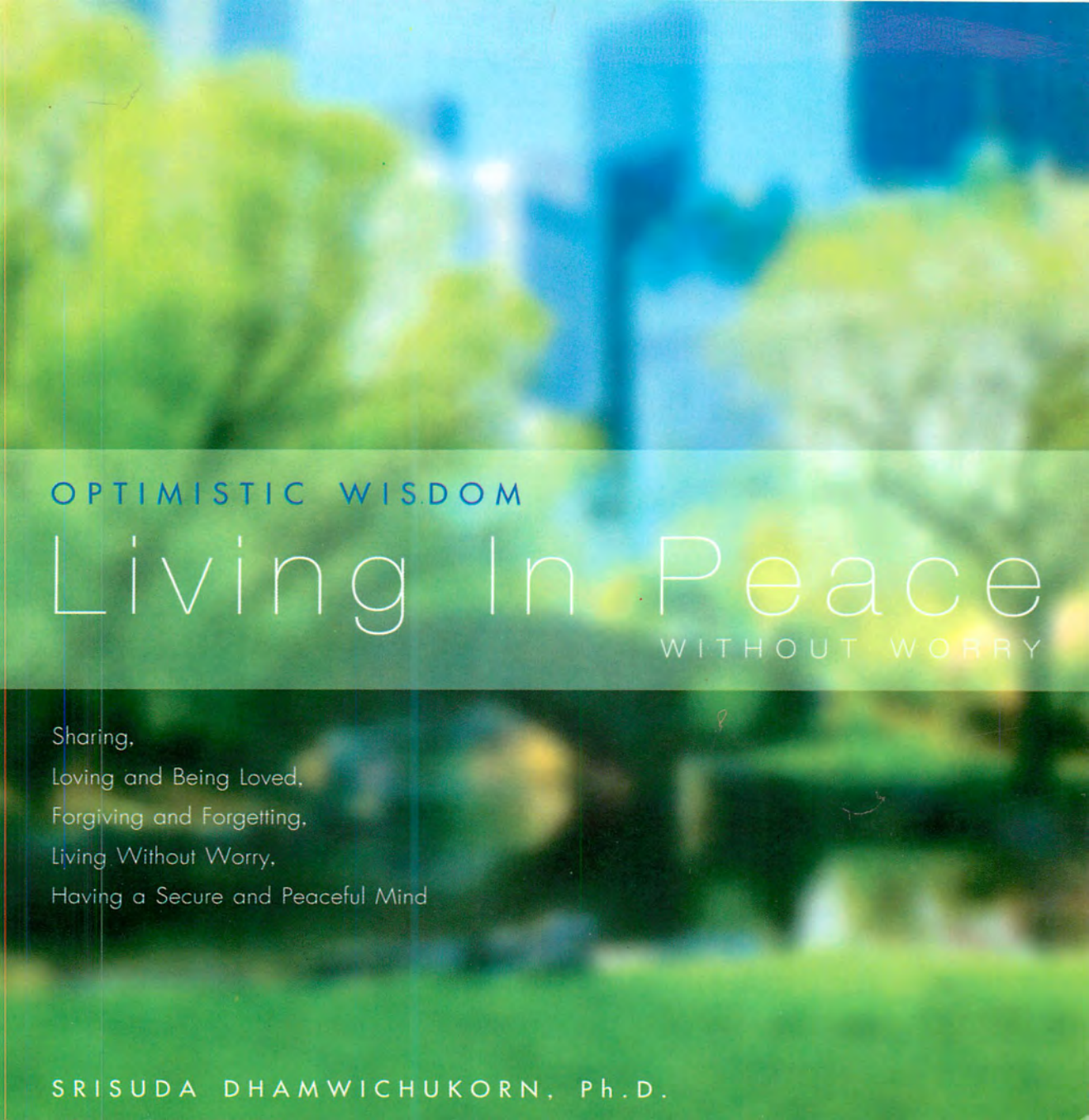




OPTIMISTIC WISDOM

Living In Peace

WITHOUT WORRY

Sharing,
Loving and Being Loved,
Forgiving and Forgetting,
Living Without Worry,
Having a Secure and Peaceful Mind

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Optimistic Wisdom

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Series1: Living in Peace without Worry

Practical insight that will lift your spirit and set your mind free from worry in all circumstances wherever you are.

Sharing, Loving and Being Loved, Forgiving and Forgetting, Living without Worry, Having a Secure and Peaceful Mind

Life is tough. It is estimated that over 19 million Americans (<http://www.nimh.nih.gov/publicat/numbers.cfm>) suffer from anxiety and depressive attacks due to the worries of coping with life. I hope this book will reduce your need to worry about the short or long term concerns in your life.

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Introduction (Wisdom from Death)

A year ago, I was asked by Prabhavanaviriyakhun, the Vice President of the Dhammakaya Foundation, to write a book about his teachings on how to create a peaceful world. I was glad to be asked to write this book. However, I was not fully aware of its importance or how my hidden talent for writing (which he believes I have) might be useful to others. Consequently, I worked toward its completion slowly. That was until the day I heard from my family in Thailand that my mother was in the hospital because of a cerebral hemorrhage. Her doctor at the hospital told us that since the hemorrhage was in the middle of her brain, they could not perform surgery. We could only prepare ourselves for her passing. I was, at least, pleased to hear that she was happy, reminiscing about doing good deeds with her good friends (at the Dhammakaya foundation at the Ratchaburi-province branch), just before she fainted. Her good friends took her to the hospital. She was in no pain. She smiled with the happiness of thinking about doing good deeds, even while she was unconscious.

At first, I was very sad. It was too sudden for me to accept, and I could not eat or leave my house. Then the words of Khun Yay Maha Rattana Upasika Chandra Khon-nok-yung (founder of Wat Pra Dhammakaya) came to me. I heard, at her cremation ceremony on February 3, 2002, that she taught, *“When you have problems, you are sad, or you cannot*

think of any good things, you need to practice meditation. That will help you to think correctly.” I began to practice meditation to avoid being devastated by the bad news, and the wisdom came to me. Then I realized more about death. *When we die, we cannot take any money, fame, or property with us - only goodness or evil.* I had heard those words over and over from my teachers, Khun Yay Chandra and both Luang Pors (Phrarajabhavanavisudhi, the president and Phrabhavanaviriyakhun, the vice president of the Dhammakaya Foundation). My mother had contributed many good things to many communities in the Ratchaburi province of Thailand where she lived. Her friends and acquaintances from the Dhammakaya Foundation in Ratchaburi prayed for her. I believe that she has gone to heaven, a better place than our polluted and struggling world.

I was still sad. I feel that being sad is normal for human beings when loved ones around us pass away. I had to tell myself that I must continue to live and do good things, so that even though she is no longer here on earth, she can always be proud of me. Writing a good or an inspirational book is one of the good deeds that I should be able to do. I have decided to spend more time writing about Prabhavanaviriyakhun’s helpful inspirational teachings. These teachings helped me in bringing closure to my grief as well. As a scientist, I am concerned with concrete terms. I hoped writing about philosophical teaching or stories (which are abstract) would not be more difficult than writing scientific matters.

After reading many of Luang Por Datta's (Prabhavanaviriyakhun) books, I realized that making people aware of the benefits of doing good deeds and behaving well in our society is also a part of how to create a peaceful world. *World peace must not stop with each individual mind. If you wish for a world without strife, you must first start with yourself.* Then consider your family and friends and finally all others that might have a chance to read this book. I gained the knowledge of how to create a peaceful world from Luang Por Datta's teachings as expressed in his Thai books Manual for Our Country's Crisis Recovery and Economy in Buddhism's Style. This knowledge includes information gained from his advice and that of the other great teachers at the Dhammakaya Foundation.

I hope the Dhamma, or teaching words, in this book will inspire others to do more good deeds and help us all to create our own peaceful minds and world.

Finally, I would like to dedicate the goodness that may happen from this book to my mother, my father, my aunt, my sisters, and all my great teachers and friends.

Crystal Moon

(Srisuda Dhamwichukorn, Ph.D.)



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Preface

From Luang Por Datta

Whatever we do, we have to begin by understanding our goals correctly. We might start by asking ourselves why we have to do it. If we understand why, then we will try to do it properly. There are two major correct understanding. The first one is the normal understanding that is how to live our lives: comprehending what we learn from classes, learning how to make our work easier, or how to live happily in this life. The second understanding is a higher level of understanding where we learn to live happily in both this life and the next. That means a person must understand these planes of existence and their elements of sin and righteousness or goodness. We must learn what good thoughts, words or speech, and deeds are. Some examples are how our parents are important to our lives, how we should show our gratitude and respond to our parents properly, why we have to respect our teachers. The second understanding takes time to develop. Because it takes time, many people in today's generation may not believe in the afterlife. However, our family, society, and the world over time will find these elements as being definite solutions to social problems such as killing, stealing, and lying. For instance, if one believes in sin or goodness and one knows that karma (effect) will occur, not only in this life but also in the next life, then that person will not do bad things. This is because good karma and bad karma will

have an effect over time. If a person has right understanding, which leads to right thoughts, words or speech, and actions, good things that one strives for will come along. *Thus, we should try to do whatever will cause us to improve ourselves or to pursue perfection.*

In addition, Buddha taught the four noble truths over 2,500 years ago. The nobility of the eightfold path is the fourth noble truth. The fourth noble truth is the way to the cessation of suffering for both our mind and body. This eightfold path which is the fourth noble truth, includes:

- 1) Right Understanding (or view)
- 2) Right Motives (or thought)
- 3) Right Speech
- 4) Right Action
- 5) Right Means of Livelihood
- 6) Right Endeavor
- 7) Right Mindfulness and
- 8) Right Concentration.

