



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.

53 – The fourth ‘Anchor of Mindfulness’: remember to remember

Checking the charts and steering the course

“Reflect, Rāhula, on bodily, verbal, and mental action – before, during, and after acting... If it leads to affliction, do not do it. If it leads to no affliction, then do it.” ~ Gotama (The Buddha)

“Everyone has the ability to affect the three feet around them by behaving more ethically, honestly, and compassionately toward those they meet.” ~ Sharon Salzberg

The map room of the raft

A map is useless if you don’t have a sense of which direction is safe and which is dangerous. The Fourth Anchor of Mindfulness is the map room. In traditional teachings, this is known as Mindfulness of the Dharmas (qualities or principles).

In this chapter, the traditional translation of *dharmas* simply means the repeatable patterns and principles we can learn to recognise and work with. This aspect of mindfulness focuses on ‘remembering to remember’. It is not about moral perfection or being good. It is about keeping in mind all that we have learned and seeing consequences early – so we don’t create avoidable harm for ourselves or others. In this and forthcoming chapters we explore the Fourth Foundation of Mindfulness in an applied way: learning to recognise the key patterns that shape experience, and using that recognition to support wiser

action in daily life.

To navigate the Training stage, we consult five specific sections of the manual, some of which we have already explored, and others that we will explore in coming chapters.

- ★ **The Hazards** (The Five Hindrances)
- ★ **The five Components of body-mind**
- ★ **The six sense doors**
- ★ **The Seven Supports**
- ★ **Gotama's Four Realisations**

The fourth aspect of mindfulness has two closely related tasks. One is recognising, in real time, what kind of pattern is present. The other is understanding conditions: seeing how these patterns arise, what keeps them going, and how they fade.

Self-reflections

1. When I am upset, triggered, or pulled by habit, how quickly do I remember to remember?
2. What most often makes me forget – tiredness, stress, urgency, emotion, craving, or self-justifying stories?
3. What helps me come back to the map when I have started to drift?
4. In difficult moments, do I remember what I value before I speak or act — or only afterwards?
5. Does my life change when I remember that choices have consequences and leave a wake behind them?
6. What would it look like, in one concrete area of my life, to remember a little sooner and steer a little wiser?
7. How does steadying myself through Ethical Mindfulness also protect others from my reactivity?

Journaling prompts

1. **A moment of forgetting:** Write about a recent moment when you completely forgot your practice and were swept into an old reaction. What pulled you away? At what point did you remember again?
 2. **A moment of remembering:** Write about a recent time when you *did* remember in time. What helped you pause? What was different because you remembered before acting?
 3. **What makes me forget?:** Reflect on the conditions under which remembering is hardest for you. Are there certain moods, settings, people, or inner stories that make you lose the map?
 4. **What helps me remember?:** Make a list of the small things that help you come back: a breath, a phrase, a pause, a sensation in the body, stepping away, prayer, honesty, or asking for help. Which of these works best when the waters are rough?
 5. **Before the old story becomes action:** Write about a recurring pattern in your life. What does it feel like in the few moments before it turns into speech, behaviour, or retreat? What might help you remember yourself at that exact threshold?
 6. **The wake of remembering and forgetting:** Compare two recent moments – one in which you remembered your training, and one in which you forgot. What kind of wake did each leave behind in you and in others?
 7. **Remembering tomorrow:** Write a short note to your future self for the next time you are triggered, lost, or reactive. What do you most need to remember at that moment? Keep it simple, kind, and clear.
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Remember to remember

The Fourth Anchor of Mindfulness is the practice of remembering to remember. It is where the Navigator enters the map room and brings the teachings back into the living moment. We do not simply notice what is happening; we remember what we have learned about how experience works. We remember the map: that moods change, urges crest and pass, habits have consequences, and small choices can either deepen suffering or loosen its grip. This is what allows

mindfulness to become more than bare attention. It becomes an active, ethically imbued way of staying oriented. To navigate the Training stage, the mind must keep returning to True North – Gotama’s Four Realisations – and the wider Middle Way programme that steers us away from harm, compulsion, and confusion, and toward steadiness, care, and freedom. Without this living reference to the map, the raft easily drifts back into old habitual currents.

This is why ethical mindfulness matters. We are not watching life from a distance like spectators on the shore; we are in the raft, steering. Safe passage requires us to recognise, in real time, what is trying to board the vessel through the six sense doors, what Hazards are rising, and what conditions are strengthening or weakening the mind. By understanding the Five Components of body–mind, we begin to see the moving parts of experience rather than collapsing into a fixed and personal “me”; by cultivating the Seven Supports, we create the bright and steady inner weather needed for the crossing. Each thought we feed, each word we speak, each action we take leaves a wake behind it – in the mind, in the body, in our relationships, and in the conditions that follow. So we pause and ask: What is happening here? What pattern is present? Where is this likely to lead? Remembering to remember does not mean we never drift. We will forget, react, and sometimes only realise afterwards that we have gone off course. But this too is part of the training. The practice is not perfection but returning. Each time we remember, reflect, repair, and begin again, mindfulness becomes less fragile and more trustworthy, until it grows into a steadiness we can rely on when the waters are rough.

“We learn to apply and reapply, moment to moment, with an effort that is calm and caring.” ~ Christina Feldman

“Mindfulness is always ethically imbued; it is never a neutral process.” ~ John Peacock

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