



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.

50 - Balancing Equanimity as a Support

The heavy keel and the even-looking eye

“Just as a solid rock is not shaken by the storm, even so the wise are not affected by praise or blame.” ~ Gotama (The Buddha)

“If you let go a little, you will have a little peace. If you let go a lot, you will have a lot of peace. If you let go completely, you will have complete peace.” ~ Ajahn Chah

The trim of the vessel

In this Freedom stage of our journey, we arrive at the seventh and final Support: ‘Balancing Equanimity’. This is the quality that keeps everything else working together. ‘Liberating Mindfulness’ can be steady, ‘Penetrating Inquiry’ can be bright, ‘Enthusiasm’ can be available, ‘Energetic Joy’ can uplift, ‘Deep Calm’ can cool, and a ‘Unified Mind’ can stabilise – but without ‘Balanced Equanimity’, we still get tipped by what we like and what we don’t like.

Equanimity here doesn’t mean going blank or not caring. It means we stay present without being yanked around. Pleasant sensations can be felt without grabbing; unpleasant sensations can be felt without pushing away. It’s a kind of inner balance that makes experience workable – not by removing weather, but by giving us a steadier centre inside it.

This is an *internal* balance regarding phenomena (sensations, thoughts, moods). It is the antidote to reactivity. It is the ability to observe pleasure without grasping and pain without pushing away.

Self-reflections

1. Do I mistake indifference (not caring) for equanimity (balanced caring)? Can I realise that true equanimity is vibrant and awake?
 2. Which of the Eight Worldly Winds knocks me off balance most easily? Is it criticism? Is it the loss of comfort?
 3. Can I feel the difference between *suppressing* sensations and simply *not reacting* to them?
 4. When a storm hits (an unexpected difficulty), is my first instinct to fix it immediately, or can I pause and let the keel stabilise the raft first?
 5. Do I believe that freedom means only having pleasant experiences? How does that belief make me vulnerable to the wind of discomfort?
 6. How does 'A Unified Mind' (Chapter 49) naturally lead to this sense of balance?
 7. Am I waiting for the storm to stop before I find peace, or can I find peace in the eye *of the storm* right now?
-

Journaling prompts

1. **The keel inspection:** Visualise your raft. How deep is your keel? Write about what gives you weight and stability in life (for example, your values, your practice, your understanding of impermanence).
2. **The Eight Winds log:** Review your day. Identify one instance where the wind of 'complements/criticism' or 'comfort/discomfort' blew. Did you lean into it or away from it? What would staying upright have looked like?
3. **The 'meh' versus 'peace' test:** Indifference feels cold, numb, and disconnected (meh). Balancing Equanimity feels warm, spacious, and present (peace). Write about a recent situation and identify which state you were actually in.
4. **The balance of feeling:** Describe a recent strong desire. Write a script for how to *witness* it without *feeding* it (acting on it) or *fighting* it (hating it).

5. **The anchor and the keel:** Reflect on the difference between stopping (anchor of mindfulness) and sailing (keel of equanimity). In which areas of your life do you need to stop, and in which do you need to move forward with balance?
 6. **Witnessing the fade:** Choose a minor discomfort (an itch, a noise, a worry). Sit with it for five minutes and write down exactly how it changes and fades on its own, without your interference.
 7. **Letter from the keel:** Write a letter from your *inner wisdom* to your *reactive mind*. Remind the mind that it doesn't need to fear the weather.
-

Remember to remember

We've now reached the end of the 'Freedom' stage of our journey. Along the way we've learned how to recognise what's happening without flinching, how to set down some of the weight we've been dragging, and how to rely on the 'Seven Supports' as a tool-kit of inner resources. Taken together, they change the feel of practice. The mind becomes less dependent on crises to wake up, less dependent on stimulation to feel alive, and less dependent on control to feel safe. There is more brightness without buzz, more calm without shutdown, and more steadiness without rigidity. Freedom here doesn't mean life has stopped being life; it means we're less compelled, less yanked around, and more able to stay present as conditions shift.

Balancing Equanimity is the clearest sign of this change. When equanimity is available, we're not constantly tilting toward *more* or *away*, and we don't have to make every mood into a verdict about ourselves. The raft feels seaworthy: not perfect, but stable enough to hold course in real weather. That's why it's the hand-off into the fourth Training stage of our journey. In this next stage, we take this steadier vessel and learn to navigate by 'Gotama's Middle Way programme' (The Eightfold Path) – not as a theory, but as a lived route through perspective, intention, speech, action, livelihood, application, mindfulness, and collectedness. We're no longer practising mainly to heal; we're practising to live and to flourish and to support others to do the same.

"Equanimity is not indifference... it is a spacious mind." ~ Analayo

“Equanimity... is a mind at ease with itself.” ~ Martine Batchelor

[RAFT to Freedom](#) © 2025 by Dr Cathryn Jacob and Vince Cullen

is licensed under Creative Commons
Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International.