Right Understanding (1) is the beginning of the way that leads to the cessation of suffering. Right Understanding (1) and Right Motives (2) help us to gain the right thought. Attaining Right Understanding (1) and Right Motives (2) will facilitate Right Speech (3), Right Action (4) and Right Means of Livelihood (5) on our path to righteousness. These five conducts (1-5) free us from the sins of thought, speech, and action. Right Endeavor (6) helps us to improve ourselves. Right Mindfulness (7) helps us to be cautious because life is not easy, and it has many obstacles, and Right Concentration (8) enlightens or brightens our minds. All these roads enable us to dedicate our lives to goodness.

Moreover, we may wonder why sometimes we have such bad habits. Some of these habits may be too ingrained to be corrected. Habits start from youth and become part of our growth. What and who creates our habits? Buddha distinguished six sub-groups of people in society who are our closest companions in the cycle of existence (birth, old-age, sickness, and death). He used the differences between relationships to create a principle called the Six Directions. The Six Directions come from people that we interact with in our society. These relationships are: 1) Parent-Child 2) Teacher-Student 3) Husband-Wife 4) Friend-Friend 5) Employer-Employee and 6) Monk-Follower. The Parent-Child direction is the most influential in our lives. It is here that the good or bad habits in our lives are created. If our parents have attained right understanding and created right understanding in us, then we will possess this important element. Other people around us,

based on the six directions, greatly influence us also. Sometimes we may not like the way someone with whom we are connected treats us, or we may not like their habits. After we have become familiar with their distasteful habits, we will begin to accept them. In fact, we have to scrutinize our own habits before correcting them. That is why the six directions are very important in our lives. *The good to be won in this life is such a major goal and so necessary for happiness.*

Finally, there are many ways to define what it means to be human. Scholars and other wise people know that it is difficult to be born a human and to live life; but life after death is even more important than this life. We should dedicate our every action to what we can do to maintain and gain our goodness. This pursuit of the good is intimately connected with avoiding bad and evil. We must reduce our imperfections for this good.

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1. The Peaceful Mind--Beginning of the Peaceful World

“Clean the world, clean the mind” (United Nations, August 6-World Meditation Day)

This phrase is short and clear, but how many people will realize how important it is and apply it in their lives? The words “clean the world” in this phrase certainly include not only cleaning tangible things (removing pollutants, wastes, etc.) but also cleaning intangible things (eliminating hatred, greed, etc.). But how does it relate to cleaning the mind? If we consider that anger, greed, and delusion come from an impure mind, then the clean or pure mind does not contain anger, greed, or delusion. Usually anger is what makes us want to hit, hurt, sue, or even kill other people. Anger would make us want them to be hurt, to be unsatisfied, or to be vengeful. Suppose that someone blinded a person. If the one who lost his eye was very angry, he might take revenge on the person that blinded him by trying to blind his enemy. (Anger usually turns the other party into an enemy.) However, the victim will not get his eyes back by doing so.

Greed is what makes us want to take things that we often do not need or that do not belong to us. Greed makes many people steal others' belongings, rob other people's houses, kill family members for insurance, or sue other people for trivial mistakes.

Delusion makes us crazy and forces us to do things without thinking about what is right and wrong.

In the bigger picture, when anger, greed, and delusion are manifested in crowds, they can cause war, pollution, and disease.

In contrast, what will make people know how to forgive and forget? What will make them know how to be satisfied with what they have and can earn? How should they spend their money? How should we behave and how can we behave well? A pure mind will make people think good thoughts, speak kind words, be optimistic, and make good clear decisions. A pure mind will enable them to behave well based on their positions and duties in their communities. It is difficult for anyone to have a pure mind, but at least anyone can focus his mind to reduce or stop his bad thoughts. If everyone tried to clean his or her mind, then we could create a good, forgiving, sharing, and helping community. That is why improving the world starts from mind cleansing.

Once I heard, “All animals/humans on earth are happiest when we are understood.” It would be very difficult to always be understood. But at least, we can start by trying to

understand ourselves first. Whenever our minds are (crystal) clear, we can actually see who we are, what we need, and what we actually need to do and to possess.

If we think of everyone in this world as our friends without the separation of nation, religion, culture, and race, then all the resources actually belong to the earth and everyone. The people who possess the important resources, which are inaccessible to the other groups, need to know how to share. When greed gets into the minds of a certain group of people, sharing becomes unreasonable terms for them. When anger gets into the minds of the people who lose the benefits and interests, threatening, hurting, killing, and using inappropriate power become reasonable terms for them. And when delusion or ignorance gets into the minds of the people who do not receive the right information, untemplated support, resistance, or hate, can intentionally become their concerns.

When we talk about “clean” peaceful solutions, the solutions should be based on sharing, compassion, and pure wisdom. There should be no killing in terms of “respect for human rights”. There should be no one who has to be killed and no one who has to kill others, if we really respect human rights. The right to life belongs to every human and no one should deserve to be killed, especially innocent people. A clean economic development also should

not be based on greed. And pure support and encouragement should not be based on ignorance.



2. The Peaceful Mind Begins from Being Good

A good person is a person with a clean or pure mind. A pure mind enables anyone to know how to respond well to his duty and to our society. There is goodness within every human being. How do we encourage bringing this goodness into consistent practice?

First, we have to understand two major concepts:

What are the qualifications of a good person?

How is a good person created?

We may define a good person as someone who conforms to moral and virtuous principles. Good persons have responsibilities to perform acts of goodness while avoiding evil acts.

For instance, usually, after I do something good, my mind is at peace. Sometimes I do something good by just giving encouraging words to people around me. When my friends have a problem or look worried, I can often help by just giving good advice or light-hearted words. That makes me feel very happy afterward. Some things that we can also give easily are love, kindness, and best wishes. If we are in a situation where we can give something,

that gift will bring pleasure to both giver and recipient. Another thing that we can give that costs nothing, but sometimes is difficult to give, is freedom. When you give freedom you receive great freedom. Many people would call this gift of freedom “forgiveness.” I have often heard many people say they love freedom and would do anything to get it. *Let’s start earning freedom in our hearts by giving forgiveness.*

Several years ago a friend said to me “Hong (my nickname), I should learn how to forgive and forget from you.” I did not think about it much then. *Now I realize that she could learn how to forgive, but perhaps it is harder to forget. We can certainly learn how to let it be, after we have done our best.*

I sometimes tell myself before I go to bed:

“The more you give, the more you get.”

“The more you chase, the more you worry.”

Then I feel relaxed and do not worry; sleep comes with peace.



3. Being good and being responsible

What is responsibility?

Responsibility is the mindfulness to perform those actions that promote the greater good for yourself and others. When we are responsible, we contribute to the well being of ourselves and others. To be responsible we must have brave hearts and the determination to take risks to protect society from harm. If problems should arise, responsible people will try to solve them.

Good people perform good acts and avoid evil acts for the sake of society's peace.

Why must humans be responsible?

Compared to other creatures, human beings have the best body and mind structures to perform goodness. Our minds and hands can be used to create, to meditate, to reflect or to perform activities. For example, although we are not as big as elephants or as strong as tigers, our hands can enable us to bring foods, medicines, cloths, gifts, etc. to our parents. *It is our responsibility to dignify all forms of life. By dignifying others, we also dignify ourselves.*

Buddha once said, “Some people will ignore doing crucial things while dedicating their lives to useless or bad things.” Some people are willing to risk gossiping. Why is this a risk? Because they might lose their friends if their friends discover they gossiped. The former friend may seek revenge for being maligned. Gossiping is harmful to relationships. Some people may dedicate their lives to chasing money or engaging in car racing. Some take mood-altering substances such as alcohol. Alcoholics will endanger their lives for the sake of drinking too much.

We have responsibilities to practice acts of goodness. Performing acts of goodness, as often as we can, will create the habit of practicing goodness. A “doing good” program is created within ourselves afterward. *People who act responsibly are either directly or indirectly rewarded, while irresponsible people will eventually lose what they have.* Everyone gets what he or she deserves in the end. At first, irresponsible people lose their pride and their self-respect. Later, they will lose their trust and respect from others.

It is the duty of good people everywhere to stand for integrity.

