



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.

The Second Resolve: Abandon

From Abstinence to Abandonment – Skilfully Letting Go

Patching the leaks and bailing the water

"If you let go a little, you will have a little freedom. If you let go a lot, you will have a lot of freedom. And if you let go completely, you will have complete freedom." ~ Ajahn Chah (paraphrased)

Following our exploration of the first resolve – the proactive effort to **Prevent** harmful states from arising – we now turn to its essential partner: The second resolve – **Abandoning**. This aspect of skilful effort addresses the reality that, despite our best preventative measures, unskilful states *will* inevitably arise. Cravings, difficult emotions, negative thought patterns, and habitual impulses are part of the human condition, particularly during our journey to liberation.

The **second resolve** guides us in making the conscious effort to **abandon**, overcome, remove, or dispel unhelpful states that have arisen, skilfully and compassionately. Gotama – the Buddha – defines the second resolve as: " ... *generating the desire for the abandoning of unwholesome, unskilful qualities; making an effort, arousing energy, applying the mind, and striving.*"

This is not about suppression or forceful repression, which often backfires, leading to more tension or later eruptions. Rather, *abandoning* here implies a skilful process of recognising the unskilful state clearly and understanding its harmful nature, applying appropriate techniques to let it go, weaken its hold,

or transform its energy. It requires both diligence and wisdom.

Self-Reflections

Reflect on your experience with arisen unskillful states and the journey from abstinence to abandonment:

- ★ What specific unskillful states (cravings, emotions, thought patterns) arise most frequently for you?
- ★ What is your typical automatic reaction when unhelpful states arise (e.g., acting out, suppressing, ruminating, judging yourself)?
- ★ Does your typical automatic reaction to a triggering situation differ from a conscious act of abandonment?
- ★ Can you recall a time when you were merely abstaining versus truly abandoning a harmful pattern?
- ★ Is there a difference between abstinence and abandonment in your internal experience and sense of freedom?
- ★ Which of the techniques mentioned above (e.g., urge surfing, MARA, SOBER, ELSA, RNILT, replacement, reframing) feels most potentially helpful or accessible to you for abandoning a specific pattern?
- ★ Which abandoning technique feels most challenging?
- ★ How does self-criticism affect your ability to work skilfully with difficult states when they arise?
- ★ How might embracing abandonment – renunciation, as a liberating choice, rather than a deprivation be helpful to you?
- ★ Have you ever consciously tried to ‘abandon’ or ‘let go’ of a compelling craving? What was that experience like?

Remember to Remember

"True freedom is not achieved through the absence of desires, but through the mastery of them." ~ Aristotle

This second of the four resolves, the Resolve to abandon harmful states – is where the active work of transformation truly happens. It acknowledges that challenges will arise on our journey, but it equips us with skilful means to meet them without being overwhelmed or drowning. This is not about battling against ourselves, but about a liberating release of the old, in favour of the new. It requires courage, patience, self-compassion, and the willingness to apply mindful effort repeatedly. The careful attention that we cultivate during mindfulness of breathing, is a precursor for the moderated intention we apply to the four resolves. This practice is crucial for recognising our capacity for change and directly relates to the core task in our next leg of this journey – the ‘A’ of Abandoning in our RAFT acronym.

By learning to skilfully patch the leaks, bail the water, and jettison the harmful cargo from our raft, we keep our vessel afloat and moving towards the safe shore. Having addressed **Prevent** and **Abandon**, we next turn to the positive construction: **Cultivating** the skilful states that actively support our well-being and propel us further on our voyage.

RAFT to Freedom © 2025 by Dr Cathryn Jacob and Vince Cullen

is licensed under Creative Commons

Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International.

