In Tandem - 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

In Tandem. At a quiet riverside workshop, calm and careful inquiry can begin in different orders.

“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

In tandem

Choose what comes next

Sit, listen, and begin - turn to page 27.

Move on and enter the adventure - turn to page 27.

Optional: read how this telling was made - turn to page 65.

Make room to settle

For this stretch, reduce one unnecessary demand and notice what attention can do under those conditions.

At the quieter table, the maker sets down the wish to inspect everything at once. The river can be heard without becoming a task. This part of the visit asks whether less unnecessary activity gives careful looking somewhere to stand. It is not a prize for keeping every thought outside the workshop.

Practice pause

Conditions for quiet

1. Notice

Sit comfortably somewhere you can pause safely.

2. Distinguish

Notice breathing and any unnecessary effort around it. Change position if needed.

3. Watch

Allow breathing to remain natural while effort softens if it can.

4. Release

End gently. A busy mind is not a failed attempt.

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 observable, and what would be useful next?

Sources and wisdom

In tandem

Mindfulness of breathing

Choose what comes next

Continue this sequence - turn to page 51.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 20.

Let the workshop commentary rest

Useful thinking can resume later. You do not have to solve the whole practice before allowing a short pause.

At the quieter table, the maker sets down the wish to inspect everything at once. The river can be heard without becoming a task. This part of the visit asks whether less unnecessary activity gives careful looking somewhere to stand. It is not a prize for keeping every thought outside the workshop.

Practice pause

Let useful thinking rest

1. Notice

After dealing with immediate needs, notice what your thinking is doing.

2. Distinguish

Is the current commentary useful, or simply continuing?

3. Watch

If it can wait, leave it alone and attend to an ordinary breath or comfortable sitting.

4. Release

Return to thinking when useful. No blankness is required.

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 observable, and what would be useful next?

Sources and wisdom

In tandem

Relaxation of thoughts

Two sorts of thinking

Choose what comes next

Let the two approaches meet - turn to page 38.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 20.

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

“If looking becomes a struggle, make room for steadiness. If calm becomes a way to avoid seeing, return gently to a useful question. Neither needs to defeat the other.”

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

Sources and wisdom

In tandem

Choose what comes next

Return to “Take a place by the river” - turn to page 43.

Which order would you like to explore?

These four sequences introduce different relationships between calm and inquiry. You may try another on a later visit; this choice assigns no identity or attainment.

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

Sit with the account that begins in quiet. Attention becomes steady enough to investigate, and investigation is not treated as an enemy of that steadiness. Or turn the scene around: someone sees a habit clearly enough that its urgency begins to loosen, and a space for quiet appears.

Notice, without grading

What was observable, and what would be useful next?

Sources and wisdom

In tandem

Choose what comes next

Begin with settling, then examine - turn to page 36.

Begin with inquiry, then settle - turn to page 23.

Let settling and inquiry take turns - turn to page 4.

Let a restless search for answers settle - turn to page 14.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 20.

Make room to settle

For this stretch, reduce one unnecessary demand and notice what attention can do under those conditions.

At the quieter table, the maker sets down the wish to inspect everything at once. The river can be heard without becoming a task. This part of the visit asks whether less unnecessary activity gives careful looking somewhere to stand. It is not a prize for keeping every thought outside the workshop.

Practice pause

Conditions for quiet

1. Notice

Sit comfortably somewhere you can pause safely.

2. Distinguish

Notice breathing and any unnecessary effort around it. Change position if needed.

3. Watch

Allow breathing to remain natural while effort softens if it can.

4. Release

End gently. A busy mind is not a failed attempt.

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 observable, and what would be useful next?

Sources and wisdom

In tandem

Mindfulness of breathing

Choose what comes next

Continue this sequence - turn to page 25.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 20.

Begin with an ordinary detail

There has never been, and never will be, a person who is always blamed or always praised.

A neutral detail can be enough. You need not summon a powerful feeling before you can investigate.

The maker places a familiar object where the light reaches it. Before any method becomes important, here is a detail that can be known. You can come closer to it, or make a little room around the urgency to inspect it. Both tables remain part of one workshop.

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

What was observable, and what would be useful next?

Sources and wisdom

Establishing mindfulness

In tandem

Choose what comes next

Continue - turn to page 53.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 20.

Let the workshop commentary rest

Useful thinking can resume later. You do not have to solve the whole practice before allowing a short pause.

At the quieter table, the maker sets down the wish to inspect everything at once. The river can be heard without becoming a task. This part of the visit asks whether less unnecessary activity gives careful looking somewhere to stand. It is not a prize for keeping every thought outside the workshop.

