Which Teaching Should I Follow? - 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

Which Teaching Should I Follow?. At a town’s gathering place, conflicting advice invites careful testing rather than a rush to certainty.

“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

To people hearing conflicting advice

Choose what comes next

Sit, listen, and begin - turn to page 29.

Move on and enter the adventure - turn to page 29.

Optional: read how this telling was made - turn to page 45.

The promise of a quick answer

A small urge to declare the matter settled may be available to notice. Give the next decision a little room.

A quick answer seems close enough to end the uncertainty. In the original encounter, the discussion turns instead toward greed, hostility, and confusion and the harm they can lead people to do. The measure is larger than immediate relief. Other lives are included in the consequences of an attractive instruction.

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

Recognizing the direction

To people hearing conflicting advice

Choose what comes next

Continue - turn to page 30.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 8.

Why this advice attracts me

Notice a wish for certainty, belonging or a practical improvement. The wish can inform the inquiry without deciding its outcome.

Another piece of advice attracts you for a different reason. It offers an identity you would enjoy having. The man does not mock the wish. He asks you to notice it so that attraction does not pass unnoticed into the role of evidence. The town has heard pleasant promises before.

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

Recognizing the direction

The fourfold round

To people hearing conflicting advice

Choose what comes next

Continue - turn to page 4.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 8.

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

Recognizing the direction

To people hearing conflicting advice

Choose what comes next

Visit the temple again - turn to page 2.

A bright result that cannot be questioned

In this fictional branch, one vivid moment becomes the only evidence allowed. Reports of harm are dismissed because they spoil the conclusion. The gathering becomes less honest, and preventable mistakes accumulate.

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

Recognizing the direction

To people hearing conflicting advice

Choose what comes next

Try another direction - turn to page 35.

Visit the temple again - turn to page 2.

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 met conflicting advice and considered what happens when it is practiced. A limited conclusion and an honest question can travel together.

“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

Recognizing the direction

To people hearing conflicting advice

Choose what comes next

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

Check the remembered instruction

Compare a remembered practical point with its actual source. A correction is useful information.

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

Stay among the listeners as the question becomes concrete. When greed takes over, what does a person become willing to do? The discussion moves toward injury, taking what is not given, sexual misconduct, and lying. Hatred and confusion are examined in the same light. The town is not being invited to test dangerous actions. People are asked to recognize their harmful direction and to take the judgment of the observant seriously.

A modern practice pause

Recall, check, and put into practice

Before you begin

Choose a short, relevant passage in Sources and wisdom. Keep the reference available.

Take care

Use an ordinary, low-stakes example. Recollection is fallible; checking is part of the practice.

1.

Read a short passage once. Set it aside and recall its practical point in your own words, without claiming to quote it.

2.

Open the source again. Notice a detail you missed or changed. Correct your recollection; leave unclear points as questions.

3.

Consider one ordinary situation in which that teaching could guide a harmless action. Separate what the passage says from your own interpretation.

4.

Try one suitable small action, or plan when to try it. Later compare the result with your expectation. Discuss unresolved questions with a knowledgeable person if useful.

5.

End the rehearsal and return to your surroundings. Keep what helps; leave the exercise if it does not.

After the practice

What did checking change? Remembering a sentence is a beginning, not mastery of a teaching.

Notice, without grading

What was observable, and what would be useful next?

Sources and wisdom

Recognizing the direction

The Fortress · Nagara

To people hearing conflicting advice

Choose what comes next

Return to the shared stretch - turn to page 18.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 8.

Optional: visit the man in the temple - carry only what helps - turn to page 17.

A pleasant result is still a result

Good people can be seen from far away like snowy mountains, while harmful people remain hidden like arrows shot at night.

A helpful feeling may be worth noticing. It need not prove every claim made by the person who suggested the practice.

A pleasant result arrives. It is allowed to be pleasant. The question is whether it also leads in a helpful direction and whether the explanation offered for it has earned the same confidence as the feeling. Enjoyment and an account of why it happened can be examined separately.

Practice pause

Pleasant without holding

1. Notice

Choose a pleasant contact, sound, or sight already present. Use a sense available to you; do not buy or create a stronger sensation.