4. Qualifications of Good Persons

Faith is a part of any human being. When we have faith in goodness, we want to do good deeds for others and ourselves. Once I heard Khun Yay Chandra say, “When we are born in this world, we should behave ourselves, be useful to ourselves and to others. If anyone behaves like this in this life, he or she will always be able to die with happiness.” Of course, this is always what good people do. It seems to me that being useful is being responsible. In addition, a person that is responsible is a person that has wisdom. Responsibility is a trait of wisdom. A person who knows how to be responsible also knows how to correct bad habits. The three concepts to correct bad habits are Dana, Sila, and, Bhavana. Dana is knowing how to give. Dana helps to protect us from being homeless – remember the more you give the more you get. Sila or the five precepts (avoid killing, stealing, committing adultery, telling lies, and drinking alcohol or taking drugs) allow us maintain our humanity, which is more than just knowing how to survive. Bhavana or meditation is how to gain wisdom through our bright minds, which can learn from a wise teacher.

This also reflects that many people who are ignorant do not know what is right or what is good. Then they do not know how to sacrifice. In order for them to sacrifice, they would need a strong and pure mind that could accept their defects.

Usually, a responsible person is willing to sacrifice in order to have a future or for the future, while an irresponsible person will make decisions for now without regard for the future.

5. Responsibility? Why Do I Have to Have it?

What would society be like if husbands and wives ignored each other, parents and children ignored each other, teachers did not take responsibility for their students, employers ignored their employees, and monks ignored their teaching?

Can you imagine how chaotic our communities would be if we parked our cars in the middle of the road, threw all of our garbage into our neighbor's yard, and spit anywhere we wanted, whether we had a cold or not?

Keep your word! Keeping your word is a major part of being responsible. Parents lie to kids, kids lie to their parents, husbands lie to wives, wives lie to their husbands, teachers lie to students, and students lie to teachers. What kind of a world is this? I would meditate to get away from the cycle of lying and seek to associate with good friends and good people. I would go to places where people have responsibility for their thoughts, words, and actions. But how can I get out of this puzzle if I do not start by taking responsibilities for my own thoughts, words, and deeds? Responsibility begins with our relationships to others. We all need to be able to respond to each other positively.

Before “we” can respond positively, it must be “I” can respond positively. I have to take responsibility for myself and I will, just like that.

Can we trust an irresponsible person? It is uncomfortable to interact with someone who we cannot trust. It makes us become tense and on edge while we are in the company of untrustworthy people. *Trust is the foundation of all relationships. And responsibility brings trust to the people who have it.*

6. Taking Responsibility for Ourselves

Why do some people not take responsibility for themselves? “Nobody taught me” is just a bad excuse. People always have opportunities and choices. How we respond to things depends on how we perceive them. There are many good and bad things in this world. What and whom we follow is our choice. If we choose to look at responsible persons and follow their practices, we can become successful like them. Is it too late to change if I have associated with a bad, lazy, and irresponsible person? *It is never too late to change, to learn, and to improve our lives to be useful to others. We just have to be patient. Patience comes when we see an approaching achievement, and we have met goals.* Sometimes we are not patient and get angry when we cannot do things successfully. This is because we have no goals or we do not see our goals being fulfilled. We have to set goals in our lives. Our goals have to be the right goals.

When we start to take responsibility, good karma starts to happen in our lives. *One of the first things good karma will bring is trust.* It is like the old saying “What goes around, comes around.” *People who are patient usually see long-term goals and benefits.* Most of us are not patient enough to see long-term benefits. However, *it is never too late to forget the past and start over again.*

Killing, stealing, committing adultery, and telling lies often lead to many bad consequences for us. If we try to avoid doing these four things that cause bad results, we then are taking responsibility for ourselves. I will discuss how to be responsible for ourselves concerning these four things in the next four chapters.

7. Killing, Is it necessary?

All creatures (animals and humans) love their lives. If we do not want to be hurt or killed then we can imagine that others do not want to be hurt or killed either. When I was younger, I heard Khun Yai Chandra taught that people must not kill even small creatures such as mosquitoes and ants. She said mosquitoes eat only small amounts of our blood. The result of their eating is death. They merely hurt us, but we kill them. I did not realize then how not killing mosquitoes would be very important. However, I follow Khun Yai Chandra's teachings. After avoiding killing insects for a while, it became my habit. This habit changed my thought and made me feel afraid to kill even bigger animals. Now I avoid any killing or hurting.

Once, I went out on a boat with a friend that likes to fish on Lake Superior, Michigan. I asked him if those fish were hurt when he tried to get the lure out of the fish's mouth. He said "yes." I wore braces for several months. I still remember the pain of the tooth extraction to facilitate the orthodontic treatment and the pain of the bands and braces in my mouth. I thought about the pain that the fish must feel when the lures are in their mouths. It must be more painful than my orthodontic treatments. I think many people fish for fun, but those fish do not feel the fun. They feel real pain. I now appreciate what Khun Yai

Chandra taught. The more I avoid killing and hurting animals, the more I do not want to hurt humans.

Anger is the beginning of the desire to hurt and kill. If I am not angry when a mosquito bites me, I can just chase it away or spray insect repellant to protect myself. If I were angry I would probably swat it right away. Taking other people's lives has many bad effects. If someone is killed, people in his family will be very sad and angry and maybe seek revenge and so forth. A killer's mind is usually rude and rough. *Those who do not kill or hurt anybody will eventually be confident, gentle, and brave. Their minds will be more powerful and pure.* They are not harmful to others. Thus, they will be loved, and no one will want to hurt or kill them. *We do not need to kill. We will have thoughtful solutions to avoid this killing and hurting in our daily lives, when we do not want to kill and hurt others.* Not killing and hurting is good karma. *If we give good karma, we will get good karma in return. The one who does not kill is the one who both gives and receives life.*



8. Stealing, Is it Necessary?

Anybody who loves and protects his own life will try to work hard to get money, food, and other things to maintain his life. *We do not want others to take the things that we love. Others do not want us to take the things that they love either.*

Many people who are jealous or greedy want other people's things. Some people think that a better life comes from selling things that they steal. Some poor people may steal essential things for living, such as food. There is a better way. They can ask for work in exchange for long-term benefits. That is an honest and a safe way to live. We may imagine a world where everyone steals. How would we have peace of mind to go to work and leave our houses? We also may imagine not being able to leave our cars unattended while shopping. Would we want to be responsible for creating a world like this? No! Thus, we should not steal others' belongings. People who do not steal are people who protect their things and the things of others. Their minds are peaceful and happy. *Those who reduce their jealousy and greed do not want the things of others.* People that become rich by taking others' belongings will worry that one day the owners will come back to take revenge.

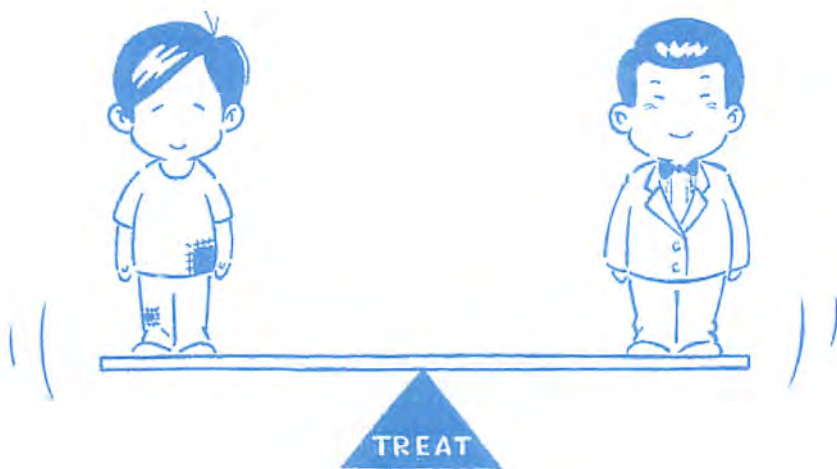
9. Committing Adultery, Do we need to do it?

I have heard that some people commit adultery for a variety of reasons. They may want a different life. *They may live their lives following other people's standards. People should love their own spouses and want to live happily within their families.* If someone takes your spouse, you may be sad, unhappy, and embarrassed. Whatever a person desires, it does not give him the right to take another's spouse. People who take another's spouse do not sleep well or peacefully. They live in danger as we see portrayed in the movies and newspapers. Many killings and lawsuits result from people committing adultery. We might be horrified if we thought our selfishness was the cause of someone's family falling apart. In addition, our society often considers taking someone else's love, killing (others' lives), stealing (others' belongings), and adultery (with others' spouses) to be evil deeds. This is mainly because of the bad consequences that occur negatively affect other people's lives in our societies.

The movie Chicago is a good example of the bad consequences of committing adultery, except it is not that musical or fun in real life.

10. Lying, Do We Need to Do It?

Some people tell lies for many reasons; to make them feel grand, to fit into groups or to allay fears of getting into trouble and of disappointing someone. *Whatever the circumstance, the truth is always good.* We cannot impress or satisfy everyone. *Speaking the truth is a symbol of honesty, sincerity, and bravery.* Sarcasm, gossip, lies, and deceit lead to sin, pain, and harm, in both the short and long term. *Those who lie have to lie to themselves before they lie to others.* Then they have to remember their lies or their words, because they may get caught later if they forget them. Those who lie often will not have a good memory. Lying is deception. Those who lie are neither lovable nor trustworthy. Lying, gossip, and sarcasm can often end up hurting other people's feelings and can cause fighting as well. *Those who do not lie will gain trust, security, and confidence.* Instead of telling lies, good people usually practice moral veracity. "Moral veracity" is a combination of truth, politeness, benefit, and kindness - *expressed at the proper times and in the proper situations.* Before a person can practice moral veracity he or she must have a pure, kind, and good mind.