Practice pause

Let useful thinking rest

1. Notice

After dealing with immediate needs, notice what your thinking is doing.

2. Distinguish

Is the current commentary useful, or simply continuing?

3. Watch

If it can wait, leave it alone and attend to an ordinary breath or comfortable sitting.

4. Release

Return to thinking when useful. No blankness is required.

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 observable, and what would be useful next?

Sources and wisdom

In tandem

Relaxation of thoughts

Two sorts of thinking

Choose what comes next

Continue this sequence - turn to page 10.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 20.

Leave both tables available

When you keep searching for others’ faults and taking offense, your own cravings grow rather than come to an end.

The workshop closes for today. You can return through another order without invalidating this visit.

The maker clears neither table out of the room. Both may be needed another day, perhaps in a different order. You leave the workshop with the river still moving and no permanent account to defend. The man welcomes an observation small enough to be revised when the next occasion teaches something new.

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

What was observable, and what would be useful next?

Sources and wisdom

In tandem

Mindfulness of breathing

Two sorts of thinking

Choose what comes next

Continue - turn to page 59.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 20.

Remain responsive

Of all the stains on the mind, a lack of understanding is the deepest.

Steadiness need not mean shutting out discomfort or another person. Keep care available alongside the inquiry.

You can remain responsive while the river keeps changing its sound. A moment of calm does not need to be protected from every question. A good question does not need to keep the mind permanently busy. Their relationship can be tested by what happens, not decided by loyalty to one table.

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 was observable, and what would be useful next?

Sources and wisdom

Cultivating care and steadiness

In tandem

Choose what comes next

Continue - turn to page 55.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 20.

The journey can continue elsewhere

A task, another person, rest or a different practice may be the next useful part of the walk.

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 scene remains available in your account when signed in, or in this browser for guests when storage works.

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

In tandem

Choose what comes next

Visit the temple again - turn to page 2.

When a result becomes a demand

Notice the urge to evaluate your sequence. Does the evaluation help you act, or keep the workshop busy?

The wish for a result returns with a polished name. It would be satisfying to leave as the person who has found their true order of practice. The maker turns the name over like a label for an unfinished tool. A label can be useful; it cannot do the work it describes.

Practice pause

Catch a small want

1. Notice

While safely waiting, notice a wish to check your phone or have a page finish loading.

2. Distinguish

How is the want apparent: words, bodily tension, an image, or something else?

3. Watch

Notice whether it persists, shifts, or disappears.

4. Release

Choose what to do. Observing does not obligate you to refuse the want.

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 observable, and what would be useful next?

Sources and wisdom

Establishing mindfulness

In tandem

Choose what comes next

Continue - turn to page 18.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 20.

Examine a small change

Notice one ordinary event appearing, continuing and ending. The exercise is a beginning, not a complete insight.

At the examining table, the maker leaves room for a detail to correct an expectation. A question can be precise without becoming relentless. This part of the visit asks whether understanding one ordinary event changes the urgency around it. Quiet is still available; inquiry does not have to keep proving its usefulness by continuing forever.

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 was observable, and what would be useful next?

Sources and wisdom

Establishing mindfulness

In tandem

Mindfulness of breathing

Choose what comes next

Continue this sequence - turn to page 31.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 20.

Separate the strands

Look at one moment through several simple questions. Description and understanding can remain incomplete.

At the examining table, the maker leaves room for a detail to correct an expectation. A question can be precise without becoming relentless. This part of the visit asks whether understanding one ordinary event changes the urgency around it. Quiet is still available; inquiry does not have to keep proving its usefulness by continuing forever.

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

What was observable, and what would be useful next?

Sources and wisdom

In tandem

The fourfold round

Choose what comes next

Continue this sequence - turn to page 61.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 20.

In Tandem

Two worktables stand beside a river: one offers a place to settle, the other a place to examine a small question. You can find a useful order without deciding what kind of practitioner you are forever.

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.

At the monastery in Kosambi, Ananda addresses the community as fellow practitioners. People have come to him speaking of complete liberation. Their accounts do not all begin in the same way. He describes four patterns in how the path has developed.

Notice, without grading

What was observable, and what would be useful next?

Sources and wisdom

In tandem

Choose what comes next

Begin with an ordinary moment - turn to page 42.

Explore a fictional shortcut - turn to page 48.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 20.

Optional: visit the man in the temple - the garden does not hurry - turn to page 33.

Try an open courtyard

If useful, a simple courtyard image can represent making room for both quiet and questions. This is an optional personal exploration, not one of the four methods prescribed in the reference.

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

Build a courtyard that opens outward

Before you begin

Choose a comfortable resting position and briefly represent an open courtyard, window, or path. Name one detail of the imagined place without needing a vivid picture.

