Stopping the Pursuit - 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

Stopping the Pursuit. Aṅgulimāla encounters a different meaning of stopping. Includes historical violence, without reenactment.

“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

The source story follows its recorded direction. Modern practice pauses and the temple framing are editorial additions, not episodes from the original story.

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

Aṅgulimāla’s change of course

Choose what comes next

Sit, listen, and begin - turn to page 18.

Move on and enter the adventure - turn to page 18.

Optional: read how this telling was made - turn to page 34.

Practice pause · A place to sit

Let the dangerous road remain in the story. Begin this modern pause in your actual safe surroundings, without imagining pursuit or violence.

The man pauses before the next part of the telling. You can try this editorial addition in the room where you are, without imagining yourself inside the historical event. There is time to notice what the beginning has stirred.

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, if anything, was useful in this pause? The source's reported result is not a result the app can establish.

Sources and wisdom

Aṅgulimāla's change of course

Establishing mindfulness

Choose what comes next

Continue to the next practice pause - turn to page 23.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 7.

Optional: visit the man in the temple - carry only what helps - turn to page 25.

Care and truth

On his rounds Angulimala sees a woman struggling in childbirth and is troubled by her suffering. He tells the Buddha that he sees how living beings suffer. The teacher gives him a carefully framed statement of truth concerning his life since his new beginning in the training. Angulimala initially objects to a statement he could not honestly make about his whole past; its qualification matters.

The source reports safety for the woman and her child. This episode is part of its religious account. It is not a medical instruction, and the contemporary pauses here do not reproduce its blessing as a treatment. What can be recognized is the changed orientation: someone once indifferent to others' lives now brings their suffering forward as something that matters.

Notice, without grading

Read at your own pace. The next two pauses are contemporary invitations, not recorded events in the source.

Sources and wisdom

Aṅgulimāla’s change of course

Choose what comes next

Continue to a contemporary practice pause - turn to page 28.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 7.

You can leave the story here

Reading, resting, and living the rest of your day are also available. There is no obligation to finish this retelling or return to it.

The man makes no attempt to draw you back into the telling. A story can wait while a person meets the needs of a real day. Leave its characters where they are for now. If you return, the page can be opened without an apology for the time spent elsewhere.

Notice, without grading

Your previous place 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

Aṅgulimāla’s change of course

Choose what comes next

Visit the temple again - turn to page 2.

Practice pause · Catch a small want

An action is not well done if it brings regret and its consequences are received with tears.

Stopping can mean leaving one reaction unperformed. Try the exercise with an ordinary impulse rather than a harmful scene.

The man leaves the story's image with you rather than explaining it again. This editorial addition is a chance to meet an everyday version of the question. A small, safe example will do.

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, if anything, was useful in this pause? The source's reported result is not a result the app can establish.

Sources and wisdom

Aṅgulimāla's change of course

Establishing mindfulness

Choose what comes next

Continue to the next practice pause - turn to page 32.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 7.

What stopping means

Angulimala finally calls for the traveler to stop. The answer turns the command around. The Buddha describes himself as already stopped and asks Angulimala to stop as well. To the pursuer, this seems impossible: one man is walking and the other has halted. He demands an explanation.

The difference is not between moving feet and still feet. The Buddha has stopped the intention to injure living beings. Angulimala, even standing in the road, has not. The chase suddenly has another meaning. The distance he has failed to close cannot be closed by running faster. He must consider the direction in which his life is going.

Notice, without grading

Read at your own pace. The next two pauses are contemporary invitations, not recorded events in the source.

Sources and wisdom

Aṅgulimāla's change of course

Choose what comes next

Continue to a contemporary practice pause - turn to page 8.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 7.

Consequences remain

The story does not end with universal approval. Later, people throw things that strike Angulimala; he returns injured, with damaged robe and bowl. His changed conduct has not erased consequences. The Buddha tells him to bear what is happening, and the discourse describes his eventual liberation and reflections on a life turned away from harm.

For a modern reader, that ending is not an instruction to stay where someone is hurting you. Nor is this adventure a reenactment of violence. Let the road remain a story in which stopping means changing what one participates in. Care for people who were harmed, practical accountability, and the possibility of another direction must remain visible together.

Notice, without grading

Read at your own pace. The next two pauses are contemporary invitations, not recorded events in the source.

Sources and wisdom

Aṅgulimāla’s change of course

Choose what comes next

Continue to a contemporary practice pause - turn to page 12.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 7.

Practice pause · Repair without disappearing

Consequences do not vanish because an intention changes. Consider a manageable place where acknowledgment or repair could be more useful than defending your self-image.