11. Being Responsible for Others in Society

As human beings, we have to live and work with others in society. We negatively affect society when we consider only what we want, what we like, and what we can accomplish. Being responsible to society, not being self-centered, requires a generous mind. People who are capable of being responsible to society need to be opened minded. Responsible people have to seek and obtain correct understanding. We know there are many relationships and habits that develop amongst people in society. The feelings of love, anger, fear, and delusion occur differently in each individual. *These feelings affect the way we treat people. Feelings may cause us to treat others unequally and thus unfairly. Love, anger, fear, and ignorance may lead us to be unfair.* When we do something wrong in our society, we need to reduce our ego in order to learn and improve. For example, we may kill others accidentally because of driving recklessly while intoxicated by drugs or alcohol. Or we may scold our children, family, and friends because we cannot control our own emotions. We need to harness our ego in order to improve. Sometimes a guilty conscious is good if it reduces our ego because we are not always right as mentioned in the examples above. A guilty conscious does not humiliate people if the guilty try to correct their actions and improve. A guilty conscious sometimes moves many people to be more responsible for themselves and society. However, please keep in mind that it is never too late to forget the past and start over again.

Likewise, keeping the awareness of the guilt all the time disrupts the ability to move on. In conclusion, *being responsible is how we learn to take control of our feelings and emotions. Being responsible is the way to treat others in our family and society correctly and properly.*

12. Partiality Because of Love

When we love or feel satisfied by someone, we usually do or give something to that person that they may not deserve. We may not give things to some people that we do not love or unfairly love less. *The unloved ones may deserve better.* If we love our daughter more than our son, then our daughter may receive mostly compliments and our son receives mostly blames. Sometimes we take sides with our children even when they do something wrong. The long-term effect of that is bad because the children will become spoiled.

When we work in the same places as our relatives, close friends, and significant others, we may give them things that they do not deserve. This is a form of corruption beginning from our mind. If most people in society behaved with partiality, it would cause corruption in that society. *If we thought of everyone in our organization or society as our relatives, we would then treat each of them equally like family.* The partiality due to love would be reduced. *When we do not have biases our minds and moods are more focused and stable.*

I do believe that everybody has one(s) that he or she can love, fall in love, and truly love. Do you believe that love makes people blind? I think falling in love probably is the strongest cause of complete blindness.

Have you ever felt that when you (fall in) love with someone, anything or everything that she or he does tends to be right or all right?

Once my mother told me that when a man falls in love with a woman, if the woman passes gases, he still can say that those are good smells. You may feel funny and may think that my mother's analogy is outrageous. But I think you will agree with her.

Therefore, I agree that love makes people blind. However, the ability to truly love others makes us try to understand the ways those people truly are. And pure love makes us unconditionally and unexpectedly give our love, understanding, and everything that we can give to others solely for the sake of goodness.



13. Preference Because of Hate

“I do not like him because he is black.”

“I do not like her because she has such a strong accent.”

“I do not like him because his parents are from the South.”

“The boy at school seems polite. However, you should not play with him, because he and his family live in the slums.”

“I do not like her because she always gets an A in every class.”

“I do not like her because she always works very hard, stays late at the office every night, and then gets promotions. That makes me look bad to my boss.”

We may prefer to do something with someone or make friends based on personality and appearance. Sometimes we dislike some people without knowing them. They may have never done us any harm. We may be jealous of others who are more talented than ourselves. We might want to make those people look bad. We may treat those people badly. Perhaps we discriminate against those of a different race, religion, nationality, language, or culture. *Discrimination often causes us to treat others in our society unfairly.*

Discrimination is one form of preference or bias in our society. We may hate someone because their ancestors treated ours badly. We might treat others unfairly because they treated us badly. Many people who are treated unfairly hate those who treat them so. This may be part of a person's self defense mechanism to let them know that they should do something about it. However, when we take revenge, or get even, it does not make us feel better. *Before we can persecute someone through our vengefulness, we must first have allowed hate to corrupt our minds. That is why deep down it does not make us feel better to take revenge. And that is why forgiveness gives us peace and freedom of mind.*

14. Prejudice Because of Ignorance

Ignorance denotes a lack of knowledge or intelligence (Merriam-Webster's dictionary). Some people are prejudiced because of their ignorance. *It is easy to become prejudiced when we lack the right information. Sometimes when we hear something about someone, we judge that person solely by what we hear, not by what we know. We may make a decision about someone without the right understanding or enough information. We often treat others badly or wrongly because of misunderstandings. This mistake can lead to a lack of morals in our society. Seeking the truth and the right information are good characteristics of a broad-minded and kindhearted person. Broadened minds extend our limits of consideration and understanding. Unbiased people usually act for the benefit of society more than for themselves.*

There are two kinds of people in this world: the ones who know and the ones who do not really know. However, the ones who know may be categorized as those who deeply and really know, really know, and partially know.

At one time, there were many people prejudiced against HIV-patients because they did not know that people who have AIDS do not easily spread HIV.

Once upon a time, there was a runaway soldier who was labeled a coward. Those who blamed him did not know that he gave up not because he was afraid to be killed, but because he was afraid of killing.

Once upon a time, there were many people who felt reluctant to give donations and did not want to attend church because they heard there was a priest who sexually abused a young boy. So they concluded that every priest is gay or sadistic. (I do not mean anything against homosexual people. It is only that the person, who enters the priesthood is not supposed to be homosexual.) However, that is not true. If a small portion of people in an organization is bad, it does not mean that everyone in that organization is bad.

It is a common belief that a middle child tends to get less attention than his or her siblings, but that does not mean all middle children will be trouble makers. The youngest child tends to get the most attention or is spoiled, but that does not mean all youngest children will be “brats”. The oldest child tends to be a good example, but that does not mean that all of them will be.

Students who come from wealthy families tend to be able to get whatever they want, but that does not mean all of them can do or deserve whatever they want, neither are all of them snobbish and arrogant.

Nowadays, people tend to believe the results that have been tested or proved by researchers, *but that does not mean all scientific tests are correct. We should prove for ourselves before we believe, but sometimes we need to believe before we can prove.*



15. Preference Because of Fear

Some people will do unfair things because of fear. People's minds are unclear and their thoughts are incorrect if they fear that they will lose their social position, money, job, fame, love, or power. For example, when a family member treats their friends or their peers incorrectly, we many times take our family member's side if we fear that we will lose the satisfaction in our relationships. We may stand for people who do harmful things in our societies if we fear that we will lose our jobs or power from the harmful people who support us. *To live without fear we need courageous minds. A courageous mind comes from inner peace and purity with an ultimate goal of life. The ultimate goal of life is to pursue our perfection, which is life without suffering. We sacrifice ourselves for the sake of goodness, because keeping goodness is more valuable to us than keeping a social position, money, a job, fame, love, or power. It may be important for us to have a social position, money, a job, fame, love, or power, but it is more important to have goodness within our hearts, thoughts, and actions. It may be hard to lose some things that we want. It may be difficult to accept at first. When we dedicate our hearts, thoughts, speech, and our actions to accepting our losses and trying to pursue our perfection, we will always live without fear. Fear will never be able to distort or mislead our life if we have learned to accept our losses.*

16. Being Responsible for an Ethical Economy

We have talked about good people behaving with responsibility to themselves and to society. The third responsibility, being responsible for an ethical economy, is important too. *An ethical economy is one in which we all use, maintain, and protect our resources in our society.*

If more people did harm than those doing good, then our communities would be ruined and the balance of peace would be destroyed in our society. Harmful actions to an ethical economy may come from addictive behaviors. Addictions are never satisfied. Addicts are impatient. Addicts are controlled by their addictive behaviors. Anyone who does not take responsibility for an ethical economy will destroy the good people in society and the economy of the world. I will discuss how to be responsible in an ethical economy of society in the next six chapters.

VALUE...



17. Drinking Alcohol, Do We Need It?

I have heard many reasons for drinking: family problems, work problems, addiction, seductive advertising, society, health, curiosity, peer pressure, availability, and depression.

I also have heard many reasons for not using drugs or drinking: waste of money, loss of control of the mind and moods, fighting, creation of many health problems, becoming notorious for acting poorly without shame (tarnishing your reputation), loss of memory, and loss of intelligence.

There are many ways to solve the above problems without cost such as through meditation, talking to monks or priests, exercising for better health, spending time with good friends, reading a good book, doing productive or charity work. These solutions are useful to us and to others. *We need to be aware of the problems, short term and long term, that can arise from the use of drugs and drinking alcohol.*

Taking drugs or drinking alcohol is what some people do in order to be fulfilled with temporary and (usually) inappropriate happiness. Taking alcohol or drugs can cause the

worst sadness, if our uncontrollable thoughts, speech, and actions negatively affect other people's lives.