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 comfortable resting position and briefly represent an open courtyard, window, or path. Name one detail of the imagined place without needing a vivid picture.

2. Experiment

If comfortable, imagine a doorway opening or a wall softening. Notice whether the boundary of “me” feels more or less defended, or unchanged. Then name one real sound, color, or texture. Move a hand comfortably if available, comparing the imagined place with the actual setting.

3. Compare

You can let the scene go without forcing any change to your sense of self. Protection can be set aside when useful; you do not have to stay inside. Feel your seat and begin a small activity: read a sentence, put an object away, or contact someone. If you feel detached or disoriented, stop the imagery and use the shared return steps.

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

Was this useful today? An image, memory or feeling does not establish the source’s reported outcomes.

Sources and wisdom

Fruits of the contemplative life

In tandem

Choose what comes next

Return to the shared stretch - turn to page 21.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 20.

Separate the strands

Look at one moment through several simple questions. Description and understanding can remain incomplete.

At the examining table, the maker leaves room for a detail to correct an expectation. A question can be precise without becoming relentless. This part of the visit asks whether understanding one ordinary event changes the urgency around it. Quiet is still available; inquiry does not have to keep proving its usefulness by continuing forever.

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

What was observable, and what would be useful next?

Sources and wisdom

In tandem

The fourfold round

Choose what comes next

Continue this sequence - turn to page 46.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 20.

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

“Calm and careful looking can support each other. Sometimes settling makes inquiry possible; sometimes understanding eases agitation. Test the order that serves this moment.”

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

Sources and wisdom

In tandem

Choose what comes next

Return to “In Tandem” - turn to page 27.

Let the workshop commentary rest

Useful thinking can resume later. You do not have to solve the whole practice before allowing a short pause.

At the quieter table, the maker sets down the wish to inspect everything at once. The river can be heard without becoming a task. This part of the visit asks whether less unnecessary activity gives careful looking somewhere to stand. It is not a prize for keeping every thought outside the workshop.

Practice pause

Let useful thinking rest

1. Notice

After dealing with immediate needs, notice what your thinking is doing.

2. Distinguish

Is the current commentary useful, or simply continuing?

3. Watch

If it can wait, leave it alone and attend to an ordinary breath or comfortable sitting.

4. Release

Return to thinking when useful. No blankness is required.

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 observable, and what would be useful next?

Sources and wisdom

In tandem

Relaxation of thoughts

Two sorts of thinking

Choose what comes next

Continue this sequence - turn to page 44.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 20.

Make room to settle

For this stretch, reduce one unnecessary demand and notice what attention can do under those conditions.

At the quieter table, the maker sets down the wish to inspect everything at once. The river can be heard without becoming a task. This part of the visit asks whether less unnecessary activity gives careful looking somewhere to stand. It is not a prize for keeping every thought outside the workshop.

Practice pause

Conditions for quiet

1. Notice

Sit comfortably somewhere you can pause safely.

2. Distinguish

Notice breathing and any unnecessary effort around it. Change position if needed.

3. Watch

Allow breathing to remain natural while effort softens if it can.

4. Release

End gently. A busy mind is not a failed attempt.

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 observable, and what would be useful next?

Sources and wisdom

In tandem

Mindfulness of breathing

Choose what comes next

Continue this sequence - turn to page 34.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 20.

An optional personal exploration

You can try a personally developed exercise, or continue without it. Its practical usefulness can be considered separately from its uncertain correspondence to the source.

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 was observable, and what would be useful next?

Sources and wisdom

In tandem

Choose what comes next

Try try an open courtyard - turn to page 28.

Continue without this exploration - turn to page 21.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 20.

Protecting a certificate

In the fictional workshop, the character calls a pleasant pause a final achievement. Every new sound becomes a threat to that claim. Defending the label brings more tension and less willingness to learn.

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 outcome is not a judgment about you. Retrace it, choose a different response, or leave for now.

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

In tandem

Choose what comes next

Try another direction - turn to page 48.

Visit the temple again - turn to page 2.

Set a modest direction

The intention is to learn something useful about attention, rather than to pass a hidden test.

The river is moving while you decide what kind of visit this will be. A modest intention is enough: to notice whether settling and looking can help each other. There is no certificate for choosing the correct table. The workshop is a modern image for a relationship described in the old teaching, not its complete training.

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

What was observable, and what would be useful next?

Sources and wisdom

How elaboration gathers

In tandem

The fourfold round

Choose what comes next

Continue - turn to page 12.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 20.

Take a place by the river

After listening to the teaching, wise people become calm like a deep, clear, still lake.

