



This document is an extract from the full chapter which is available for download in the table via this [link](#) and is intended for use by participants of meetings.

The Heart's Compass as a Superpower

*"If my Heart could do my thinking,
and my Head began to feel,
Would I look upon a world anew?
And know what's truly real." ~ Van Morrison*

"Your vision will become clear only when you look into your heart. Who looks outside, dreams; who looks inside, awakes." ~ Carl Jung

The guiding compass: the stabiliser of our raft

Having reinforced our resolve with 'Noble Desire' and fuelled our journey with 'Courageous Energy', we now cultivate our third essential superpower: the Heart's Compass. The Heart's Compass works synergistically with Noble Desire, Courageous Energy, and Fearless Investigation to propel us from the suffering and danger of the 'near shore' to the freedom and safety of the 'far shore'.

The Heart's Compass (*Citta*) primarily represents a mindset, or state of mind that has an emphasis on the emotive side of our thinking. The Oxford English Dictionary defines *citta* as 'the mind as the seat of both thoughts and feelings; (where) a person's cognitive and emotional faculties are considered collectively'. From a Buddhist perspective the heart and the mind are connected; for the purposes of our journey, we present *citta* as 'the Heart's Compass'.

The connection between the heart and the mind – emotions and thoughts – is a universal concept. It has been said in many contexts:

"The longest journey you will ever take is the 18 inches from your head to your heart".

The Heart's Compass encompasses our mind and heart – our thoughts, emotions, consciousness, and deep intuitive knowing. It can be our greatest ally or our most challenging obstacle. A scattered and untrained mind, much like an untamed horse, runs wild with cravings, aversions, and distractions, pulling us off course. However, when trained and befriended, the Heart's Compass provides us with inner stability, emotional clarity, and reliable guidance on our journey towards freedom. Buddhist teachings highlight that, although often clouded by distractions, our Heart's Compass is inherently 'knowing and luminous' and capable of clarity. The personal insight that 'I am not my mind' can be surprisingly liberating. Our thoughts are real, but that does not mean they are true.

"A thought is harmless unless we believe it. It's not our thoughts, but the attachment to our thoughts, that causes suffering." ~ Byron Katie

The Secular Dharma author and teacher, Stephen Batchelor, beautifully describes the Heart's Compass as:

"Citta is that part of us which is not physical, which moves us from within. It is mind-heart ... In this context, intuition works well, pointing to a kind of 'knowing' that is neither rational nor conceptual, but which has the capacity to arrive at insights, often suddenly".

In our RAFT metaphor, the Heart's Compass acts as both a compass and a stabiliser – guiding our direction and preventing us from drifting or capsizing amidst the turbulence of harmful cravings or difficult emotions. A well-cultivated Heart's Compass prevents our raft from drifting aimlessly or capsizing in turmoil. As we embrace this superpower, our Heart's Compass becomes the navigating force that keeps us moving in the right direction, stopping us from wandering too far off course and bringing us back after we have drifted. Furthermore, the focused stability of our cultivated Heart's Compass allows us to remain present and to make wise choices, even amidst the storms of harmful cravings or difficult emotions.

Self-reflections

Explore the state of your own Heart's Compass:

- ★ What has been the general state of your heart-mind (Heart's Compass) lately – calm, agitated, clear, or distracted?
 - ★ What regularly pulls your attention off-course?
 - ★ How effectively do you manage challenging emotions when they arise?
 - ★ What inner values or aspirations guide your daily choices?
 - ★ How do you relate to the insight 'I am not my mind'?
 - ★ Could my journey towards freedom be more caring, joyful and creative?
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Journaling prompts

Use writing to investigate and train your Heart's Compass:

- ★ **Mind-wandering journal:** Note where your mind drifts during brief meditations. Observe patterns compassionately.
 - ★ **Straightening your arrow:** Reflect on one persistent negative mental habit. Identify practical steps to gently shift this pattern.
 - ★ **Heart's deepest aspiration:** Write freely about your deepest intention for your life and journey to liberation. Clarify your values.
 - ★ **Observing thoughts:** Spend five minutes labelling your thoughts without judgment. Reflect on the experience of seeing thoughts clearly.
 - ★ **Intuition exploration:** Recall a time intuition guided you effectively. How does intuition differ from purely logical thought?
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Remember to remember

Our Heart's Compass is the superpower that guides and stabilises our raft, enabling clear, wise choices amidst life's turbulence. Cultivating a mindful, focused, and emotionally regulated heart-mind is essential for maintaining resilience and clarity on our path to freedom. Befriend your mind, stay

connected to your deepest aspirations, and practise mindfulness daily.

Remember, developing the Heart's Compass is an ongoing process, requiring patience, persistence, and compassion. With consistent effort, we can cultivate a heart-mind that is increasingly clear, stable, and capable of supporting our journey to freedom. As we develop a clear, stable Heart's Compass, we will find ourselves increasingly capable of navigating our journey confidently, compassionately, and wisely. With our Heart's Compass guiding us, we are now ready to explore the final superpower: Fearless Investigation, the illuminating wisdom that brings deep understanding and lasting freedom.

"If you want to know the path, ask your heart." ~ Anonymous

"In the body, there is a morsel of flesh which, if it be sound, all the body is sound and which, if it be diseased, all the body is diseased. This part of the body is the heart." ~ The Prophet Muhammad

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