I once received an e-mail from a friend. At the beginning, the e-mail showed pictures of a girl when she was young until she was 19 years old. She was pretty as she grew up. However, in the subsequent pictures, I saw hideous pictures of a person. Later, the e-mail indicated that it was the pretty girl who got trapped in a car that was hit by a 17 year-old student who was a drunk driver. He was on his way home after drinking a couple of beers with his friends. The girl was burnt all over her body. She has gone through at least 40 operations, lost her hands, one of her eyelids, and other burnt organs causing her terrible and endless pain.

The awful accident has tremendously saddened the driver who is now over 20 years old, the girl, and their families. I saw the picture showed he was crying. It has been over 3 years now, and he still cannot forgive himself. Because of that drunken moment, neither he nor anyone else can change her back to the pretty person she was. She will never be the same, although he will never forgive himself for the rest of his life, *not even trading her life for his life will change anything*. All he can do right now is tell people how drinking and driving has

devastated his life. This sad accident occurred only because of his short moment of fun spent drinking.



18. Roaming the Streets at Night, Do We Need It?

People who wander at night have more chances of encountering danger. Somebody that roams the streets may become useless and increasingly reckless. Many people roam the streets to be social, to have fun, to meet men or women, escape boredom, to get away from home, and to avoid their parents. When some people roam at night, they do inappropriate things that they cannot do at home. Many bad people like to hide their activities from others and thus gravitate to performing their activities at night when it is harder to see. *Those who roam the streets at night are considered to be the ones that do not protect themselves, their families, or their belongings (money and property).* Good people usually stay home at night with their families. They try to rest at night in preparation for work the next day. While resting they avoid chances of meeting with bad people. Generally bad people will wander to bad places at night.

19. Seeing Bad Television Shows and Movies, Do We Need Them?

Bad shows create bad pictures and memories in our minds. *Bad shows can generate anger, greed, and delusion in our minds. Bad words and bad deeds come from bad thoughts. Bad thoughts come from bad pictures in our minds. Seeing bad shows is even more dangerous for children, because they cannot distinguish between what is right and what is wrong.* We need to choose good hobbies for the people in our families. Maintaining good habits within the household allows us to avoid unhappiness in families. *Unhappiness can cause loneliness.* People like to be happy. They will be attracted to smiling people and avoid those who are moody, unhappy, or negative. In addition, when we are alone, we can have fun and relax with other appropriate activities or hobbies such as planting trees or flowers, reading good books, seeing good shows, doing volunteer work, exercising or playing sports, listening or playing nice music, and practicing meditation. This is better than seeing bad shows and movies.

A woman who has achluophobia (fear of darkness) because when she was young, her brother pretended to be a ghost, walked into her room at night, and grabbed her feet.

My closest friend told me that she once stayed at a state park hotel, which is in the middle of the woods. There was one night that she watched the movie Devil's Advocate and fell asleep. She got up again at 3 o'clock. It was very dark outside and when she looked through the windows all she saw were trees moving because of the wind. And because of some horrible scenes she saw from the movie, she started imagining ghosts and she was afraid and she could not get back to sleep. Although she is a scientist and is not expected to believe in ghosts, she could not calm herself down on that night. Then she stayed awake all night and started writing about how the pictures that we see and the sounds that we hear can affect our imagination and thought. *Actually, that "closest friend" is me.*

20. Gambling, Do We Need It?

Do you want to marry a gambler? I may start with a question that seems funny, but I believe that I will get a “No” answer from most people. Most people do not like seeing others’ misfortunes. Money that we earn from winning comes from other people who lose. That means we are making money from others’ misfortunes while we are winning. Easy money is gained from gambling; it is also easy to lose money. We are all familiar with the saying “Easy come, easy go.” A gambling business survives because we lose more often than we win. Those who like gambling will soon have money problems. People who are having financial problems and turn to gambling will only make their situations worse. The ones that win will be spoiled and become addicted to gambling. The ones that lose will look for revenge or try to get their money back somehow. People who are addicted to gambling will turn into liars, and liars lose their trust, pride, and respect.



21. Associating with Bad Friends

Bad friends lead us to bad lives. And many bad lives lead to irresponsible behavior, and irresponsibility often ruins the ethical economy in our society. This is how associating with bad friends ruins ethical economy. There are bad people in this world. If we are not their friends, then they cannot influence or convince us to go in the wrong directions (e.g., drinking, gambling, and cheating). Good people usually feel comfortable being around good friends. Bad people usually are comfortable being around bad friends. *If we want to be good, we must have good friends and avoid associating with bad friends.* It is that simple. We become like our friends because when we spend time with them, we tend to pick up their expressions, moods, attitudes, and beliefs.

How do we know who is a good friend and who is a bad friend? Later chapters of this book will describe what good friends and false friends are.

22. Reluctance to Work for a Living

Some people are reluctant to work because they are lazy. Their laziness may be an ingrained habit or they may have some problems. Many people will provide reasons for their reluctance to work like having worked for a long time, being bored, lacking a goal, losing motivation because of low income, being sick, having psychological problems, thinking work is not important, having problems at work, having a bad boss or having a bad colleague. Whatever excuses people give, they are not good excuses because we all have to work for a living. Although some people who are lazy are also honest, nice, and friendly, nobody wants to offer them a job. *A life without working is a life without value.* Some people may want to find a job that gives them a sense of accomplishment, hope of better life, and fire in their hearts. However, menial work, boring work, great work, domestic work, exciting work, or whatever type of work is not important. *It is worthy and admirable to work as long as it is honest and it maintains our wellbeing and goodness.* *Sooner or later working hard will pay off, directly or indirectly. Good work needs to be done at the right time and by the right method. Successful work results from putting love, patience, care, and understanding into our work.*

“Doing what you like is enjoyment, Liking what you do is happiness.” (Anonymous)

However, please keep in mind (remember) that there are other things besides work that are important in our lives as well.

“Too” is an adverb that whenever it is in front of any adjective, that adjective can become unfavorable. For instance, when it modifies either the good adjectives such as too good, too nice, too beautiful, too pleasant, too clean, too kind, too full, too attractive, and too effective or the bad adjectives such as too bad, too awful, too dirty, too hurtful, too nasty, too difficult, and too dangerous, none of these words are pleasing.

Therefore, I think working too hard is not as good as working really hard. During an economic crisis, many people may try very hard to get a job or work very hard to keep their jobs. However, paying attention too much to these things may cause us too much stress and we can become too worried or too depressed. And paying attention too little or being too relaxed may prevent us from accomplishing anything.

Sometimes we try our very best for our work and some things that are too far from our control such as being laid off because of less demand for work or reducing budgets can happen. Thus, we need to look for other alternatives such as focusing on extra education for

ourselves or others, doing volunteer work, doing a meditation retreat for a month, or creating our own jobs.



23. Being Responsible for the Environment

Besides, taking the three responsibilities: self, society, and ethical economy, good people are also responsible for the environment. Air, water, soil, forest, and weather are important for our living. These things are part of our environment and a good environment positively affects our living. Men live together in the world. Therefore, it is our responsibility to take care of our environment. Even Buddha was born in the forest, found his way to enlightenment in the forest, and passed into Nirvana in the forest. Lord Buddha demonstrated the importance of environment through his life events. *Buddha cultivated respect for the environment by training the monks to protect the forest.* They were neither allowed to cut down trees, nor allowed to discard wastes in the water or soil. *It is the responsibility of every good person to protect the environment as well.* To be responsible for the environment, we need to avoid any destruction, try to protect the environment from further destruction, and create a good environment. Creating a good environment includes both physical and mental environments which are good neighborhoods, foods, neighbors, and teachings.



24. Looking for a Good Neighborhood

A good neighborhood is essential for living in peace. If our neighborhoods are noisy, dangerous, hot, do not have trees, and are crowded, we will not live in physical peace. *Being uncomfortable physically leads to being uncomfortable mentally.* Therefore if possible, our homes and offices must be in good neighborhoods to comfort our lives and minds. *A good neighborhood for living does not need to be in a high-income area, but it needs to be safe and comfortable.*

We spend most of our time outside our workplaces in our homes and sometimes we even work at home. Therefore, it is very important that we need to live in a good neighborhood. A good neighborhood can also facilitate the way we develop our professional and personal growth. For example, children from families in a good neighborhood should be able to play and learn things together. Wives and husbands should be able to have useful and fun activities to do or to share. This is largely because a good neighborhood is usually composed of good people. When good people are together, they tend to do things that will benefit themselves and other people who live nearby.

Once, my friend told me that her neighbor screamed at her little children with insanity all the time. Those children are only about 2, 3, and 5 years old. It became annoying and she sometimes solved the problem by turning the stereo really loud and shutting her door. Good neighbors can create good neighborhoods and bad neighbors can potentially damage good neighborhoods.

