Goodwill - 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

Goodwill. Cultivate care and harmless intentions in ordinary relationships.

“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 10.

Move on and enter the adventure - turn to page 10.

Optional: read how this telling was made - turn to page 53.

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 care for yourself and other people. A kind intention can accompany a practical boundary as well as an open hand.

"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.

Another position, your own ground

Consider possible explanations for an ordinary exchange while keeping your needs and the facts clear.

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

Try their chair, keep your feet

1. Notice

Wait until there is enough steadiness to think. Notice your feet and state what you actually saw or heard, separate from the motive you assigned.

2. Invite

Imagine hearing the exchange from the other person’s position. Offer two possible explanations, such as misunderstanding or a competing pressure; neither is established fact.

3. Listen

Return attention to your own body. Ask what still matters to you, even if one of those explanations is true.

4. Respond

If safe and useful, ask a real question: “What did you mean by that?” Understanding their perspective does not require agreement, forgiveness, or remaining in an unsafe 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 explanation is a possibility rather than established fact?

Sources and wisdom

Cultivating care and steadiness

Choose what comes next

Return to the shared stretch - turn to page 32.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 16.

Another position, your own ground

Consider possible explanations for an ordinary exchange while keeping your needs and the facts clear.

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

Try their chair, keep your feet

1. Notice

Wait until there is enough steadiness to think. Notice your feet and state what you actually saw or heard, separate from the motive you assigned.

2. Invite

Imagine hearing the exchange from the other person’s position. Offer two possible explanations, such as misunderstanding or a competing pressure; neither is established fact.

3. Listen

Return attention to your own body. Ask what still matters to you, even if one of those explanations is true.

4. Respond

If safe and useful, ask a real question: “What did you mean by that?” Understanding their perspective does not require agreement, forgiveness, or remaining in an unsafe 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 explanation is a possibility rather than established fact?

Sources and wisdom

Cultivating care and steadiness

Choose what comes next

Continue into the adventure - turn to page 25.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 16.

Goodwill · Make room for your own arrival

Someone you know has had a good day. Someone else is struggling. Your own day is unfinished. There is room to explore care without manufacturing a feeling or taking over anyone’s life.

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 25.

Explore another way in - turn to page 40.

In the story, care by taking everything over - turn to page 52.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 16.

Optional: visit the man in the temple - the garden does not hurry - turn to page 13.

An optional place for care

Imagine a small place with a way in and out while actual support stays clear. Explore whether protection and openness can coexist.

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

Keep the image only if it helps you meet ordinary life.

Sources and wisdom

Cultivating care and steadiness

Fruits of the contemplative life

Choose what comes next

Continue with the story - turn to page 29.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 16.

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

“Care need not wait for a warm feeling. You can begin by wishing not to add harm, and by choosing one action that gives someone room to breathe.”

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 “Goodwill · Make room for your own arrival” - turn to page 10.

Care can include no

An honest boundary can keep kindness from becoming a bargain for approval.

A boundary is needed. Nothing in the room becomes less kind because the answer may be no. In this original scene, the man moves a cup from the edge of a table: protection need not be an accusation. Care includes the person setting the boundary as well as the person hearing it.

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

What can you choose without controlling their reaction?

Sources and wisdom

Analysis of the path

Cultivating care and steadiness

Reflection on action

Choose what comes next

Continue - turn to page 43.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 16.

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.

A question before the answer

Even among people who hate, we can live free from hatred.

There may be information you do not have yet.

You begin forming an answer and then notice a question that has not been asked. Perhaps the other person needs a listener; perhaps there is something you have not understood. The ancient practice of care acquires a modern pause before a voice or a message goes out.

Practice pause

Curiosity before the rebuttal

Take care

A yes is voluntary. Keep no available, respect the other person’s no, and leave coercive or unsafe interactions. Openness does not require trust without evidence, agreement, disclosure, or a personality change. Keep your eyes open if helpful and breathe naturally. Stop if you become dizzy, panicked, disoriented, unusually detached, or overwhelmed. Look around, feel ordinary support, and seek help if the effects persist. Do not push through to prove readiness.

1. Prepare

2 minutes. Choose a minor difference of preference. Rehearse alone, or invite a willing partner who knows this is a short listening exercise and may decline. Choose a comfortable position and an optional gentle timer. Shorten any phase if needed.

2. Experiment

14 minutes. Spend four minutes stating the preference without arguing for it. For five minutes, practice an open question such as “What do you enjoy about that?” With a partner, listen without preparing your next case, then check your understanding. Alone, leave their answer unknown rather than inventing it. For five minutes, prepare or offer your own view in one or two sentences, including anything you honestly learned.

3. Compare

2 minutes. Did curiosity produce information, or merely delay a rebuttal? Agreement is optional. Notice one way to ask a less loaded question next time.

