needs to remove the anger.

3. Listen

Let the bodily sensation and the support beneath you share attention. When the inner prosecution restarts, return to describing the sensation rather than debating it.

4. Respond

Choose not to send, accuse, or decide for this brief interval. A feeling can be present without receiving an immediate 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

What was added by the second argument?

Sources and wisdom

Cultivating care and steadiness

The arrow

Choose what comes next

Continue into the adventure - turn to page 47.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 42.

Which invitation fits now?

You might explore a mild bodily reaction or the room that remains available around it.

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

Sit beneath the tree while the teacher speaks through images of the elements. Earth receives things regarded as clean and things regarded as filthy without becoming personally offended. Water washes them; fire burns them; air moves among them. Space does not offer a place on which an injury can get a grip. These images invite a steadiness not built from demanding agreeable contact.

Notice, without grading

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

Sources and wisdom

Cultivating care and steadiness

Choose what comes next

No trial for having a feeling - turn to page 28.

The changed plan is not the whole room - turn to page 24.

Look at another possibility - turn to page 49.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 42.

The reaction is an event

Notice a small arising or ending without insisting that an emotion disappear.

You consider an ordinary response rather than a final state of perfect balance. There may be a message to send, help to ask for, or rest to take. The tale has not trained you to be untouched. It has kept a little room in which an appropriate response can be found.

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 change was actually apparent?

Sources and wisdom

Cultivating care and steadiness

Establishing mindfulness

Mindfulness of breathing

Choose what comes next

Continue - turn to page 12.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 42.

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

Cultivating care and steadiness

Choose what comes next

Try an optional door that opens - turn to page 39.

Leave this exploration and continue - turn to page 5.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 42.

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

“Steadiness does not require the world to hold still. Notice what changes while you remain available to respond. Numbness is not the same as balance.”

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

Sources and wisdom

Cultivating care and steadiness

Choose what comes next

Return to “Steadiness of mind · The plan changes; support remains” - turn to page 32.

The changed plan is not the whole room

Include more than one available channel without dividing attention during a demanding task.

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

Stay for the practices of the heart. Goodwill is developed against ill will, compassion against cruelty, gladness for others against resentment, and evenness against resistance. The teaching also includes contemplations of unattractiveness and change, then returns to the detailed development of breathing.

Practice pause

Contact, sound, and sight together

1. Notice

Begin with your feet or the chair. Keep your eyes open and your breathing ordinary.

2. Invite

Add one sound or part of your view to the contact. Add a third available channel only if comfortable; two points of touch also work.

3. Listen

Compare contact alone with this wider selection. Which detail stays clear, fades, or returns when you look for it? If attention shifts, notice the shift and return when you choose.

4. Respond

Choose one familiar object, then feel your body and support clearly. Resume 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

What else was present alongside the concern?

Sources and wisdom

Cultivating care and steadiness

Establishing mindfulness

Choose what comes next

Continue into the adventure - turn to page 47.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 42.

The changed plan is not the whole room

Include more than one available channel without dividing attention during a demanding task.

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

Stay for the practices of the heart. Goodwill is developed against ill will, compassion against cruelty, gladness for others against resentment, and evenness against resistance. The teaching also includes contemplations of unattractiveness and change, then returns to the detailed development of breathing.

Practice pause

Contact, sound, and sight together

1. Notice

Begin with your feet or the chair. Keep your eyes open and your breathing ordinary.

2. Invite

Add one sound or part of your view to the contact. Add a third available channel only if comfortable; two points of touch also work.

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Compare contact alone with this wider selection. Which detail stays clear, fades, or returns when you look for it? If attention shifts, notice the shift and return when you choose.

4. Respond

Choose one familiar object, then feel your body and support clearly. Resume 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

What else was present alongside the concern?

Sources and wisdom

Cultivating care and steadiness

Establishing mindfulness

Choose what comes next

Return to the shared stretch - turn to page 30.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 42.

No composure certificate

Family, friends, and loved ones welcome someone who returns safely after a long absence.