25. Eating Well

When I first arrived in Michigan in 1997 to pursue my Ph.D. degree, I had many things to do to adjust to the new place, culture, and study. One of my Thai friends in Seattle recommended that I should take 1,000 mg of vitamin C a day. My friends in Michigan also said to me, “An apple a day keeps the doctor away.” In any case, everyone should care about eating foods that are useful to his or her body. *Eating well is important to maintaining our lives. It includes eating to be full and healthy. When we are hungry, our bodies are not in peace. When we lack essential nutrients, our bodies are weak and tired. Then we cannot think clearly. Drinking enough water each day is also necessary for our bodies. Most people say eating well is as important as exercising well.* I absolutely agree.

Over the past few years, I have heard from American and international friends, commercials, and media talking about loving good food. Some friends whom I invited to dinner often say after seeing the food on the dining room table, “Wow! good food!”. After finishing the dinner, some friends said “Thank you so much for treating us with such good foods.” My mother said, “Your friends probably never have had real good Thai food,” when I told her about the compliments.

Anyway, the compliments make me think about what good foods really are. Perhaps, some people think about good foods as delicious foods. The others may think about them as expensive or high quality foods. And some health nuts may think about good foods as total macrobiotic foods.

There have been tremendous numbers of research on what foods we should or should not eat; how and how much we should eat. The research included what kinds of exercise we can do and cannot do; how and how much we can do.

I try to read those kinds of books and watch TV programs to educate and to motivate myself as often as I can *because I am not the kind of person who exercises and eats right on a regular basis.*



26. Looking for Good Neighbors

Good environments for living do not only contain comfortable places, but they also need to contain good neighbors. Creating good neighbors might be more difficult than creating comfortable homes. Therefore, looking for good ones with whom we can live in peace is a simpler approach. *Good neighbors possess good manners, and they know how to adjust themselves to other people's cultures. We must not only expect others to be our good neighbors, but we must be good neighbors to others as well.* Basically, good neighbors are somewhat good people, and good people usually have good teachers or mentors in their lives telling them to behave well.

A few years ago while I was doing my Ph.D., there was a friend who came to the office with panda-eyes or panda syndrome (black rings around the eyes because of sleeplessness or restlessness). She started complaining with me how the two neighbors who lived on the second floor of her apartment complex got up very early in the morning and walked very loudly causing her to lose sleep.

Two single moms whose apartments were across the hall from each other had an unbelievable fight because of the conflicting of their laundry schedules. I said “unbelievable fights” because one called the other with a nasty name. And the other one was

very angry too and reported to the apartment manager how rude the other woman was. There were consequently unbelievable fights from the laundry conflict that I will not mention here. It was very silly whenever I look back at the fight and its cause.

The problem of the neighbors with the heavy footstep was not difficult to solve. I just asked them politely to walk more lightly and showed sympathy by turning the major cause of the noise problem to the building's material construction. And the neighbors were polite enough to promise that they would walk more quietly.

The second case was more difficult to solve. Both single moms were in charge of everything in their families. Both thought they were right and that the other had caused the problem. Looking for good neighbors is not as easy as I thought, especially, if unintentional problems occur. And the problems might change good manners into bitter manners.

At this point, I think "right understanding" of people's behaviors, manners, and perspectives would be an initial help in creating civility among our neighbors.

27. Looking for Good Teachings

Good friends have more qualities of good people than bad friends. In order to create a peaceful mind and world, we need to search for and have many good friends. Likewise, we can also help to create more good friends in our society. This calls for good teachers to teach us. *Good teachers teach us knowledge that can increase our abilities and skills, helping us to perform better work, and thus be able to do more good. The concept of learning is seeking good teachers, listening to the teachers, analyzing the teaching, accepting the teaching, and following the teaching.*

In any situation, good people usually look for only the good or bright sides of others in order to learn and to improve themselves. *If we always look for goodness in others, soon our minds will be like a sea of goodness. If we always look for only others' defects, soon our hearts will be full of evils.* Furthermore, good teachers always try to teach good teaching and provide good solutions. A clean wisdom comes from a clean knowledge, and the good teacher knows the clean knowledge.

Sometimes we think we know, and then we realize that we do not really know when we come across good teachers who do know. *Sometimes we think we learn some teaching that is really good, but it is not good enough when we come across the ultimate good teaching.*

The ultimate good teaching should allow us to be able to find the ultimate victory in our lives. And the ultimate victory is the ability to be deeply in touch with the most inner peace in every moment of our lives. Although, I do not “always” find peace in my mind because of some activities in life that can cause turmoil, *I still think that I am lucky enough to have met good teachers at the Dhammakaya foundation. They have great intentions to teach everyone the things that we should do in order to find the peace and the ultimate victory in life.*

28. Training Ourselves to Do More and More Acts of Goodness

Cloning has become a very popular issue. Scientists have been successful in cloning microbes, plants, and animals. But I am considering cloning of good habits, behaviors, and manners of good people. Cloning these good characteristics calls for training. *Training ourselves begins with disciplining our minds, and the disciplined mind guides our speech and actions into the right direction. Therefore, successful training must start by training our minds by avoiding bad thoughts, brightening our minds, and doing more acts of goodness.* We can practice by doing good everyday. Furthermore, those who like training themselves need to have a modest and respectful mind. *We all might accept that we are not perfect, and we always need to learn, to train, and thus to improve ourselves, until we accomplish our goals. Do not fill your mind with any worry or sorrow at all. Our minds actually are clean, joyful, pure, and bright. Everything (both good and bad) just comes and goes. We should keep only good in our hearts.* Every morning, we might practice smiling when we get up and wish that we will be happy today. *After we practice thinking of good every moment, soon the good will have the power to chase the sorrow away from our minds. Our minds will be left with only happiness, joy, and peace. The sunshine in the morning shines and chases the darkness. The sunshine of goodness and peace in our minds will chase the darkness or badness in our minds as well.*

29. Distributing Knowledge to Others

There are three forms of knowledge. They are knowledge from memory, wisdom, and brightness from meditation. Knowledge from memory is gained by studying things and memorizing them. Knowledge from wisdom is gained by learning and experiencing many various things, which we have gone through in our lives. *Knowledge from brightness from meditation is the inner brightness that shines on our mind to understand the way things are and then to think, speak, and act correctly.* Actually, we need a perfect teacher who can teach us the knowledge from meditation. Who is the perfect teacher? Buddha and Arahanta are the perfect teachers, because their minds are completely enlightened and pure, and they contain great kindness to teach or distribute the knowledge without any kind of discrimination. It may be very difficult to find a perfect teacher in our generation. However, we can find the knowledge from monks or priests who know his teachings. *The concepts of how to distribute knowledge to others are: sharing good teaching and switching between being students and being teachers* (depending on who knows that topic of teaching better). There are some people in this world that do not want to share knowledge. *There is no true benefit, if we just keep it for ourselves.* We need to have a kind mind to do the sharing for the sake of goodness.

Like I mentioned before, “The more you give, the more you get.” *You always get happiness in your heart when you start thinking about giving.*



30. Making Choices to Cooperate, Employ, or Coordinate with Others for Social Development, Management, etc.

People who are enthusiastic, patient, and charitable do good things, and therefore these people are the ones with whom we want to cooperate. However, the most important thing is that those persons have to “keep their word.” People who know how to “keep their word” are responsible. Those who practice the truth or keep their promises will eventually know how to take responsibilities for themselves, society, ethical economy, and the environment. In addition, we might want to start cooperating with people who have similar understanding. They are also willing to put the 4 Hs: head, heart, hand, and health, toward accomplishing the work (just like the 4H organization).

About four years ago, I started using a software program “Adobe FrameMaker” to make a huge poster for my research presentation. I did not know how to use the software and my English skills were in the developing process. Because I have been taught and trained my whole life to finish whatever I start, I spent so many hours learning to use the software and writing the technical content in order to finish the poster. During that time, besides my determination, I put my love, care, and persistence into the poster’s quality. Unexpectedly, I won the best poster award that year.

Recently, I made a poster using FrameMaker again. I could finish making the poster within a few days because I know how to use the software quite well and my English skills are better. I did not forget to put my determination in making the poster though. However, when I compare my new poster to the poster that won the award, the new poster looks lame. Then I asked myself why it turned out that way and what made the previous one look much better.

Then I realized that I forgot to put my love, care, and devotion into it. So I learned that aside from having work ethic, which is a strong commitment to work, putting love and care consistently in every piece of work is what I always need for myself and for those with whom I choose to cooperate.

31. The Easiest Cause of Ruin is Following False Friends

When I was in high school, there was a semester when I spent time with friends who felt that smoking was fine, skipping classes was fun, going to bars or night clubs was great (we were younger than 18 at that time), and not listening to parents' advice was cool. At first, I felt fine and got along with them, but then my grades dropped, and my behavior was inappropriate. I smoked and drank at their houses, and I went to the bars with them. However, I still tried to listen to my parents. What made me keep listening to their teaching? The answer is their hope. I always know by my heart that I am my parents' hope. Thus I do not want to disappoint them. I wanted to enter a good university, and I wanted to be "really good, not only cool." Thus, I realized that I did not belong to that group. I stayed away from them afterward. After that I associated with good friends who concentrated on our studies and my grades improved. From that event, I realized how false friends can affect our lives. Following false friends is the easiest cause of ruin, because false friends can take our lives in all kinds of wrong directions. For instance, if we spend time with friends who do not respect their parents, soon we will not respect our parents. If we spend time with friends who like gambling, roaming the streets at night, avoiding work, soon we will get used to those bad habits and follow them. Buddha categorizes false friends into four major groups. False friends are described in detail in the four following chapters as four major "false friendships." *I consider those relationships as false friendships*

because many times we did it without knowing what we were doing and how badly it could affect others and ourselves.



