



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.

46 – Enthusiasm as a Support

Sustaining insightful momentum and the fine-tuning of power

“For a person who is energetic, vigorous, and always making an effort, mindfulness is well-established.” ~ Gotama (The Buddha)

“Nothing great was ever achieved without enthusiasm.” ~ Ralph Waldo Emerson

A gentle hand-off from Penetrating Inquiry to steady energy

When ‘Penetrating Inquiry’ is alive, something often follows quite naturally – *momentum*. The mind becomes less foggy, less passive, more willing to engage. ‘Enthusiasm’ is that steady willingness – not strain or hustle, but a workable readiness to keep going. It is the Support that carries insight forward when the initial spark has passed.

In this Freedom stage, the key question is no longer “How do I push harder?” but “How do I keep going without burning out?” Enthusiasm is the kind of energy that lasts: steady, renewable, and guided by what helps.

In this Freedom stage of our journey, following the establishment of ‘Liberating Mindfulness’ and the ignition of ‘Penetrating Inquiry’ the third essential Support arises: ‘Enthusiasm’ (traditionally called energy).

It helps to see how ‘Energy’ matures as our journey progresses – the same capacity, refined for different waters:

This Support is not the same as brute *willpower*. Willpower can feel tight and finite. Enthusiasm is different: it renews itself when we see, directly, that a skilful choice brings relief, clarity, or ease. When the mind recognises “this helps,” effort becomes less forced and more willing.

Self-reflections

1. Do I believe that if I am not pushing hard, I am not making progress? Where did I learn that?
 2. When my energy dips, is my first instinct to criticise myself – or to get curious about what is happening?
 3. Can I tell the difference between driven energy (tight, narrow, urgent) and wholesome enthusiasm (bright, steady, present)?
 4. Where in my life is the string too tight? Where is it too loose?
 5. Do I associate energy with panic – or can I imagine a calm, strong energy?
 6. How does seeing the benefits of this path naturally feed my willingness to continue?
 7. Am I trying to sprint a marathon? What would a walking pace look like today?
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Journaling prompts

1. **The lute-string audit:** Where is my effort today – tight/restless or loose/dull? What is one small adjustment toward the centre?
2. **Success spiral:** List three tiny things that went well today. How does remembering them shape tomorrow?
3. **Right effort, including rest:** Write a definition of ‘Appropriate Action’ (Chapter 60) that includes rest as a skill, not a failure.
4. **The energy leak:** Identify one habit that drains you. If you plugged it, where could that energy go instead?
5. **The wind, not the oars:** Recall a time you felt carried by engagement rather than pushing. What conditions allowed that?

6. **Letter to the striver:** Write to the part of you that believes perfection equals safety. What would you offer instead?
 7. **The joy of function:** Write about the quiet pleasure of a body and mind that work. How is this different from excitement?
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Remember to remember

Enthusiasm is not the flash of energy that gets us started; it is the steady pulse that keeps us going. It grows from inquiry, and it is protected by balance. Too tight, and the mind overheats into striving. Too loose, and it drifts into dullness. But when effort is tuned, practice becomes repeatable – and what is repeatable becomes reliable. As Stephen Batchelor suggests, this steadiness asks for a particular kind of courage: to go against the stream of habit, to stay with what is vulnerable, and to not be seduced back into the old escape-routes of distraction and reactivity.

Remember: consistency beats intensity. A small, steady breeze will take you further than a storm that tears the sails. When the mind wobbles, it can be enough to return to the centre – soften what is tight, brighten what is dull, and take the next workable step. Let Enthusiasm be quiet, rhythmic, and kind: not pressure, but willingness; not grit, but a courage you can live day by day.

“Grit is passion and perseverance for long-term goals.” ~ Angela Duckworth

“Tiny is mighty.” ~ BJ Fogg

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