



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 resolve to prevent: skillful effort on the path

### **Guarding your raft from known hazards**

#### **Proactive protection on the journey**

*“Indeed I would define mental health as the capacity to be aware of the gap between stimulus and response, together with the capacity to use this gap constructively. Thus, mental health, in my judgement, is on the opposite side of the spectrum of conditioning and control.” ~ Rollo May*

*"The best way to predict the future is to create it." ~ Peter Drucker*

This chapter delves into the first of the ‘Four Great Efforts’ that we are reframing as the ‘Four Resolves’. These efforts are vital for cultivating helpful mental states and abandoning unhelpful ones.

This practice’s focus is the Resolve To Prevent – that is our wholehearted commitment to our liberation. This is our guiding principle that helps us channel our energy wisely and compassionately away from harmful patterns and towards healing and freedom.

The Resolve to Prevent provides us with a skill for creating supportive

conditions. This isn't about fearful avoidance or shutting ourselves off from life, but about *wise-protection*. In the early stages of our journey,, especially as our inner resources might still be developing. Prevention strategies act as essential safeguards, giving skilful habits time to strengthen. We acknowledge that it's far easier and wiser to prevent a fire from starting than to extinguish a raging blaze.

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## Self-Reflections

Consider your own experience with prevention:

- ★ What specific triggers (internal or external) are you most aware of currently? Are there others you suspect but haven't fully identified?
  - ★ How effective are your current strategies for avoiding or managing these triggers?
  - ★ What does your daily/weekly routine look like? Does it generally support your journey, or does it contain elements that increase risk?
  - ★ What helps you feel grounded and calm?
  - ★ What tools are currently in your 'calm toolkit'?
  - ★ What does 'guarding the senses' mean to you in practical terms (for example, regarding media consumption, conversations, environments)?
  - ★ If you decide to adopt a personal sajja (vow), which one would you choose and why?
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## Journaling Prompts

Deepen your understanding of prevention through writing:

- ★ **Trigger mapping:** Start a trigger log for a few days or a week. Note down any significant cravings, urges, or difficult emotional states. Record the time, place, people present, preceding thoughts/feelings, and the situation. Review it to identify patterns.
- ★ **Supportive routine design:** Sketch out an ideal (but realistic) daily or weekly schedule that incorporates supportive habits (sleep, meals, exercise, practise, connection, downtime). What is one small change you

could implement this week?

- ★ **Building your calm toolkit:** List at least five specific resources or techniques (internal or external) that help you feel calmer or more grounded. How can you make these readily accessible when needed?
  - ★ **Guarding the gates:** Reflect on one specific sense gate (seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching, thinking). How could you apply more mindful guarding to this sense gate today to prevent unskillful states from arising (for example, being mindful of online content, choosing conversations wisely)?
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## Remember to Remember

The intention to prevent harmful states from arising is an act of wisdom, foresight, and profound self-care. It involves honestly recognising our vulnerabilities and triggers and proactively taking steps to guard our bodies and minds and cultivate supportive conditions. While it requires diligence, prevention is often far less draining than constantly battling fully-arisen cravings or emotional turmoil. This proactive guarding helps protect the integrity of our RAFT, steering it clear of immediate dangers while we build strength and gather further skills.

As Suzy Welch says about resolve:

*“99% is a bitch. 100% is a breeze”*

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