



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.

## 44 – Liberating Mindfulness as a Support

### **The ever-wakeful watch and the space of non-reactivity**

*“Luminous is the mind. And it is defiled by visiting impurities.” ~  
Gotama (The Buddha)*

*“Freedom is not something you acquire; it is the absence of the  
compulsion to grasp or resist – the opening of a space where life can  
unfold.” ~ Stephen Batchelor*

### **The central regulator of the Seven Supports**

In our overview of the Seven Supports (Chapter 43), we saw that the Seven Supports function as an integrated system for balancing the mind once the ‘Hazards’ come into view, in the service tasting Freedom, Gotama’s third reality. At the centre of that system sits ‘Liberating Mindfulness’ – not as another technique to apply, but as the capacity that monitors conditions and coordinates the response. This chapter explores mindfulness in that role: not fighting experience, but knowing it clearly enough for freedom to emerge.

In this Freedom stage, our raft enters the metaphorical ‘Land of Perpetual Dawn’. Here, mindfulness does not appear as something new, but as something that has matured through the journey.

Now, as the first of the Seven Supports, mindfulness comes fully into its balancing mode as ‘Liberating Mindfulness’. This is not mindfulness as

effort, vigilance, or repair, but mindfulness as a stable operating condition of the mind itself: a *non-reactive* awareness that abides with experience rather than managing it. From this abiding clarity, the other Supports can be activated appropriately, and the journey toward freedom becomes increasingly self-sustaining.

If mindfulness was previously the lookout scanning for rocks and storms, Liberating Mindfulness is the vessel's *steady watch*. It confirms that the raft is trimmed correctly for the long crossing. In this stage, its primary role is balancing. It functions as the regulating intelligence at the centre of the instrument panel, continuously assessing the *sea state* of the mind. From this clear seeing, it determines whether the vessel needs the energising supports – ‘Penetrating Inquiry’, ‘Enthusiasm’, and ‘Energetic Joy’ – to counter dullness and ‘Tuning Out’, or the calming supports – ‘Deep Calm’, ‘A Unified Mind’, and ‘Balanced Equanimity’ – to settle agitation.

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### Self-reflections

1. Can I sense the difference between striving to be mindful (tight, effortful) and resting in Liberating Mindfulness (open, receptive)?
2. When difficult emotions arise, does my mindfulness try to push it away – or does it simply hold it, as a cradle holds a child?
3. Do I still treat mindfulness as a tool to fix something broken, or can I recognise it as a natural capacity of the mind?
4. How does Liberating Mindfulness help me distinguish between useful thought (planning, discernment) and ‘Mara’ thought (rumination, self criticism, amplification, catastrophising (Chapter 14))?
5. Can I trust that clearly seeing a pattern is already a form of loosening it – without needing to attack or suppress it?
6. In what moments today did I *lose the watch*? What specifically pulled attention away?
7. Does my awareness tend to feel narrow and spotlight-like, or wide and lantern-like?

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### Journaling prompts

1. **The shift log:** Describe a moment today when you shifted from fighting an urge to witnessing it. What changed in the body?

2. **The instrument panel:** Imagine your mind as the raft dashboard. Which warning lights are blinking? How does Liberating Mindfulness register them without panic?
  3. **The pause button:** Recall a recent automatic reaction. Rewrite the moment as if you had paused for three seconds. What would have been noticed?
  4. **Who Is watching?:** Sit quietly for five minutes and observe thoughts. Then write about the sense of distance between the traffic (thoughts) and the road (awareness).
  5. **The ‘suchness’ practice:** Choose a mundane activity and describe only the raw sensory experience. This is the practice of *suchness*. Practising *suchness* is resting with experience exactly as it is – before naming, judging, or trying to change it – meeting each moment with clear, open awareness – the true nature of reality, *as-it-is-ness*.
  6. **The gatekeeper’s report:** Write from the perspective of your inner gatekeeper. Which visitors arrived today? Which were met with clarity and care?
  7. **Freedom from ‘me, my and mine’:** Take a worry – *my anxiety*. Change it to ‘there is anxiety’. Reflect on how this grammatical shift alters your relationship to it.
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## Remember to remember

We are not building a raft to carry us away from ourselves, or to escape the difficulties of being human. We are building a raft strong enough to carry us *through* our conditioning – through habit, reactivity, longing, fear, and confusion – without being overwhelmed by them. Freedom does not require a different life or a perfected self. It begins with learning to pause, to stay, and to meet experience as it is, without immediately turning toward grasping or resistance. Again and again, we discover that clarity does not have to be forced. Often, it is already available when we stop interfering.

Liberating Mindfulness is the Support that reminds us we are already safe enough to pause. Like an open sky, it allows the changing weather of emotions, sensations, and thoughts to move through without destabilising the whole system. This is not neutral observation for its own sake, but awareness shaped by care – attentive to what leads toward Freedom and alert to what pulls us back into entanglement. As we return again and again to simple presence, the mind learns something vital: Freedom does not need to be manufactured. It appears naturally in the moments when craving

loosens and reactivity quiets. Over time, these moments become familiar, a place we know how to return to – a steady, peaceful awareness that feels like home.

*“My experience is what I agree to attend to.” ~ William James*

*“Men are disturbed not by things, but by the views which they take of things.” ~ Enchiridion*

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