There is no requirement to end with a perfectly settled mind.

The elements remain in the telling, and the room returns to its usual scale. You can be moved by life without having to be moved into every reaction it offers. The man sends you back with room for care, which is more useful than a requirement to feel steady all the time.

Practice pause

Ease without a review

1. Notice

If an easy moment is present, notice it. If not, simply sit comfortably.

2. Distinguish

Distinguish ease from excitement about being calm or checking whether it will last.

3. Watch

Let that extra evaluation rest briefly. Notice what remains.

4. Release

Look around and continue your day. There is no state to preserve.

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

Can the evaluation rest too?

Sources and wisdom

Cultivating care and steadiness

Mindfulness of breathing

Two sorts of thinking

Choose what comes next

Continue - turn to page 43.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 42.

No trial for having a feeling

A reaction can be described without adding a prosecution for having it.

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

Sit beneath the tree while the teacher speaks through images of the elements. Earth receives things regarded as clean and things regarded as filthy without becoming personally offended. Water washes them; fire burns them; air moves among them. Space does not offer a place on which an injury can get a grip. These images invite a steadiness not built from demanding agreeable contact.

Practice pause

No second argument

1. Notice

Notice the feeling and any added thought such as “I should not feel this.” Find one stable point of contact beneath you.

2. Invite

Describe it plainly: “That was annoying. I am angry.” Compare that description with “I should not feel this.” Neither sentence needs to remove the anger.

3. Listen

Let the bodily sensation and the support beneath you share attention. When the inner prosecution restarts, return to describing the sensation rather than debating it.

4. Respond

Choose not to send, accuse, or decide for this brief interval. A feeling can be present without receiving an immediate 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

What was added by the second argument?

Sources and wisdom

Cultivating care and steadiness

The arrow

Choose what comes next

Return to the shared stretch - turn to page 30.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 42.

Optional: visit the man in the temple - carry only what helps - turn to page 14.

A moment without a verdict

A neutral detail can exist while a concern remains unresolved.

You meet a small unpleasantness and notice the impulse to push the entire moment away. Water in Rahula's lesson does not become offended by what it washes. In this scene, the comparison gives a little room around the impulse, while actual needs and sensible boundaries remain intact.

Practice pause

Neutral has detail

1. Notice

Notice a familiar wall, background sound, or comfortable clothing contact.

2. Distinguish

Does it feel neither particularly pleasant nor unpleasant? Do not force neutrality.

3. Watch

Look for detail without trying to make it interesting. Is boredom a separate response?

4. Release

Let this ordinary experience return to the background.

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

Is boredom another response, or is that unclear?

Sources and wisdom

Cultivating care and steadiness

Establishing mindfulness

Choose what comes next

Continue - turn to page 35.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 42.

Steadiness of mind · The plan changes; support remains

A plan changes at the last minute. You still care about what happens, and something remains yours to do. There is space between fighting the whole moment and giving up on it.

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.

Rahula follows the Buddha toward town when a teaching about the body stops him short. Bodily form is not to be treated as a permanent self; the same examination reaches feeling, recognition, mental activity, and awareness. Rahula turns back and sits beneath a tree. Sariputta sees him there and recommends attention to breathing.

Notice, without grading

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

Sources and wisdom

Cultivating care and steadiness

Choose what comes next

Begin with the first practice - turn to page 47.

Explore another way in - turn to page 41.

In the story, turn steadiness into not caring - turn to page 4.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 42.

Optional: visit the man in the temple - the garden does not hurry - turn to page 21.

A mild irritation and its demand

Use only something harmless already present. Comfort and practical care remain available.

A feeling changes before you have decided what it means. The old instruction turns attention toward what is happening rather than toward the story of who should be able to prevent it. You can know the weather of this moment without declaring the whole day lost.

Practice pause

Unpleasant, and the response

1. Notice

If a harmless itch or small irritation is already present, notice it briefly. Never create discomfort.

2. Distinguish

Notice the unpleasant quality and any demand that it end.

3. Watch

Are these distinguishable? Adjust or scratch whenever you wish; do not endure pain.