Know the position you are actually in. No river image or special posture is necessary.

At the riverside workshop, one table is cleared for quiet work and another holds things ready to examine. The maker welcomes you without assigning a table. The man tells how Ananda heard accounts of liberation that began differently. Some first settled, some first understood, some developed both together, and some found steadiness after a restless search.

Practice pause

Knowing this position

1. Notice

Notice whether you are sitting, standing, walking, or lying down.

2. Distinguish

How do you know? Notice contact and position without adjusting them.

3. Watch

Stay with that ordinary knowledge briefly.

4. Release

Continue your activity; there is nothing to retain.

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 observable, and what would be useful next?

Sources and wisdom

Establishing mindfulness

In tandem

Choose what comes next

Continue - turn to page 40.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 20.

Optional: visit the man in the temple - carry only what helps - turn to page 8.

Examine a small change

Notice one ordinary event appearing, continuing and ending. The exercise is a beginning, not a complete insight.

At the examining table, the maker leaves room for a detail to correct an expectation. A question can be precise without becoming relentless. This part of the visit asks whether understanding one ordinary event changes the urgency around it. Quiet is still available; inquiry does not have to keep proving its usefulness by continuing forever.

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 was observable, and what would be useful next?

Sources and wisdom

Establishing mindfulness

In tandem

Mindfulness of breathing

Choose what comes next

Continue this sequence - turn to page 63.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 20.

Make room to settle

For this stretch, reduce one unnecessary demand and notice what attention can do under those conditions.

At the quieter table, the maker sets down the wish to inspect everything at once. The river can be heard without becoming a task. This part of the visit asks whether less unnecessary activity gives careful looking somewhere to stand. It is not a prize for keeping every thought outside the workshop.

Practice pause

Conditions for quiet

1. Notice

Sit comfortably somewhere you can pause safely.

2. Distinguish

Notice breathing and any unnecessary effort around it. Change position if needed.

3. Watch

Allow breathing to remain natural while effort softens if it can.

4. Release

End gently. A busy mind is not a failed attempt.

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 observable, and what would be useful next?

Sources and wisdom

In tandem

Mindfulness of breathing

Choose what comes next

Continue this sequence - turn to page 6.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 20.

A fictional shortcut

Make a moment of calm into proof of success. This direction is a story to examine, not an instruction to perform.

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 was observable, and what would be useful next?

Sources and wisdom

In tandem

Choose what comes next

Follow the fictional consequence - turn to page 39.

Begin with the shared practice instead - turn to page 42.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 20.

Separate the strands

Look at one moment through several simple questions. Description and understanding can remain incomplete.

At the examining table, the maker leaves room for a detail to correct an expectation. A question can be precise without becoming relentless. This part of the visit asks whether understanding one ordinary event changes the urgency around it. Quiet is still available; inquiry does not have to keep proving its usefulness by continuing forever.

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

What was observable, and what would be useful next?

Sources and wisdom

In tandem

The fourfold round

Choose what comes next

Let the two approaches meet - turn to page 38.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 20.

Examine a small change

Notice one ordinary event appearing, continuing and ending. The exercise is a beginning, not a complete insight.

At the examining table, the maker leaves room for a detail to correct an expectation. A question can be precise without becoming relentless. This part of the visit asks whether understanding one ordinary event changes the urgency around it. Quiet is still available; inquiry does not have to keep proving its usefulness by continuing forever.

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 was observable, and what would be useful next?

Sources and wisdom

Establishing mindfulness

In tandem

Mindfulness of breathing

Choose what comes next

Continue this sequence - turn to page 57.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 20.

Choose an order

Pause before choosing among four possible sequences. Any selection is provisional, and a later visit may begin differently.

Now the order becomes a real choice. Ananda's telling does not demand that everyone begin with the same capacity. The maker asks what would make attention workable today. The question is about this meeting, not about deciding forever what sort of practitioner you are.

Practice pause

A brief gap

1. Notice

Notice a nonessential impulse, such as opening another video.

2. Distinguish

If comfortable, allow a few seconds before acting. The duration is unimportant.

3. Watch

What is the impulse doing during this pause? Does another thought join it?

4. Release

Act or leave it. Do not delay necessary care or attention to your 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 was observable, and what would be useful next?

Sources and wisdom

Establishing mindfulness

How elaboration gathers

In tandem

Choose what comes next

Continue - turn to page 9.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 20.

Set down the comparison

The other routes can wait. Leave one unnecessary comparison unfinished rather than declaring a winner.

A comparison with other visitors can be set down. You have not heard their whole story, and this visit cannot measure their freedom or yours. Ananda's accounts concern a developed path and its result. Our workshop is a place to begin noticing the relationship with care.

