



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 First Creative Power – Noble Desire

*"The path is not about forcing yourself into rigid discipline, but about cultivating a heartfelt interest in waking up to life. When you care about your journey, the effort becomes a joy." ~ Stephen Batchelor*

*"The movement of spiritual awakening is away from grasping and toward openness – toward intention rather than craving." ~ Tara Brach*

### **The wholesome desire for freedom**

### **The spark of motivation that powers our raft**

Having surveyed our ‘Four Creative Powers’ that propel us on our journey from suffering to freedom – we now explore the first and arguably foundational superpower: Noble Desire or Enthusiasm (*Chanda*). This isn’t just any desire; it’s the crucial spark, the wholesome aspiration and committed interest that ignites and fuels our entire journey towards freedom from the many ways we lose ourselves and experience suffering.

It is absolutely vital to distinguish the difference in meaning of the Pali words *Chanda* (desire) and *Tanha* (craving). As Buddhist translators point out, Gotama (the Buddha) spoke of two kinds of desire: *tanha* and *chanda*, with *chanda* being essential for our progress on our journey.

- ★ **Taṇhā (Craving):** Arises from a sense of lack, ignorance, and often delusion. It's the desperate wanting, grasping, clinging – "I need this to be okay" – that drives the cycle of the many ways we lose ourselves and leads directly to the suffering of pain, difficulties and disappointments. It's often ego-driven and focused on immediate gratification or escape – reward or relief.
- ★ **Chanda (Noble Desire):** Arises from wisdom, clarity, and connection to our values. It's the positive aspiration, the genuine interest, our heartfelt commitment – "I want to heal" – "I aspire to freedom," – "This path is worthwhile". Chanda fuels our effort without agitation and is directed towards long-term well-being for ourselves and for others.

The Buddhist monastic Ajahn Sucitto, describes chanda beautifully as:

*"Desire is an eagerness to offer, commit, apply oneself... It's a psychological 'yes,' a choice, not a pathology. You could summarise Dhamma training (the Buddhist teachings) as the transformation of taṇhā into chanda."*

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### **Self-reflections**

As we cultivate Noble Desire, we often find our relationship with our journey shifts from struggle to an inspiring exploration. Let us explore this transformation together through these reflections:

- ★ Can you distinguish between the feeling of craving (*Taṇhā*) and the feeling of wholesome desire/aspiration (*Chanda*) in your own experience? What are the key differences?
- ★ What truly inspires you about cultivating well-being? What vision for your future sparks genuine enthusiasm?
- ★ What makes your journey to liberation feel like a burden or obligation versus an inspiring path?
- ★ Are your current goals for a purposeful life specific, meaningful, and

achievable? Do they inspire 'Noble Desire'?

- ★ How do you typically respond when your enthusiasm or motivation wanes?
- ★ Can you differentiate between the craving that leads to suffering and the 'Noble Desire' that motivates positive action?

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### **Journaling prompts**

Use your journal to connect with and cultivate Noble Desire:

- ★ **Vision of freedom:** Write a detailed description of what the 'safe shore' looks like for you. Imagine yourself living freely, embodying the qualities you value. What does it feel like? What are you doing? Who are you with? Let this vision inspire your 'Noble Desire'.
- ★ **Connecting to values:** List 3-5 core values that are important to you (for example, honesty, kindness, freedom, health, connection). How does your journey to liberation align with and support these values? Write about this connection.
- ★ **Inspiring steps:** Choose one larger goal for cultivating well-being. Break it down into 3-5 smaller, inspiring, and achievable steps you can take in the coming days or weeks. Write them down as positive resolves.
- ★ **Chanda vs. Taṇhā:** Reflect on a recent experience of strong desire. Was it primarily *Taṇhā* (craving, based on lack, leading to agitation) or *Chanda* (aspiration, based on value, leading to skilful effort)? Describe the difference in feeling and outcome.
- ★ **Affirming aspiration:** Create 1-3 personal affirmations based on your Noble Desire for cultivating well-being (for example, "I am committed to cultivating peace and freedom," "I embrace this journey of healing with a caring curiosity and hope"). Write them down and consider repeating them daily.

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## **Remember to remember**

Noble Desire (*Chanda*) is the essential Creative Power, the spark that powers our raft and illuminates our path. By clearly distinguishing it from the painful grip of craving (*Taṇhā*) and consciously cultivating this wholesome aspiration rooted in our deepest values, we transform the path of healing from a reluctant struggle into an inspired journey of growth and liberation.

Recognising our capacity for Noble Desire is a key insight of this leg of our journey. Nurturing this enthusiasm provides us with the foundational motivation needed to engage with the challenges and practices ahead.

Remember to connect with your 'why', set inspiring goals, approach the path with curiosity, and balance your desire with wisdom and self-compassion. With this wholesome desire as our guide, we are ready to explore the next superpower: the Courageous Energy needed to translate aspiration into sustained action.

As we move forward, we do so together, ignited by this shared Noble Desire, propelling our raft steadily towards freedom.

*“The Buddha doesn’t recommend getting rid of all desire – only unskillful desire. Without skillful desire, you can’t follow the path.”* ~ Thanissaro Bhikkhu

*“You will become as small as your controlling desire; as great as your dominant aspiration.”* ~ James Allen

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