4. Release

Take care of your comfort and finish the experiment.

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 is unpleasant, and what is your response?

Sources and wisdom

Cultivating care and steadiness

The arrow

Choose what comes next

Continue - turn to page 7.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 42.

Keep the care

Caring does not grant control over every outcome.

A pleasant event arrives, and holding it becomes the next occupation. The man smiles at how quickly relief can be appointed guardian of the future. You can receive a good moment without requiring it to sign a contract. Steadiness has a task here too.

Practice pause

Steady care

1. Notice

Think of someone you care about in an ordinary situation.

2. Distinguish

Distinguish wishing them well from needing a particular outcome.

3. Watch

Can care and steadiness be present together, even briefly?

4. Release

Keep appropriate responsibilities and boundaries. Release only the extra struggle you can leave.

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 remains a responsible action?

Sources and wisdom

Cultivating care and steadiness

Choose what comes next

Continue - turn to page 10.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 42.

Different days can coexist

Another person’s good fortune need not become evidence against your own day.

Another person's decision is outside your reach. The source's images do not ask you to stop caring about it. They invite a way of caring that does not spend the whole day trying to become someone else's will. Your next action can be chosen from where you actually stand.

Practice pause

Room for someone else’s joy

1. Notice

Recall someone’s small success or happiness.

2. Distinguish

Notice any comparison alongside the possibility of being glad for them.

3. Watch

Give their good fortune a moment of appreciative attention.

4. Release

Let your response be as it is. Warmth need not be forced.

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

Can appreciation coexist with unfinished concerns?

Sources and wisdom

Cultivating care and steadiness

Choose what comes next

Continue - turn to page 20.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 42.

An optional door that opens

Explore a protective imagined place with an entrance and a way back to the room.

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

A mental fortress

Take care

Keep this brief, seated or lying safely. Stop at dizziness, panic, disorientation, an unsettling sense of unreality, or other concerning effects. Use the return steps. Do not push through; if effects persist or worry you, seek professional support. Unusual does not mean advanced.

1. Prepare

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

2. Experiment

Choose a small invented room, garden, or fortress. Give it an entrance and three landmarks. Imagine being within it while feeling your actual support. Try opening a door, changing a wall, or softening an edge. Revisit briefly if useful.

3. Compare

Notice whether protection or openness changes the feel of attention, effort, or “me.” Leave the meaning open, then set the place aside.

4. Return

Look around and name familiar objects. Feel the chair or floor. Move your hands and feet. Stand or walk only when steady and appropriate, then resume ordinary activity.

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

Did the image support responsiveness or become another thing to hold?

Sources and wisdom

Cultivating care and steadiness

Fruits of the contemplative life

Choose what comes next

Continue with the story - turn to page 5.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 42.

Another way into this moment

You might explore a mild bodily reaction or the room that remains available around it.

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

Sit beneath the tree while the teacher speaks through images of the elements. Earth receives things regarded as clean and things regarded as filthy without becoming personally offended. Water washes them; fire burns them; air moves among them. Space does not offer a place on which an injury can get a grip. These images invite a steadiness not built from demanding agreeable contact.

Notice, without grading

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

Sources and wisdom

Cultivating care and steadiness

Choose what comes next

No trial for having a feeling - turn to page 15.

The changed plan is not the whole room - turn to page 22.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 42.

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

Cultivating care and steadiness

Choose what comes next

Visit the temple again - turn to page 2.

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 explored steadiness while experience changed. Remaining responsive can be more useful than trying to keep one feeling in place.

"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

Cultivating care and steadiness

Choose what comes next

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

The first response

Notice the quality of a moment before explaining why it should be different.

Earth receives what people prize and what they reject. You imagine the ground beneath a busy path, still supporting footsteps that do not agree about where to go. A body can have a place to settle while the mind recognizes that not every unwanted event requires a second fight.

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

Can feeling and preference be distinguished?

Sources and wisdom

Cultivating care and steadiness

Establishing mindfulness

Choose what comes next

Continue - turn to page 33.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 42.

