



This is the document to read out during a RAFT to Recovery meeting. The full document is available for download in the table available via this [link](#).

A section from this week's practice.

Introduction to the RAFT to Freedom

*“For me, there is no happiness without freedom, and freedom is not given to us by anyone; we have to cultivate it ourselves.” ~
Thich Nhat Hanh*

*“The attempt to escape from pain is what creates more pain.” ~ Dr
Gabor Maté*

Gotama's four realisations

In his first discourse after awakening to life, Gotama presented four vital realisations:

1. **Recognise:** Life is inherently painful, difficult, and disappointing. We often do not get what we want, yet frequently encounter what we don't want. Gotama encouraged us to clearly see and deeply understand this reality.
2. **Abandon:** Much of our pain, difficulty and disappointment stems from habitual cravings, compulsions, aversions, and preferences. Gotama urged us to abandon these destructive inclinations - not through force or suppression, but through compassionate understanding and

skilful letting go.

3. **Freedom:** Freedom from craving and compulsive patterns is possible. Gotama insisted that we can personally experience this liberation by actively cultivating moments of clarity, peace, and non-reactivity.
 4. **Train:** Gotama provided a structured programme – the Noble Eightfold Path – that integrates wisdom, ethical conduct, and mental discipline into our daily lives. Through ongoing training, we develop resilience and equanimity, steering ourselves consistently towards freedom.
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Self-reflections for starting your journey

- ★ What current pain or suffering motivates you to seek change?
 - ★ What qualities represent your personal 'safe shore' of freedom?
 - ★ Reflect on your existing strengths and potential areas needing support as you build your raft.
 - ★ What deeply motivates you to undertake this courageous voyage towards freedom?
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Remember to remember

RAFT to Freedom provides a structured yet flexible approach, integrating ancient wisdom with modern science, guiding your personal journey from pain towards lasting freedom.

You do not have to identify with addictions and compulsions, nor be a Buddhist, to benefit from this programme. Just come as you are. Embarking on the path of liberation is a profound act of courage and self-care. RAFT as a framework offers a reliable structure, integrating ancient wisdom with a modern understanding to guide our way.

Trust in your capacity to learn, grow, and heal, patiently and persistently. The journey begins now, with the first crucial step – recognising the landscape of our shared human experience. Now let's begin by gathering the material we need for the first stage on our journey – that of recognising what it is to be human.

"And so, this spiritual life is not lived for the sake of possessions, honour, and popularity, or for accomplishment in ethics, or for accomplishment in concentration, or for knowledge and vision. Rather, the goal, the core, and final end of the spiritual life is the unshakable freedom of the heart." ~ Gotama

Your courageous journey begins now – welcome aboard.

Both Cathryn and Vince acknowledge with gratitude the inspiration drawn from [Stephen Batchelor's work](#), particularly his [Cartography of Care](#).

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