

Inner Enemies Practice Handbook

This handbook presents the Buddhist approach to the 'inner enemies'—the afflictive states of mind that disturb peace and obstruct wisdom. Each section contains definition, recognition signs, antidote, a meditation, and a practical daily-life exercise.

Self-Centredness / Selfishness

Definition: The habit of prioritising 'me and mine' over others.

Recognition Signs:

- Thoughts like 'What about me?' or 'That's unfair to me.'
- Irritation when not recognised or praised.
- Indifference to others' suffering.

Antidote: Bodhichitta — the wish to achieve enlightenment for the benefit of all beings.

Meditation: Visualise all beings around you, reflect that all want happiness and none want suffering. Imagine your heart opening outward, radiating warmth and care equally.

Practical Exercise: Do one act of kindness daily without anyone knowing.

Anger / Aversion

Definition: Hostile rejection of people or situations; the urge to harm or retaliate.

Recognition Signs:

- Heat rising in the body, tightening chest.
- Harsh words forming in the mind.
- Replay of grievances.

Antidote: Patience and compassion — remembering the other person suffers too.

Meditation: Recall a time someone hurt you. Instead of replaying anger, reflect on the pain they must carry to act like that. Let compassion arise.

Practical Exercise: Pause and count to ten before responding in anger.

Ignorance / Delusion

Definition: Not seeing reality as it is; grasping at permanence and a solid self.

Recognition Signs:

- Believing 'I' exists independently.
- Surprise or grief at natural change.
- Chasing happiness in possessions or status.

Antidote: Wisdom — insight into emptiness and interdependence.

Meditation: Analyse: Where is the 'I'? In body? Mind? Feelings? See how all are impermanent and interdependent. Rest in spacious awareness.

Practical Exercise: When clinging to 'I' or 'mine,' repeat silently: 'Empty, impermanent, interdependent.'

Pride / Arrogance

Definition: Inflated self-image, resistance to correction, clinging to superiority.

Recognition Signs:

- Thinking 'I already know better.'
- Feeling insulted by advice.
- Comparing yourself with contempt.

Antidote: Humility — remembering all qualities come from others' kindness.

Meditation: Recall a skill you're proud of. Trace how many beings contributed to it. Dissolve pride into gratitude.

Practical Exercise: Once a day, listen carefully to someone you might dismiss.

Attachment / Craving

Definition: Grasping at things or people, believing they bring lasting happiness.

Recognition Signs:

- Restlessness when deprived.
- Clinging to possessions or relationships.
- Anxiety about loss.

Antidote: Mindfulness of impermanence — everything changes.

Meditation: Picture something you crave. Reflect: 'This too will fade.' Release your grip and rest in contentment.

Practical Exercise: Abstain from one small pleasure for a day. Notice craving and its impermanence.

Jealousy / Envy

Definition: Resentment of others' success or happiness.

Recognition Signs:

- Comparing yourself unfavourably.
- Bitterness at others' success.
- Pleasure in others' failures.

Antidote: Mudita — rejoicing in others' happiness.

Meditation: Visualise someone whose success you envy. Say: 'May your joy increase.' Imagine sharing in their light.

Practical Exercise: Each day, sincerely congratulate someone — especially if it stings.

Laziness / Spiritual Sloth

Definition: Avoidance of practice through distraction or inertia.

Recognition Signs:

- Putting off practice.
- Filling time with trivia.
- Disinterest toward Dharma.

Antidote: Diligence — reflecting on death and precious human life.

Meditation: Reflect: 'Death is certain, its time is uncertain. Only practice benefits then.' Let this energise you.

Practical Exercise: Keep a minimum daily commitment (e.g., 10 minutes meditation). Never skip it.

Daily Integration:

Morning: Set the intention to guard against inner enemies.

Midday: Pause and ask which enemy is strongest now, apply antidote.

Evening: Review successes and failures, rejoice and resolve anew.

Weekly: Choose one enemy to study and practice with deeply.