32. False Friendship 1: A Selfish Person

We may wonder what behaviors are meant when one is selfish.

Selfishness is:

1. Always thinking about taking and never giving;
2. Sacrificing little in the hope of gaining much;
3. Helping others only when threatened by the same danger;
4. Only making friends to serve one's own interest.

Many times we might have done these things without knowing how evil we are.

From now on, I think we know what we should do to avoid being selfish.

“Giving brings friendship.” (Buddha)

33. False Friendship 2: The Man of Empty Promises

We may wonder what behaviors are performed by the man of empty promises.

The man of empty promises usually:

1. Tells you how sad he is not to have been able to share with you something that he has already run out of;
2. Promises to share with you things he does not have yet;
3. Tries to win your favor with empty promises;
4. Excuses himself every time he is called upon to help.

Many times we might have behaved like that without knowing how evil we are. These poor behaviors certainly can cause us worry because of the empty promises. At least, we probably worry whether or not we can keep our promises. From now on, I think we know what we should do to avoid being the man of empty promises.

“A truthful person is honored.” (Buddha)

34. False Friendship 3: The Flatterer

We may wonder what behaviors are those of the flattering.
The flatterer usually:

1. Encourages you and allows you to do evil;
2. Mindlessly follows you as you do both good and evil;
3. Sings praises to your face;
4. Gossips about you behind your back.

Many times we might behave like that without knowing how evil we are. These poor behaviors certainly can cause us worry because nobody thinks that we are sincere in the long run. Following both good and bad is somewhat dumb or foolish, when we step outside and look at the behaviors. That means we cannot separate what is right and what is wrong. Perhaps, we know the difference between good and evil, but we still follow the evil route for false hope. From now on, I think we know what we should do to avoid being the flatterer.

“It is advisable to think before doing anything.” (Vajirananvarorasa, a late supreme patriarch of Thailand)

35. False Friendship 4: The One Who Leads You Down the Road to Ruin

The one who leads you down the road to ruin is:

1. Your loyal drinking companion;
2. At your side when you roam the streets at unseemly hours;
3. Known to frequent games and shows with you;
4. Known to join you at the gambling table.

Basically, the one who leads you down the road to ruin likes persuading you to do bad, unnecessary, or useless things. *Ruin leads us down the road to worry and unhappiness in life.* That is why good people never want to go down the road to ruin. Good people, however, want their inner evil to be ruined.

“Safeguard your virtue against decline, just as salt never loses its saltiness.” (Buddha)

36. The Best Catalyst of Creation is Good Friends

Good friends usually lead us in the right directions. They prefer only thoughts, words, and actions that benefit their lives and others. Whatever is right and appropriate they know how to do. They are modest and respectful of any good advice, although some advice might indicate that they are wrong. They will try to listen to and follow the advice to improve themselves without egotism. In addition, good friends obey the rules of societies where they belong. They do not break rules if breaking them will wreck or cause disorder in the societies. Overall, good friends are helpful, constant, wise, and sympathetic. Because of these admirable characteristics, good friends are the best catalyst of creation. Good friends can influence us to be more creative and well behaved. Wouldn't it be nice and safe if we were their friends, and we controlled our lives similar to them? I should not ask like this. People who want their lives in peace without worry would say "Yes." Just start thinking about being a good friend; the loneliness in our hearts will start going away.



37. Looking for a Helpful Friend

Helpful friends have the opposite characteristics of selfish friends. The attributes of helpful friends are:

1. *To protect you when you are in trouble and give good advice;*
2. *To help protect your property when you use it incorrectly;*
3. *To be your refuge in times of danger;*
4. *To always provide you with more than you ask for when it is necessary.*

I am sure that we may practice any of these actions with our friends when the time comes.
Whoever behaves in these ways is admirable.

Once I heard from a kid's movie "Help each other and you will learn how to love each other." When we grow up we tend to forget that helping each other is the way to find and to share love. Helping allows us to reach the warm part of each other's hearts. Being helpful is the way to be a good friend. It sometimes can chase the cold and dark side of a selfish friend and help the person to find the warm and bright side of her or his heart.

38. Looking for a Constant Friend

A constant friend has the opposite characteristics of the man of empty promises, as follows:

1. He or she confides in you.
2. He or she does not tell your secrets.
3. *He or she does not abandon you when you fall on hard times.*
4. He or she would even die in your place.

How lucky we are, if we can have a friend like this, or we can behave in these ways toward our friends. We are impressed by these characteristics.

Being a constant friend needs care. When we “really” care about someone, we tend to have trust and faith in that person. We can sacrifice our belongings and lives to those about whom we truly care. I am not so fond of the sentence “I do not care.” It is okay to use the sentence for the bad things, events, and people in our lives. But using the sentence too much can make us become insensitive and unfaithful. Caring about every thing too much can, however, cause us anxiety.

“To associate with the virtuous is a cause of happiness.” (Buddha)

“You are what your associates are.” (Vajirananvarorasa)

39. Looking for a Friend of Wise Counsel

A friend with wise counsel acts opposite the flatterer, as shown below:

1. He or she warns you against unwholesome behavior.
2. He or she encourages you toward wholesome behavior.
3. He or she saves up new good things to tell you.
4. He or she points you in the direction of heaven.

I believe that we still can find a lot of friends like this in our society. That means the world is not too bad. However, “not too bad” does not mean it is all good. *To make the world “all good,” we require each individual to be good then.*

Who is a wise person? Certainly, a wise man is wise, but not the wise guy (smart aleck). A wise man gives good advice.

When we get older, we tend to have more abilities to discern what is true, what is right, or what is lasting. *The abilities come from both the good and bad experiences that we have been through.* And that can make us become wise. However, a true wise person should provide only good information or direction to those with whom he or she associates.

Great information comes from great learning.

“A wise person is not a fault-finder.” (Buddha)

40. Looking for a Sympathetic Friend

A sympathetic friend possesses admirable characteristics far different from the one who leads you down the road to ruin, as shown below:

1. He or she doesn't laugh at your misfortunes.
2. He or she congratulates you on your good fortune.
3. He or she speaks out against anyone who maligns you.
4. *He or she validates those who speak well of you.*

Sometimes, we have laughed too much at inappropriate times undeliberately. We may be jealous of others' success. We may often talk bad about our friends. All of these are common things that we should not do. *From now on, we know how to be properly sympathetic.*

41. Our Relationships: Six Directions

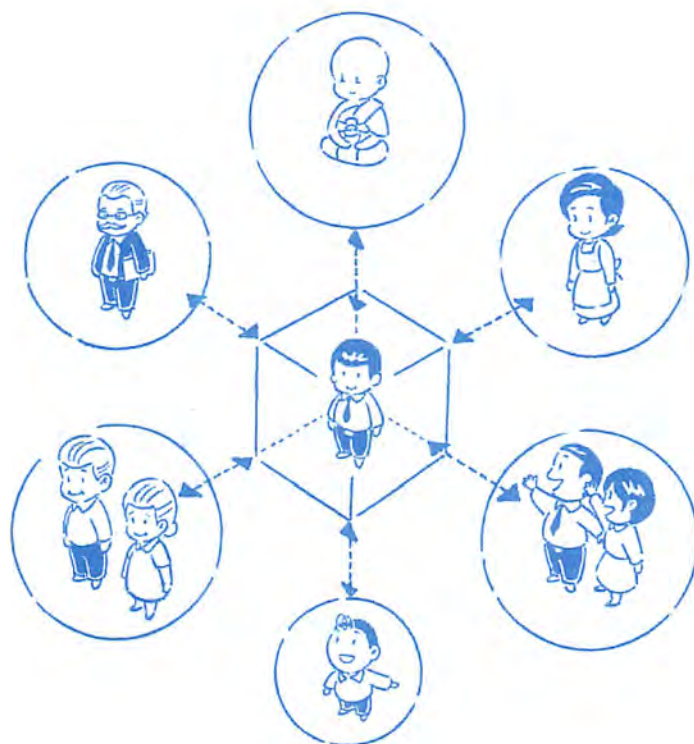
Everyone knows that we all are in the same cycle of existence (birth, oldage, sickness, and death). *Even if we are strangers, we are friends in the same world.* Buddha classified people by their relationships, as represented by the six directions. We are defined by our relationships. Certainly, it is not possible that a person will be able to perform well and improve without having friends, family, or teams in society. Children need parents to take care of them when they are young. Students need teachers to teach in their stages of development. We need colleagues or teams in our work places in order to perform our jobs well. *We can conclude that we need to connect with other people. We can also count those people with whom we connect as friends. That is why we need to have friends or connect to others.*

The six directions indicate how a dutiful person can live up to the relationships we have with different sectors of society.