Practice pause

Leave the pursuit for a moment

1. Notice

Notice a harmless wish for more entertainment or stimulation.

2. Distinguish

Recognize both the want and your ability to choose a next step.

3. Watch

Briefly leave the pursuit alone. Does the want stay the same?

4. Release

Choose freely. Do not use this to withhold something you need.

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 observable, and what would be useful next?

Sources and wisdom

How elaboration gathers

In tandem

Choose what comes next

Continue - turn to page 16.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 20.

Let the workshop commentary rest

Useful thinking can resume later. You do not have to solve the whole practice before allowing a short pause.

At the quieter table, the maker sets down the wish to inspect everything at once. The river can be heard without becoming a task. This part of the visit asks whether less unnecessary activity gives careful looking somewhere to stand. It is not a prize for keeping every thought outside the workshop.

Practice pause

Let useful thinking rest

1. Notice

After dealing with immediate needs, notice what your thinking is doing.

2. Distinguish

Is the current commentary useful, or simply continuing?

3. Watch

If it can wait, leave it alone and attend to an ordinary breath or comfortable sitting.

4. Release

Return to thinking when useful. No blankness is required.

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 observable, and what would be useful next?

Sources and wisdom

In tandem

Relaxation of thoughts

Two sorts of thinking

Choose what comes next

Continue this sequence - turn to page 49.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 20.

The next part belongs to your day

Let the story and exercises finish. You can choose an ordinary activity, take a rest or explore another adventure.

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

Which small observation or action is worth carrying forward? Completion records participation only.

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 let calm and careful looking meet in a chosen order. You may return through another sequence without turning today’s route into an identity.

“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

In tandem

Choose what comes next

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

Examine a small change

Notice one ordinary event appearing, continuing and ending. The exercise is a beginning, not a complete insight.

At the examining table, the maker leaves room for a detail to correct an expectation. A question can be precise without becoming relentless. This part of the visit asks whether understanding one ordinary event changes the urgency around it. Quiet is still available; inquiry does not have to keep proving its usefulness by continuing forever.

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 was observable, and what would be useful next?

Sources and wisdom

Establishing mindfulness

In tandem

Mindfulness of breathing

Choose what comes next

Let the two approaches meet - turn to page 38.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 20.

Separate the strands

Look at one moment through several simple questions. Description and understanding can remain incomplete.

At the examining table, the maker leaves room for a detail to correct an expectation. A question can be precise without becoming relentless. This part of the visit asks whether understanding one ordinary event changes the urgency around it. Quiet is still available; inquiry does not have to keep proving its usefulness by continuing forever.

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

What was observable, and what would be useful next?

Sources and wisdom

In tandem

The fourfold round

Choose what comes next

Let the two approaches meet - turn to page 38.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 20.

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.

About the adaptation

Original contemporary fiction and practice invitations informed by the linked wisdom sources. No invented event or dialogue is attributed to a historical teacher.

The source and this adventure

The reference describes four ways calm and insight develop in a path toward freedom. These branches are modern introductory exercises. Choosing a route does not diagnose your temperament, reproduce the complete training or certify an awakening. The fourth branch does not ask you to create agitation.

Optional personal exploration

If useful, a simple courtyard image can represent making room for both quiet and questions. This is an optional personal exploration, not one of the four methods prescribed in the reference. The exact method is not an instruction recovered from this source. Keep what helps and let the rest go.

Practice beyond the story

Short exercises and fictional outcomes do not complete the training or establish liberation. Ethical conduct, sustained practice, source study and suitable real-world support remain relevant. Your reflections are not collected.

Knowing this position

adaptation. Knowing this position: 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.

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.

Leave the pursuit for a moment

adaptation. Leave the pursuit for a moment: This invitation adapts an operation from the cited discourse: leaving pursuit or elaboration. A temporary pause is not cessation of craving; useful thinking and necessary care remain available.

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.

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.

A brief gap

adaptation. A brief gap: 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.

Catch a small want

adaptation. Catch a small want: 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.

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.

Build a courtyard that opens outward

uncertain. Build a courtyard that opens outward: 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.

Conditions for quiet

adaptation. Conditions for quiet: 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.

Let useful thinking rest

adaptation. Let useful thinking rest: 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.

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.

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.

Sources and wisdom

Cultivating care and steadiness

Establishing mindfulness

Fruits of the contemplative life

How elaboration gathers

In tandem

Mindfulness of breathing

Relaxation of thoughts

The fourfold round

Two sorts of thinking

Choose what comes next

Return to the temple garden - turn to page 2.