

Four Points that Turn the Mind

The 'Four Points that Turn the Mind' are key foundation practices from the Buddha's teachings that help shift our perspective towards a more meaningful, spiritual life. Here's a simple summary:

1. Impermanence (Anicca): Everything is constantly changing. All things that are assembled will disassemble. Nothing lasts forever, so holding on to things, ideas or people is a source of suffering.

Practices: recognising holding, letting go, watching clouds, hearing, opening to change

2. Suffering (Dukkha): Life inevitably involves dissatisfaction, discomfort and death. This helps us understand that seeking lasting happiness in external things is futile. Being aware of this also generates compassion.

Practices: recognising dissatisfaction/seeking and cyclic thoughts, letting be, opening to what is

3. Selflessness (Anatta): There's no permanent, unchanging 'self.' What we think of as 'me' is just a collection of parts, concepts and experiences that change, so it's wrong to hold a fixed idea of who we are. By being a 'nobody' we can be less reactive, and kindness is more natural.

Practices: recognising that self-identity and preferences are concepts of our own making, being a nobody, equanimity

4. Cause and Effect (Karma): Our thoughts and actions have consequences. Good thoughts and actions lead to positive results, while harmful ones lead to negative outcomes for us or others, sooner or later. Understanding this encourages ethical behaviour and personal responsibility.

Practices: recognising the complexity and interdependence of arising phenomena, gratitude, positivity and kindness

These four thoughts guide us in daily living and help us to find mental freedom. In doing this we make our world a better place.