The story is nearing its ending, but your day has its own pace. This editorial addition asks whether anything small can travel with you into that day. It need not resemble the result reported in the account.

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, if anything, was useful in this pause? The source's reported result is not a result the app can establish.

Sources and wisdom

Analysis of the path

Aṅgulimāla's change of course

Reflection on action

Choose what comes next

Continue to the next practice pause - turn to page 30.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 7.

Practice pause · Before the reply

An action is well done when it brings no regret and its consequences can be received with joy.

A new direction becomes visible through actions. Explore one small choice that could reduce harm without making a grand promise about yourself.

Here the man allows a longer silence. This editorial addition can be tried without producing the lesson's supposed correct feeling. Notice what the invitation actually does, and stop if ordinary care asks for something else.

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

What, if anything, was useful in this pause? The source's reported result is not a result the app can establish.

Sources and wisdom

Analysis of the path

Aṅgulimāla's change of course

Reflection on action

Choose what comes next

Continue to the next practice pause - turn to page 19.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 7.

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

“Stopping harm is more than changing the story you tell about yourself. It begins in what you stop doing and what you choose next.”

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

Sources and wisdom

Aṅgulimāla’s change of course

Choose what comes next

Return to “A dangerous road” - turn to page 18.

A change of course

Angulimala lays aside his weapons and asks to enter the training. The account allows a profound change of direction without pretending that the earlier violence never happened. Later, King Pasenadi comes with a large force, concerned about the killer who has made the countryside unsafe.

The Buddha asks how the king would respond if that same man were now living a restrained life. The king says he would treat such a practitioner with respect. Only then is Angulimala identified nearby. The king is frightened. The encounter holds two realities together: there is a past that rightly gives people fear, and there is a person now undertaking a different life.

Notice, without grading

Read at your own pace. The next two pauses are contemporary invitations, not recorded events in the source.

Sources and wisdom

Aṅgulimāla’s change of course

Choose what comes next

Continue to a contemporary practice pause - turn to page 14.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 7.

A dangerous road

Someone who was once careless and becomes attentive lights up the world like the moon emerging from clouds.

People along the road warn the Buddha not to go farther. Angulimala is there, a man whose violence has emptied settlements and made even groups of travelers afraid. The account does not make his deeds harmless or imaginary. The teacher continues alone, despite the warnings.

Angulimala sees a solitary traveler where he expects frightened people to gather for protection. He takes up his weapons and follows. Here the source includes an extraordinary event: although Angulimala runs with all his strength, he cannot catch the Buddha, who is walking normally. This is a reported wonder in the ancient story, not an ability these practices teach. It brings the pursuit to a question that speed cannot answer.

Notice, without grading

Read at your own pace. The next two pauses are contemporary invitations, not recorded events in the source.

Sources and wisdom

Aṅgulimāla's change of course

Choose what comes next

Continue to a contemporary practice pause - turn to page 4.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 7.

Optional: visit the man in the temple - the garden does not hurry - turn to page 16.

Practice pause · Choose what to cultivate

Other people may need time and evidence before trust returns. This pause gives room for a response you cannot control.

The turn in the story need not become a demand on you. This editorial addition offers another modest experiment. Something useful may appear; nothing in the characters' lives depends on whether it does.

A modern practice pause

Choose what to cultivate

Before you begin

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

Take care

Having an unwanted thought is not wrongdoing. Work with what you cultivate and do.

1. Invitation 1

At a comfortable pause, choose one small unhelpful pattern and one helpful quality. For example: rehearsing blame and being willing to ask a clear question.

2. Invitation 2

Prevent: change one condition that would invite the unhelpful pattern, such as rereading a provocative draft. This is about conduct and attention, not preventing every unwanted thought.

3. Invitation 3

Abandon: if blame is already being rehearsed, stop adding the next accusation. Return to ordinary contact; take practical action if a problem needs it.

4. Invitation 4

Develop: deliberately offer a truthful question or a wish for the other person’s well-being. Use an unsent draft if no interaction is appropriate.

5. Invitation 5

Maintain: if care or clarity is already present, give it time and supporting conditions. Repeat a useful action without forcing a feeling.

6. Invitation 6

End by choosing one manageable action. Effort can be steady without becoming harsh.

After the practice

Which effort fits the situation now? It may change next time.

Notice, without grading

What, if anything, was useful in this pause? The source’s reported result is not a result the app can establish.

Sources and wisdom

Analysis of the path

Aṅgulimāla’s change of course

Two sorts of thinking

Choose what comes next

Continue the story - turn to page 6.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 7.