2. Distinguish

Describe the detail itself, then notice any plan to repeat, improve, or prolong it. These may overlap.

3. Watch

Stay with the detail for a few seconds without adding another plan. Can you distinguish enjoyment from planning, or is the boundary unclear? You do not have to stop either.

4. Release

Enjoy what remains or move on freely.

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

Recognizing the direction

The arrow

To people hearing conflicting advice

Choose what comes next

Continue - turn to page 16.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 8.

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

Recognizing the direction

To people hearing conflicting advice

Choose what comes next

Try represent two usable tools - turn to page 42.

Continue without this exploration - turn to page 36.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 8.

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

“Testing a teaching takes more than liking the first result. Notice effects over time and listen to thoughtful criticism. Leave room to revise an earlier judgment.”

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

Sources and wisdom

To people hearing conflicting advice

Choose what comes next

Return to “Check the remembered instruction” - turn to page 13.

Choose a harmless test

When we neglect what needs doing and do what should be left alone, unchecked desires keep growing.

Use a low-stakes action whose likely effects you can consider. Leave dangerous or consequential experiments to appropriate practical judgment.

You choose a harmless test that can be stopped. This is a modern addition, not a request to try dangerous conduct in the name of open-mindedness. The old lesson asks for informed ethical judgment. A small, ordinary question is enough for the gathering's next piece of work.

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 was observable, and what would be useful next?

Sources and wisdom

Analysis of the path

Recognizing the direction

Reflection on action

To people hearing conflicting advice

Choose what comes next

Continue - turn to page 40.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 8.

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

“Confidence need not mean accepting every confident voice. Look at what a practice encourages, what it costs, and whether it leads toward care or harm.”

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

Sources and wisdom

To people hearing conflicting advice

Choose what comes next

Return to “Which Teaching Should I Follow?” - turn to page 29.

Leave an honest open question

A careless action, a broken promise, and halfhearted practice bring little benefit.

You can end with a limited conclusion and an unresolved question. The town does not require a declaration of certainty.

You leave without an answer to everything. The town's lesson is recognizable in the question you carry: what does this encourage when it is lived, and who else can help me see its effects clearly? The man accepts an honest open question more readily than a certainty that must silence the room to survive.

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

Mindfulness of breathing

Recognizing the direction

To people hearing conflicting advice

Two sorts of thinking

Choose what comes next

Continue - turn to page 10.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 8.

Keep the helpful direction

What should be prevented, set aside, developed or sustained? Use consequences and informed judgment to refine the next attempt.

The source's telling opens beyond debate into goodwill, compassion, shared gladness, and evenness, then the assurances of a blameless life amid uncertainty. Our gathering cannot settle every question about existence. It can ask whether the direction you keep makes a life more caring and less divided against itself.

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 was observable, and what would be useful next?

Sources and wisdom

Analysis of the path

Recognizing the direction

To people hearing conflicting advice

Two sorts of thinking

Choose what comes next

Continue - turn to page 21.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 8.

A familiar claim

Familiarity can feel reassuring. Recognize the thought without treating recognition as verification.

You hear a claim that sounds familiar. Its familiarity is comforting, but the old lesson does not let familiarity finish the work. Repetition, tradition, and a text can matter without being sufficient grounds on their own. The person at the gathering has to look at what following the claim would actually encourage.

Practice pause

Recognize a thought

1. Notice

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

2. Distinguish

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

3. Watch

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

4. Release

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

5. Return

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

6. Make It Yours

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

Notice, without grading

What was observable, and what would be useful next?

Sources and wisdom

Recognizing the direction

To people hearing conflicting advice

Two sorts of thinking

Choose what comes next

Continue - turn to page 6.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 8.

Let evidence change the plan

If the result was harmful or unclear, adjust or stop. A specific repair can be more useful than defending the original prediction.

The plan can change. That is not an insult to the sincerity with which it began. You can stop repeating what does not help, ask a more careful question, or consult someone whose judgment has shown integrity. A belief need not be protected from the test it was supposed to welcome.

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 was observable, and what would be useful next?