4. Return

2 minutes. End the deliberate exercise. Look around, name where you are, and notice the chair or floor. Move comfortably if appropriate. Choose one ordinary next action and give yourself time before resuming it. Record a sentence only if useful; an unfinished exploration is enough.

5. 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 would you actually want to understand?

Sources and wisdom

Analysis of the path

Cultivating care and steadiness

Reflection on action

Choose what comes next

Continue - turn to page 14.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 16.

A point you can honestly meet

A small agreement need not erase disagreement or boundaries.

There is a person whose position you resist. Rather than asking you to approve their whole story, the man asks whether there is one point you can understand without surrendering your judgment. A little honest recognition can make a conversation possible where a sweeping declaration of love would only feel false.

Practice pause

One true point of agreement

Take care

A yes is voluntary. Keep no available, respect the other person’s no, and leave coercive or unsafe interactions. Openness does not require trust without evidence, agreement, disclosure, or a personality change. Keep your eyes open if helpful and breathe naturally. Stop if you become dizzy, panicked, disoriented, unusually detached, or overwhelmed. Look around, feel ordinary support, and seek help if the effects persist. Do not push through to prove readiness.

1. Prepare

2 minutes. Write a low-stakes suggestion you might usually dismiss, such as trying a different lunch place. Choose something that does not involve pressure, danger, or an important boundary. Choose a comfortable position and an optional gentle timer. Shorten any phase if needed.

2. Experiment

9 minutes. For three minutes, write your immediate response without acting on it. For three minutes, identify one part you can sincerely acknowledge: the person’s interest, a practical benefit, or a shared wish. For three minutes, say several responses aloud, each adding something true: “Yes, a change could be nice, and I would like somewhere quiet.” If you cannot agree, try “I see what appeals to you; here is what would work for me.”

3. Compare

2 minutes. Which response allows contact without pretending? Notice whether the contribution is specific enough to help someone respond. You do not have to accept the original suggestion.

4. Return

2 minutes. End the deliberate exercise. Look around, name where you are, and notice the chair or floor. Move comfortably if appropriate. Choose one ordinary next action and give yourself time before resuming it. Record a sentence only if useful; an unfinished exploration is enough.

5. 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 affirmed truthfully?

Sources and wisdom

Analysis of the path

Cultivating care and steadiness

Reflection on action

Choose what comes next

Continue - turn to page 17.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 16.

Which invitation fits now?

Care can start with receiving kindness or understanding a small part of another person’s position.

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

Let a kindness arrive - turn to page 45.

Another position, your own ground - turn to page 6.

Look at another possibility - turn to page 24.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 16.

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

Another position, your own ground - turn to page 6.

Continue with the next practice - turn to page 32.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 16.

Make room for your own arrival

Hatred never ends through hatred; it ends through love. This has always been true.

You can begin with support rather than another obligation to be kind.

Someone you know comes to mind before you have decided to invite them. The man begins with Rahula beneath a tree, learning a training that includes body, breath, and the qualities of the heart. Here is a smaller meeting: yourself arriving with your own mixture of warmth, fatigue, and resistance.

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 support is already present?

Sources and wisdom

Cultivating care and steadiness

Establishing mindfulness

Choose what comes next

Continue - turn to page 38.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 16.

Difficulty without taking over

Bring an ordinary difficulty to mind and explore wishing relief.

Now someone else's difficulty comes into view. The temptation is to make a promise too large to keep or to turn away because you cannot repair everything. The tale opens a third possibility: care that recognizes suffering and asks what help is actually possible.

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 help, if any, would actually be appropriate?

Sources and wisdom

Cultivating care and steadiness

Choose what comes next

Continue - turn to page 34.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 16.

An ordinary interaction

Let us live happily, free from greed even among the greedy.

Explore a considerate tone and interest without performing endless friendliness.

The imagined encounter becomes ordinary enough to enter your life: a doorway, a message, a request, a brief exchange while someone is tired. The lesson is no longer an opinion about how loving you should be. It is a chance to decide what the next small act will carry.

Practice pause

Gentle, interested, present

1. Notice

Notice your current posture, breathing, and urge to act.

2. Name

Name the present situation as simply as you can.

3. Choose

Choose this invitation if it suits the moment. You can leave it at any point.

4. Try

Avoid threats or attacks. Listen with genuine interest, acknowledge what is understandable in the other person’s experience, and use an approachable manner. Eye contact and posture can vary; effectiveness does not require a performance.

5. Observe

Notice what followed, including little or no change. Decide what the situation needs next.

6. Return

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

7. 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 made room for another person?

Sources and wisdom

Analysis of the path

Cultivating care and steadiness

Reflection on action

Choose what comes next

Continue - turn to page 50.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 16.