Practice pause · Meeting difficulty with care

Be quick to do good and keep your mind from harm; when you delay doing good, the mind can turn toward harm.

Truthfulness includes knowing what you cannot claim. Let an honest description be enough for this pause.

The man has not asked for a report. This editorial addition lets you listen to the effects of a practice privately. Keep what is usable, and leave what has become unnecessary work.

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, if anything, was useful in this pause? The source’s reported result is not a result the app can establish.

Sources and wisdom

Aṅgulimāla’s change of course

Cultivating care and steadiness

Choose what comes next

Continue the story - turn to page 11.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 7.

Practice pause · Knowing this position

The warning in the account matters. Caring for yourself includes noticing what needs a practical boundary or outside support.

The telling remains open while you try another small invitation. This editorial addition does not ask you to decide what the characters should have felt. Let one ordinary experience of your own receive a little attention.

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, if anything, was useful in this pause? The source’s reported result is not a result the app can establish.

Sources and wisdom

Aṅgulimāla’s change of course

Establishing mindfulness

Choose what comes next

Continue the story - turn to page 10.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 7.

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 changed direction does not erase consequences or the needs of people who were hurt. Let the possibility of change stand beside accountability and practical care.”

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

Sources and wisdom

Aṅgulimāla’s change of course

Choose what comes next

Return to “Practice pause · A place to sit” - turn to page 5.

Let the story rest

The retelling and its modern practice pauses can end here. You can read the full wisdom reference, return to ordinary activity, or explore another adventure.

The man closes the telling without turning its reported ending into a result you are expected to claim. The people in the old account have their own training and consequences. What you can carry is a question or an intention that meets your own ordinary life with a little more care.

Notice, without grading

Participation in these pauses does not establish the attainments described in the source.

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 read a story about stopping harm and changing direction. A change of course can be real while consequences and the needs of others remain.

“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

Aṅgulimāla’s change of course

Choose what comes next

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

Practice pause · Wishing well

The source's childbirth episode is not a modern treatment. The practice here concerns an ordinary moment of care, with medical needs left to appropriate care.

The next part can wait while the lesson meets an ordinary choice. This editorial addition stays close to a real, manageable situation rather than asking you to reproduce the events or achievements in the telling.

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, if anything, was useful in this pause? The source's reported result is not a result the app can establish.

Sources and wisdom

Aṅgulimāla's change of course

Cultivating care and steadiness

Choose what comes next

Continue to the next practice pause - turn to page 21.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 7.

Practice pause · After the choice

Even splendid royal vehicles wear out, and the body ages, but the goodness of good people does not wear away.

Close the story by returning to a safe, ordinary next action. You do not need to identify with any character to learn from a change of direction.

For this last editorial addition, the man leaves room to finish. You can set down the exercise along with the book. An unfinished question may remain useful without being carried as an obligation.

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, if anything, was useful in this pause? The source's reported result is not a result the app can establish.

Sources and wisdom

Aṅgulimāla's change of course

Recognizing the direction

Reflection on action

Choose what comes next

Continue the story - turn to page 26.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 7.

Practice pause · A brief gap

The teacher's reply asks about direction, not speed. Notice whether more effort is serving the intention you actually want to live by.

Before the telling moves on, there is another way to approach this moment. As an editorial addition, the exercise belongs to your present life. You can adapt it or let it pass without changing anyone's part in the old story.

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, if anything, was useful in this pause? The source's reported result is not a result the app can establish.

Sources and wisdom

Aṅgulimāla's change of course

Establishing mindfulness

How elaboration gathers

Choose what comes next

Continue the story - turn to page 17.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 7.

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

An original short retelling of the cited discourse episode. Historical narrative is distinguished from contemporary practice invitations; no invented choices change the recorded events.

Story, practice, and the full source

This short retelling omits much of the discourse and its concluding verses. Its extraordinary events, truth statement, and reported attainment are not methods or outcomes promised by the modern pauses. Changing conduct does not erase harm or require others to forgive; protection and practical care remain appropriate.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

Choose what to cultivate

adaptation. Choose what to cultivate: New practice addressing: All four efforts. Original contemporary script. It introduces part of the cited training and requires real-world repetition; no attainment is inferred.

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.

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.

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.

Sources and wisdom

Analysis of the path

Aṅgulimāla’s change of course

Cultivating care and steadiness

Establishing mindfulness

How elaboration gathers

Recognizing the direction

Reflection on action

Two sorts of thinking

Choose what comes next

Return to the temple garden - turn to page 2.