



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.

MĀRA – Recognising the voice of craving

“Māra, I See You”: Navigating the ongoing journey

- ★ Māra - I can see you,
- ★ Māra - I can hear you,
- ★ Māra - I can smell you,
- ★ Māra - I can taste you,
- ★ Māra - I can feel you,
- ★ Māra - I know you!

Temptation and relapse: Guardrails against falling overboard

"Māra never vanishes; he is always there, lurking. But for those who have opened their eyes, his power is broken. They see him and know him, and he cannot deceive them." Adapted from a Buddhist Commentary

As we continue our exploration within the 'R' for **Recognising** what it truly means to be human, we now turn our attention to a particularly cunning aspect of our inner world: Māra. You may have encountered tales of Māra in Buddhist teachings, often depicted as a personification of temptation and obstacles. Here, in the context of our recovery, Māra is the perfect metaphor for the ‘*addictive voice*’ or the personification of compulsion itself—subtle, cunning, and persistently trying to pull us off course.

This isn't about battling some monstrous external force; instead, it's about learning to recognise, understand, and wisely relate to our internal patterns of

thought, cravings, and compulsions. We can think of Māra as those persuasive whispers in our minds that try to convince us to give in to old habits, rationalise unhelpful actions, or create doubt about our path to freedom. These are the *hidden reefs and deceptive mirages* that threaten to scupper our raft on our journey towards lasting peace.

Just as a vigilant navigator must learn to identify hidden dangers, we must learn to recognise Māra's presence in his or her various disguises, if we are to steer our vessel to safety. What may have previously been unrecognised or subconscious urges and fears can now be clearly seen for what they are: the manifestations of Māra.

When old urges or self-defeating thoughts arise, we can pause, name the pattern, and say: “*I see you, MĀRA.*”

Self-Reflections

Approach these reflections gently, with self-compassion:

- ★ When I feel the pull of an old behaviour, what does MĀRA say to me?
- ★ What forms does temptation take in my life – pleasure, avoidance, self-pity, righteousness?
- ★ Do I sometimes believe the voice of MĀRA? What happens when I do?
- ★ How might I develop the capacity to say, “*I see you, MĀRA*”, and let go?
- ★ Do I remember mindfulness when cravings arise?
- ★ Where do I most often lose mind-body connection?
- ★ Using your body as an anchor and your mind as radar. What are you feeling, thinking, reacting to right now?
- ★ Where in my body do I feel an urge? (for example, chest tightness, butterflies, tension)
- ★ What thoughts or memories are tied to that sensation?
- ★ How often do I automatically react to discomfort?

- ★ What habits pull me back into addiction?
 - ★ What is the most wise and compassionate choice right now?
 - ★ Who or what helps me take that action (for example, a wise friend, a sponsor, meditation, walk)?
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Remember to remember

Recognising Māra, the voice of addiction and compulsion, is a crucial step in our RAFT to Freedom journey. It's about developing the wisdom to read our inner map accurately, identify these *hazards* when they appear, and learn skillful means to avoid being shipwrecked by them. By patiently and persistently consulting our internal map through mindful awareness and using our navigational skills, we learn to sail through these hazardous waters towards the calm harbour of freedom.

This chapter has equipped us with powerful ways to recognise Māra's subtle influence, to greet it with the clear, empowering phrase, "***I see you, Māra,***" and to choose our response wisely. This ongoing vigilance, supported by our growing awareness and compassion, is a vital guardrail against falling overboard. It allows us to strengthen our raft and ensure we continue on our purposeful journey towards the safe shore. Māra is not something to fight but someone to see. His or her power is invisibility or disguise. Gotama didn't destroy Māra; he disempowered him by naming him – again and again. You, too, can learn this art: To say, "*I see you, Māra*" and walk on. As the Persian poet Rumi said,

"The moment you recognise your cage, you are already free. The rest is simply walking out."

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