Sources and wisdom

Recognizing the direction

Reflection on action

To people hearing conflicting advice

Choose what comes next

Continue - turn to page 23.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 8.

Which Teaching Should I Follow?

You arrive at a fictional gathering where several confident visitors offer incompatible advice. Some statements sound familiar, others exciting. There is room to ask what following them would actually do.

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.

Visitors keep coming to Kesaputta. Each teacher praises a teaching and pulls the others apart. The townspeople have heard enough certainty to become uncertain. When the Buddha arrives, they bring him that difficulty rather than pretending to know whom to trust. He does not shame them for doubting. Their doubt has reasons.

Notice, without grading

What was observable, and what would be useful next?

Sources and wisdom

Recognizing the direction

To people hearing conflicting advice

Choose what comes next

Begin with an ordinary moment - turn to page 38.

Explore a fictional shortcut - turn to page 35.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 8.

Optional: visit the man in the temple - the garden does not hurry - turn to page 20.

Choose what would help this moment

Different circumstances may call for a different response. Each invitation returns to the shared stretch.

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

Stay among the listeners as the question becomes concrete. When greed takes over, what does a person become willing to do? The discussion moves toward injury, taking what is not given, sexual misconduct, and lying. Hatred and confusion are examined in the same light. The town is not being invited to test dangerous actions. People are asked to recognize their harmful direction and to take the judgment of the observant seriously.

Notice, without grading

What was observable, and what would be useful next?

Sources and wisdom

Recognizing the direction

To people hearing conflicting advice

Choose what comes next

Check the remembered instruction - turn to page 12.

Separate a result from resistance - turn to page 33.

Continue with the shared practice - turn to page 18.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 8.

What was actually observed?

Distinguish a sensation, feeling, recognition, intention and awareness from the explanation offered for them.

What was actually observed? A feeling, a change in behavior, a remembered detail, or an effect on another person? The telling slows down before observation becomes proof of a whole doctrine. The people at Kesaputta were asked to consider what the observant and wise recognize too, not to make private preference the final judge.

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

Recognizing the direction

The fourfold round

To people hearing conflicting advice

Choose what comes next

Continue - turn to page 14.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 8.

Separate a result from resistance

An unwelcome result and your objection to it can be noticed separately before drawing a conclusion.

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

Follow the telling beyond the argument. A person free of those harmful qualities extends care in every direction: goodwill, compassion, gladness for others, and evenness of mind. The teaching then offers four assurances. If actions bear fruit beyond this life, such conduct has a good direction; if they do not, the person can still live here without hostility. If wrongdoing brings suffering, one has not chosen it; if it does not, the blameless life still has nothing to hide on that account.

Practice pause

The event and the objection

1. Notice

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

2. Distinguish

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

3. Watch

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

4. Release

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

5. Return

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

6. Make It Yours

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

Notice, without grading

What was observable, and what would be useful next?

Sources and wisdom

How elaboration gathers

Recognizing the direction

The arrow

To people hearing conflicting advice

Choose what comes next

Return to the shared stretch - turn to page 18.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 8.

A fictional shortcut

Trust the most impressive experience as final proof. 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

Recognizing the direction

To people hearing conflicting advice

Choose what comes next

Follow the fictional consequence - turn to page 9.

Begin with the shared practice instead - turn to page 38.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 8.

Include effects on others

Ask whether the action supported honesty and care as well as comfort. The other people affected may have information you lack.

Someone else is affected by the proposed practice. The old dialogue's concern for conduct becomes difficult to evade. A method that gives one person a bright experience while encouraging dishonesty or cruelty has not passed merely because the experience was bright. The gathering makes room for a less convenient piece of evidence.

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

Recognizing the direction

To people hearing conflicting advice

Choose what comes next

Continue - turn to page 27.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 8.

Arrive before deciding

Understanding grows through dedicated practice and fades through neglect; knowing both possibilities, practice in a way that lets understanding grow.

Begin with your actual position. You can consider the town’s claims as a story without adopting any of them.

At the town's gathering place, two pieces of advice arrive with equal confidence and opposite directions. The man begins the old story of Kesaputta, where visiting teachers praised their own views and tore others apart. The people who questioned the Buddha were not short of certainty to listen to. They were trying to find what deserved trust.

