



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.

Fearless Investigation as a Superpower: the wisdom that learns and adapts

The intelligent navigation system of our raft

The interactive power of watchful, wise inquiry

"Do not go by reports, by legends, by traditions, by scripture, by logical conjecture... But when you know for yourselves that, 'These things are skillful... these things, when undertaken and observed, lead to welfare and happiness' – then you should enter and remain in them." ~ Gotoma (the Buddha)

"Nothing ever goes away until it has taught us what we need to know." ~ Pema Chödrön

We arrive at the fourth and final superpower: 'Fearless Investigation' or *Wise Inquiry*. This essential quality integrates and guides the other three superpowers – Noble Desire provides the direction, Courageous Energy provides the power, the Heart's Compass provides the focus and stability and Fearless Investigation adds the crucial element of wisdom, discernment, analysis, and our ability to learn from experience.

Fearless Investigation is the faculty that asks ‘*Why?*’ and ‘*How?*’ It investigates the nature of things, explores the cause and effect in our own lives, and helps us to discern between what is skillful and unskillful, what leads us towards suffering and what leads us towards freedom. It's not just a passive observation, but an active, yet non-interfering, inquiry. It embodies caring curiosity, non-judgemental critical thinking, and the willingness to experiment and to adapt our approach based on the results we observe.

This superpower is *fearless*, not because it's aggressive, but because it requires us to use courage to look honestly at reality, including the uncomfortable truths about ourselves and our patterns, without flinching or falling into denial. It helps us to move beyond our assumptions and beliefs to a direct experiential understanding of *how things really are*.

Within this first stage of our journey, Fearless Investigation is the very faculty that allows us to *deeply recognise* the patterns of our pain, difficulties and disappointments, the workings of our mind, the effectiveness of our efforts, and the nature of our desires. It is the engine of insight within the process of recognition.

In our RAFT to Freedom metaphor, Fearless Investigation functions as our intelligent diagnostic system and adaptive navigational computer. It constantly monitors our raft's progress, analyses the effectiveness of our paddling techniques (Courageous Effort), checks the accuracy of the compass reading (Heart's Compass), assesses the condition of the raft's materials, learns from encounters with hazards or helpful currents. Along with Noble Desire, it refines our course based on this real-time data, and the location of our ultimate destination. It allows our raft's navigation system to *learn* and *adapt* during our journey, ensuring we navigate skillfully towards the safe shore.

Self-reflections

Consider your natural inclination towards investigation:

- ★ How curious are you generally about your own inner workings (thoughts, feelings, motives)?

- ★ When faced with a problem or challenge, is your first instinct to react, avoid, or investigate?
 - ★ How do you typically respond when a strategy doesn't work or you experience a setback? Do you tend to blame yourself, give up, or try to understand what happened?
 - ★ Are you open to questioning your own long-held beliefs or assumptions, especially those related to cravings and aversions?
 - ★ When do you feel most insightful or clear about your patterns? What conditions support that clarity?
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Journaling prompts

Make some note about Fearless Investigation into your journal.

- ★ **Investigate a pattern:** Choose one recurring compulsion, challenge or destructive pattern (for example, a specific trigger, a harmful habit, negative self-talk, or a difficulty with a particular practice). Write down investigative questions about it (for example, When does it arise? What precedes it? What follows it? What beliefs support it? What lessens it?). Explore possible answers.
- ★ **Learning from a setback:** Reflect on a recent time things didn't go as planned on your journey to wellness (a lapse, a strong craving you struggled with, a difficult interaction). Write about it from an investigator's perspective: What were the contributing factors? What can be learned? What different strategy could be tried next time? Focus on the learning without self-blaming.
- ★ **Questioning assumptions:** Identify one assumption or belief you hold about yourself, your patterns of self sabotage or your journey ahead. (for example, 'I'll always struggle with this,' 'I need this substance or behaviour to cope,' 'This feeling is unbearable'). Gently question this assumption. Is it 100% true? What evidence supports or contradicts it? What would it be like to hold this assumption more lightly?
- ★ **Tracking experiments:** If you decide to try a new skillful means or wellness strategy (for example, a different meditation technique, a new

way of responding to triggers), keep a brief journal tracking your experience and the observed results over a few days.

Remember to remember

Fearless Investigation is the fourth essential superpower, bringing the light of wisdom and discerning intelligence to our journey to liberation. It integrates and guides the motivation of Noble Desire, the energy of Courageous Effort, and the focus of the Heart's Compass. By cultivating curiosity, engaging in honest reflection, learning from all experiences, and wisely questioning our assumptions, we move beyond blind habit into conscious, adaptive, and insightful living.

Recognising our innate capacity for this wise inquiry completes our exploration of the Four Superpowers within the first stage of our journey. Fearless Investigation is the crucial diagnostic and navigational intelligence of our raft, allowing us to understand the journey and refine our course.

We are now concluding the first stage of our journey – ‘Recognising what it is to be human. *Understanding that life is often inherently painful, difficult and disappointing – this is natural and universal – not personal!*

Grounded in ethical commitment, (the Five Gifts), a heart-based appropriate response, (self-compassion), embodied awareness, (Mindfulness of Body), skillful application of energy, (Four Intentions), and the potential of our inner powers, (Four Superpowers), we have gathered a rich understanding of our current terrain and have collected materials and resources (skills and attitudes) for our raft.

We are now fully prepared to embark on the second stage of our journey – the ‘A’ of our RAFT acronym – ‘*Abandoning*’ harmful cravings and compulsions.

“We do not learn from experience... we learn from reflecting on experience.” ~ often attributed to John Dewey,

“The important thing is not to stop questioning. Curiosity has its own reason for existing.” ~ Albert Einstein

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