The plan changes; support remains

As a solid rock stands firm in the wind, wise people remain steady through blame and praise.

Let an ordinary point of support begin the exploration.

The day's conditions have not asked your permission. A plan shifts, someone disappoints you, and a pleasant moment arrives at an inconvenient time. The man begins with Rahula learning from earth, water, fire, air, and space. These are images for a mind less easily recruited into resistance, not instructions to become unfeeling.

Practice pause

A place to sit

1. Notice

Sit in a position that feels comfortable. Notice where your body meets the seat.

2. Invite

Notice two points of contact: perhaps a hip and a thigh, or your back and the chair. Compare pressure or texture. Use another supported position if sitting is unavailable.

3. Listen

Make one small comfortable adjustment, or remain still and shift attention between those points. What changed in the contact, and what stayed the same? No posture needs to be achieved.

4. Respond

Let your attention move outward while the support remains beneath you.

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 be recognized without resolving the plan?

Sources and wisdom

Cultivating care and steadiness

Establishing mindfulness

Choose what comes next

Continue - turn to page 45.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 42.

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.

Stay for the practices of the heart. Goodwill is developed against ill will, compassion against cruelty, gladness for others against resentment, and evenness against resistance. The teaching also includes contemplations of unattractiveness and change, then returns to the detailed development of breathing.

Notice, without grading

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

Sources and wisdom

Cultivating care and steadiness

Choose what comes next

The changed plan is not the whole room - turn to page 24.

Continue with the next practice - turn to page 30.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 42.

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.

Steadiness is not indifference

The exercises distinguish feeling, extra struggle, and responsible action. They do not equate low arousal, numbness, or abandoning obligations with steadiness of mind.

Wider cultivation

A small changed plan is a starting example. The wider cultivation of steadiness of mind and liberation are not completed or measured here.

No second argument

supporting. No second argument: Allowing feeling while choosing care may support steadiness. Acceptance, soothing, or reduced distress alone does not establish source-based steadiness of mind or require accepting harm.

Contact, sound, and sight together

supporting. Contact, sound, and sight together: Attending to ordinary physical experience can prepare bodily mindfulness. This modern sensory comparison omits the full mindfulness framework and does not establish insight.

A place to sit

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

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.

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.

Ease without a review

adaptation. Ease without a review: This invitation adapts an operation from the cited discourse: settling body and mind. Natural breathing and temporary ease do not cover the sixteen trainings or establish deep collectedness.

Unpleasant, and the response

adaptation. Unpleasant, and the response: 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.

The event and the objection

adaptation. The event and the objection: This invitation adapts an operation from the cited discourse: recognizing and investigating wanting. Regulation or preference alone does not establish ethical skillfulness; all four efforts and consequences need consideration.

Neutral has detail

adaptation. Neutral has detail: 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.

Steady care

adaptation. Steady care: This invitation adapts an operation from the cited discourse: cultivating care. Modern imagery, permission, and interpersonal techniques are adaptations; the full cultivation is not covered.

Meeting difficulty with care

adaptation. Meeting difficulty with care: This invitation adapts an operation from the cited discourse: cultivating care. Modern imagery, permission, and interpersonal techniques are adaptations; the full cultivation is not covered.

Room for someone else’s joy

adaptation. Room for someone else’s joy: This invitation adapts an operation from the cited discourse: cultivating care. Modern imagery, permission, and interpersonal techniques are adaptations; the full cultivation is not covered.

Say no and let it stand

supporting. Say no and let it stand: Pausing and considering a response can support truthful, non-harming speech. Assertiveness or bodily confidence alone does not fulfill right speech; assess truthfulness, harm, and effects.

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.

A mental fortress

uncertain. A mental fortress: 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

Analysis of the path

Cultivating care and steadiness

Establishing mindfulness

Fruits of the contemplative life

How elaboration gathers

Mindfulness of breathing

Recognizing the direction

Reflection on action

The arrow

Two sorts of thinking

Choose what comes next

Return to the temple garden - turn to page 2.