Care turns into a demand

In this fictional branch, the character insists on solving someone else’s problem and requires gratitude for the effort. The other person pulls away. Concern becomes exhaustion and resentment when care is used to control the outcome.

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 52.

Visit the temple again - turn to page 2.

Care without owning the ending

Someone can matter to you while their outcome remains outside your control.

Rahula's instruction also includes a steadiness that does not oppose every unwanted event. You imagine caring for someone whose choices you cannot make. The wish for their well-being can remain while the demand to arrange their life is allowed to loosen. Their day is not yours to own.

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

Which responsibility is yours?

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 16.

Their good news has room

Avoid harmful actions as a merchant carrying valuable goods avoids a dangerous road, or as someone who values life avoids poison.

Notice comparison without making their happiness a verdict on your life.

A person has good news. For a moment their happiness brushes against an old comparison in you. The man lets that small sting enter the story honestly. Gladness for another person need not begin with pretending that envy never arrived; it can begin with what you choose to feed next.

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 their good fortune matter for a moment?

Sources and wisdom

Cultivating care and steadiness

Choose what comes next

Continue - turn to page 23.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 16.

What followed the care?

Even among people driven by greed, we can live without it.

Separate the intention to help from effects you actually observed.

The person you imagined returns to a life beyond this telling. So do you. The man leaves the tree and its larger teaching visible in the distance, while one usable intention remains close enough to carry. You need not keep a feeling alive in order to choose care again.

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 would you repeat, adjust, or check later?

Sources and wisdom

Cultivating care and steadiness

Recognizing the direction

Reflection on action

Choose what comes next

Continue - turn to page 4.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 16.

A simple wish

Begin with someone easy to like. Warmth is not required for a well-wishing intention.

The lesson turns toward goodwill as an answer to ill will. There is no order to produce a glowing feeling on command. An ordinary wish that harm need not be added is enough material to examine. You can begin with a person for whom that wish is not a battle.

Practice pause

Wishing well

1. Notice

Think of someone easy to like.

2. Distinguish

Offer a simple wish for their safety and well-being.

3. Watch

Notice the response. Later, if comfortable, include someone you feel neutral about.

4. Release

Let the wish rest. You need not start with a difficult relationship.

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 intention invite, including no obvious response?

Sources and wisdom

Cultivating care and steadiness

Choose what comes next

Continue - turn to page 27.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 16.

Another way into this moment

Care can start with receiving kindness or understanding a small part of another person’s position.

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

Let a kindness arrive - turn to page 41.

Another position, your own ground - turn to page 8.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 16.

Let a kindness arrive

A kind word does not have to become an argument about whether you deserve 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

Receive a kind word

Take care

A yes is voluntary. Keep no available, respect the other person’s no, and leave coercive or unsafe interactions. Openness does not require trust without evidence, agreement, disclosure, or a personality change. Keep your eyes open if helpful and breathe naturally. Stop if you become dizzy, panicked, disoriented, unusually detached, or overwhelmed. Look around, feel ordinary support, and seek help if the effects persist. Do not push through to prove readiness.

1. Prepare

2 minutes. Recall a mild, genuine compliment or use a written example for rehearsal. Avoid material tied to manipulation or a difficult relationship. Choose a comfortable position and an optional gentle timer. Shorten any phase if needed.

2. Experiment

4 minutes. For one minute, notice the urge to contradict, minimize, or immediately return a compliment. For one minute, rehearse “Thank you” in your ordinary voice. For the next two minutes, allow the words and present body contact to coexist. You may add one true detail, such as “I enjoyed working on it,” without defending your worth or promising more.

3. Compare

2 minutes. Did receiving feel different from agreeing with every word? Notice whether a simple response preserved both connection and your own judgment.

4. Return

2 minutes. End the deliberate exercise. Look around, name where you are, and notice the chair or floor. Move comfortably if appropriate. Choose one ordinary next action and give yourself time before resuming it. Record a sentence only if useful; an unfinished exploration is enough.

5. 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 it like to receive rather than earn?

Sources and wisdom

Analysis of the path

Cultivating care and steadiness

Reflection on action

Choose what comes next

Continue into the adventure - turn to page 25.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 16.

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 place for care - turn to page 11.

Leave this exploration and continue - turn to page 29.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 16.

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

“A kind intention can stand beside a clear boundary. You do not have to excuse harm, force closeness, or neglect yourself to practice goodwill.”

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 “Let a kindness arrive” - turn to page 47.

Let a kindness arrive

A kind word does not have to become an argument about whether you deserve 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

Receive a kind word

Take care

A yes is voluntary. Keep no available, respect the other person’s no, and leave coercive or unsafe interactions. Openness does not require trust without evidence, agreement, disclosure, or a personality change. Keep your eyes open if helpful and breathe naturally. Stop if you become dizzy, panicked, disoriented, unusually detached, or overwhelmed. Look around, feel ordinary support, and seek help if the effects persist. Do not push through to prove readiness.