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

Recognizing the direction

To people hearing conflicting advice

Choose what comes next

Continue - turn to page 25.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 8.

Give the test a boundary

An endless search for another opinion can obscure the question. Set a modest boundary while retaining necessary information.

The test receives a boundary: a time, a situation, or an observation small enough to describe. Without that boundary, every result could be used to preserve the claim. The man leaves room for an answer that is uncertain, disappointing, or unlike the one you hoped to bring back.

A modern practice pause

Give the next check a boundary

Before you begin

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

Take care

This is voluntary restraint, never withholding food, care, communication, or urgent action.

1. Invitation 1

Feel your seat or another ordinary contact. First check whether you need the device for safety, care, work, or another real responsibility.

2. Invitation 2

For a nonessential check, notice the sight or thought that invites another look. Recognize any anticipated reward and the cost of repeating the loop.

3. Invitation 3

Choose a small boundary: close the extra tab, put the device within hearing but out of view, or choose a realistic time to check. Leave necessary notifications available.

4. Invitation 4

Turn to one useful activity. When the invitation returns, remember the boundary without arguing with the thought. Adjust the plan if circumstances change.

After the practice

Did the boundary help, hinder, or need changing?

Notice, without grading

What was observable, and what would be useful next?

Sources and wisdom

Analysis of the path

Gradual training

Recognizing the direction

To people hearing conflicting advice

Choose what comes next

Continue - turn to page 31.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 8.

Represent two usable tools

A small sketch or imagined tool shelf can remind you of two real options. Its usefulness does not validate a teaching or turn imagery into a source instruction.

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

Put two tools within reach

Before you begin

Choose an ordinary object you can safely touch, or a visible or written reminder. Give it a place in your imagined armory. Pick two tools: pause before replying, ask for time, orient to the room, or use a coping skill you already know.

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 an ordinary object you can safely touch, or a visible or written reminder. Give it a place in your imagined armory. Pick two tools: pause before replying, ask for time, orient to the room, or use a coping skill you already know.

2. Experiment

Touch or notice the reminder, name both tools, and rehearse one with a mild everyday situation. For example, rest your hands and say “I will reply after lunch.” Compare recalling a tool with trying its first action.

3. Compare

The reminder may make a useful choice easier to remember. Ask which tool fits the facts, not which makes the feeling vanish. Put the reminder somewhere practical and resume an ordinary task.

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

Recognizing the direction

To people hearing conflicting advice

Choose what comes next

Return to the shared stretch - turn to page 36.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 8.

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 source concerns people hearing conflicting teachings and examines harmful and helpful qualities and their consequences, including the judgment of wise people. This adventure is a modern adaptation. Personal preference, one pleasant result or a persuasive speaker is not sufficient evidence; the brief experiments do not settle every claim.

Optional personal exploration

A small sketch or imagined tool shelf can remind you of two real options. Its usefulness does not validate a teaching or turn imagery into a source instruction. 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.

Recall, check, and put into practice

adaptation. Recall, check, and put into practice: New practice addressing: Retaining and examining a teaching. Original contemporary script. It introduces part of the cited training and requires real-world repetition; no attainment is inferred.

The event and the objection

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

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.

Recognize a thought

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

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

Give the next check a boundary

adaptation. Give the next check a boundary: New practice addressing: Protecting attention. Original contemporary script. It introduces part of the cited training and requires real-world repetition; no attainment is inferred.

One moment, five questions

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

Pleasant without holding

adaptation. Pleasant without holding: This invitation adapts an operation from the cited discourse: recognizing feeling and response. Acceptance, soothing, or reduced distress alone does not establish source-based steadiness of mind or require accepting harm.

Steady care

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

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.

Put two tools within reach

uncertain. Put two tools within reach: 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

Gradual training

How elaboration gathers

Mindfulness of breathing

Recognizing the direction

Reflection on action

The Fortress · Nagara

The arrow

The fourfold round

To people hearing conflicting advice

Two sorts of thinking

Choose what comes next

Return to the temple garden - turn to page 2.