1. Prepare

2 minutes. Recall a mild, genuine compliment or use a written example for rehearsal. Avoid material tied to manipulation or a difficult relationship. Choose a comfortable position and an optional gentle timer. Shorten any phase if needed.

2. Experiment

4 minutes. For one minute, notice the urge to contradict, minimize, or immediately return a compliment. For one minute, rehearse “Thank you” in your ordinary voice. For the next two minutes, allow the words and present body contact to coexist. You may add one true detail, such as “I enjoyed working on it,” without defending your worth or promising more.

3. Compare

2 minutes. Did receiving feel different from agreeing with every word? Notice whether a simple response preserved both connection and your own judgment.

4. Return

2 minutes. End the deliberate exercise. Look around, name where you are, and notice the chair or floor. Move comfortably if appropriate. Choose one ordinary next action and give yourself time before resuming it. Record a sentence only if useful; an unfinished exploration is enough.

5. 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 it like to receive rather than earn?

Sources and wisdom

Analysis of the path

Cultivating care and steadiness

Reflection on action

Choose what comes next

Return to the shared stretch - turn to page 32.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 16.

Optional: visit the man in the temple - carry only what helps - turn to page 44.

If something went wrong

Acknowledge a specific action without turning yourself into the whole problem.

Something may have gone poorly. A careless word, an offer pressed too hard, a boundary left unspoken. The story does not end goodwill at the first mistake. You can acknowledge what happened and consider repair without deciding that all care was false because it was imperfect.

Practice pause

Repair without disappearing

1. Notice

Recall a manageable recent interaction where your behavior caused a problem. Notice support beneath your body.

2. Invite

Name the specific action and its likely impact without explaining it away or declaring yourself a bad person.

3. Listen

Rehearse a repair: “I interrupted you. I am sorry. I want to hear the rest.” Let the words be plain.

4. Respond

Make the repair if appropriate and follow through. The other person does not owe immediate forgiveness or reassurance.

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 repair is safe and realistic?

Sources and wisdom

Analysis of the path

Cultivating care and steadiness

Reflection on action

Choose what comes next

Continue - turn to page 36.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 16.

Let the intention become conduct

Before a small action, consider truthfulness and its likely effects. Rehearsal is enough if action is inappropriate.

The instruction has to leave the cushion eventually. You consider a particular action that could express the intention without forcing closeness or demanding gratitude. A kind wish can be quiet and still change how a sentence is spoken or a task is shared.

A modern practice pause

Before the reply

Before you begin

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

Take care

No message needs to be sent. Keep boundaries and necessary protective action.

1. Invitation 1

Use a low-stakes message, real or imagined. Keep your hands comfortably supported. Leave urgent or unsafe situations to practical care.

2. Invitation 2

Before replying, ask whether the words are truthful and whether sending them is likely to harm you, the other person, or both. Bodily tension is information, not the answer to that question.

3. Invitation 3

Draft one accurate sentence without an accusation about a motive you cannot know. If it would cause avoidable harm, revise it or choose not to send it.

4. Invitation 4

If you speak or send, remain attentive to the effects. Stop or correct course when harm becomes apparent. You can also leave the draft unsent.

After the practice

What did you choose, and what still needs checking?

Notice, without grading

Would this help, harm, or need more information?

Sources and wisdom

Analysis of the path

Cultivating care and steadiness

Reflection on action

Choose what comes next

Continue - turn to page 48.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 16.

A fictional turn

Explore this as a story only. The character could care by taking everything over. 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 31.

Try the shared stretch instead - turn to page 25.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 16.

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.

From one person toward wider goodwill

Beginning with manageable relationships is an adaptation. This adventure does not complete boundless cultivation or require starting with an unsafe or difficult relationship.

Care, conduct, and boundaries

A kind feeling cannot replace truthful speech, practical help, appropriate boundaries, or responsibilities. These invitations must be tested in actual conduct.

Receive a kind word

supporting. Receive a kind word: 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.

Try their chair, keep your feet

supporting. Try their chair, keep your feet: A considerate intention or action can support goodwill and harmlessness. Modern imagery, permission, and interpersonal techniques are adaptations; the full cultivation is not covered.

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.

Wishing well

adaptation. Wishing well: 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.

Repair without disappearing

supporting. Repair without disappearing: 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.

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.

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.

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.

One true point of agreement

supporting. One true point of agreement: 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.

Curiosity before the rebuttal

supporting. Curiosity before the rebuttal: 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.

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.

Gentle, interested, present

supporting. Gentle, interested, present: 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.

Before the reply

adaptation. Before the reply: 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.

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

Recognizing the direction

Reflection on action

Choose what comes next

Return to the temple garden - turn to page 2.