Duties are more important than what our hearts want. However, if you can make your heart want the same things that your duties are, then you don't have to break your heart.

The six directions determine our destinies, and right understanding is the most important beginning. We are the major influences on children. They are still young, and it is easy for us to raise them with good characteristics.

People relate to one another in six directions: 1) Parents-Children 2) Teachers-Students 3) Husbands-Wives 4) Friends-Friends 5) Employers-Employees, and 6) Monks-Followers. The six directions are described in detail in the twelve following chapters.



42. A Child Should Minister to His Parents

The direction in front of us represents the relationships we have with others as a result of their giving birth to us, i.e. our parents. Parents give us life (the best minds and bodies among all kinds of animals). For example, we can imagine being lucky enough to be born or raised in a very rich, powerful, and kind family. But if our parents are “poodle dogs”, that means we have the body of a dog with a potentially luxurious life. We would be just a lucky dog who rides in a nice Mercedes Benz, eats good dog-foods, wears good clothes, and lives in luxurious places. We will not be able to do good for our parents, teachers, or society in return because of the limits of body and mind. Besides giving us life, parents give material things, and education for our growth and development. Parents devote their time and lives for us much more than we can describe. Therefore, children should minister to their parents by:

1. Supporting them in turn because they have supported us;
2. Doing their work for them;
3. Keeping up the honor and traditions of the family;
4. Making ourselves worthy of our heritage;
5. Making offerings and dedicating merit and good karma or works to them after their death.

Why don't children obey their parents?

No one is perfect. Thus, parents are not perfect and can make mistakes. And children often see their mistakes. However, *children need to realize how parents are important to their lives and what their parents have dedicated to them. If children see these things, learn how to show gratitude, and listen to their parents, our society will be in place.* When children obey their parents, it follows the family line, that is each generation should respect parents or elders. Therefore, when children grow up and become parents, they will earn respect from their children as well. If parents do not respect themselves, their children, and others, they cannot expect their children to respect them. Likewise, *if children do not know how to respect their parents, then they do not know how to respect others. Respecting elders and others in our families and taking care of relatives are the beginnings of good network development, because these practices reflect a good network in family and thus our society.*



43. Parents Should Cherish Children

Meanwhile, parents should cherish children by:

1. Restraining them from evil;
2. Training them in virtue;
3. Giving them education;
4. Scrutinizing or knowing their children's friends to make sure that their children are associating with good people;
5. Passing on their heritage to them in due course.

I believe that many parents always want to cherish their children. No matter how good or how bad they are, they are your own flesh and blood. They actually are pure when they are born. Children are, in fact, enjoyable, lovable, honest, and funny. If they become bad, we might consider that this is because we “adults” do not create a good environment, or we may hurt them and not teach them or show them what good is. *Too much ambition may drive them in the wrong direction, and no ambition may drive them in the wrong direction as well.*

What do children expect from their parents? Some children might ask for material things. Parents need to know how to control their own spending and teach their children how to save their money. Children actually expect their parents to be good role models, showing them that they can achieve their goals. Parents need to let them know that pleasing or satisfying everybody is impossible. *We just need to be honest, learn to do things that give ourselves and others joy, and know how to help ourselves and others. If mistakes are made in the past, they are too late to be corrected in our generation. It will be better to teach those mistakes to our children, so that those mistakes will not happen again.* Parents need to learn how to grow and teach their children. *In any case, parents need to behave themselves in order to be good role models.*

44. A Student Should Minister to His Teachers

The southern direction, or the right hand direction, represents the relationships we have with our teachers as a result of their giving us education and training. A student should minister to his teachers by:

1. Rising to receive them (as an expression of respect);
2. Serving them (in things, which facilitate the teacher's convenience);
3. Being obedient to the teaching or showing an eagerness to learn;
4. Providing personal service or helping their personal and professional businesses at the appropriate time and chance;
5. Attentively and respectfully learning the arts and sciences and knowing how to use the knowledge to live well and to be successful.

Why don't students respect their teachers? They do not learn to respect at home.

In many societies, even when children may not agree with other people's opinions, but they will learn how to respect others' opinions. Anyway, students should respect their teachers, because teachers teach us not only because it is their jobs. They have to dedicate their lives to learning things and skills that they need. They actually guide us through those times of education, and they want to see their students become successful.

We should always be grateful to our teachers. Without teachers, how can we learn properly and effectively? When we do not learn properly and effectively, we lose our extra time and effort to find the right information or the correct answers. Teachers actually are our adopted parents or families, who share our goals and who are an important part of our accomplishments. They are not just hired carriers who take us from the unknown side to the known side. If the unknown side is the dark side and the known side is the bright side, *teachers are like our sunshine.*

45. Teachers Should Make Sure...

Meanwhile, teachers should make sure:

- 1. The student is well trained;**
- 2. The student is taught in such a way that he understands and remembers well what he has learned. Teachers have to understand the learning styles of their students to help them retain the knowledge;**
- 3. The student is thoroughly instructed in the lore of every art without holding knowledge back;**
- 4. The student is praised by the teacher, which raises his esteem amongst his peers;**
- 5. The student's security and safety in every quarter is ensured (to point out the loopholes and weaknesses present in any body of knowledge).**

What do students expect from a good teacher? A good teacher should:

- 1. Be patient;**
- 2. Be open-minded (because they teach more than one student, and each student is different);**

3. Respect individuals without having preferences or biases;
4. *Reward students when they achieve goals or they do well even though they do not achieve, but they try their best; know when to compliment;*
5. Be creative (not foolish and boring);
6. Be able to teach things that the teachers both are and are not even interested in.
Teachers have to motivate and interest themselves in the subjects they teach. Children already tend to excite teachers by their natures. Teachers should not bore or discourage themselves and their students.

Teachers need to keep in mind that we are important role models for children in our society. If we are good role models, children will look at us, follow us, and respect us. They then will make good things for themselves and contribute great things for societies. Good teachers have dedication and provide good knowledge and thought without holding back.



46. A Husband Should Cherish His Wife

The western direction, or the direction behind us, represents the relationships we have with others as a result of marrying them i.e. our spouse;

A husband should cherish his wife by:

1. Honoring her (by acknowledging her as his wife);
2. Not looking down on her;
3. Being faithful to her;
4. Giving her gifts (and things that she needs).

A husband should keep in mind that a wife wants respect and support. The support refers not only to financial support, but also emotional support in order to accomplish her goals and to live happily. Why does a husband need to do these things? Because they commit to live together. It is not only because of the vows and the wedding band, but these are parts of commitment. All of the above and support also are parts of love that they should give without conditions. In addition, in modern society, both men and women work outside the home. Therefore, both husband and wife should share responsibilities with domestic duties and other roles as appropriate and possible.

Perhaps, we should think carefully and thoroughly before we make a decision to marry someone. By doing so, we probably will not have to worry much later about divorce problems.

47. A Wife Should Cherish Her Husband

Meanwhile, the wife should:

1. Keep the family in order;
2. Be hospitable and helpful to her husband's friends and relatives;
3. Be faithful to him;
4. Take good care of his possessions;
5. Be conscientious (never lazy) in all her duties;

A wife should keep in mind that a husband wants support. Similar to her own needs for support, a wife needs to do these things because of the same reasons in the previous chapter. These also are parts of love that they should give and share without conditions. Spouses need to encourage and nurture each other's lives to make their lives thrive. *Both the husband and wife should be submissive to each other.* Any arguments or disagreements may cause damage or violence in the family.

Perhaps, we can choose the right person for us by thinking carefully and thoroughly before we will make a decision to marry him or her. So we will not have to be sorry that our single

lives contain much more freedom, peace, and joy. Khun Yai Chandra said “Being single is like a free bird. There is no cage to limit life’s freedom. A free bird can fly wherever and whenever it wants without worry. A free bird is not necessarily lonely and does not have to be alone. It also does not mean that a free bird will not have other birds to take care of or taking care of it. It also does not mean that the birds which have baby bird(s) will be taken care by their baby birds when they grow up. (If the parent birds are not lucky and have not been good examples or good role models for them to look up to.)”

There was a friend who told me a story about a girl who walked into a flower garden. The girl tried to choose a perfect flower for her. During the walk, she thought, “This flower is beautiful, but it is smelly. That flower is beautiful, but its petals are hard. Those ones look pretty, but they wilt quickly. These flowers are so pretty, have a nice smell, and last long, but there is too much pollen that spills everywhere.” She walked until the end of the garden and could not find the flower that was both good and right (basically perfect) for her. Moreover, the people who walked after her to the garden picked all the good flowers. And there was no good flower left that the girl could go back to pick. The friend said, “The girl is like a woman who always thinks carefully and thoroughly in order to choose the right guy.” “There will be no good guy left,” she said.

However, I told her that I would rather have none of the flowers than picking a flower without extreme and thorough contemplation. This is because I do not want to take the wrong flower that will upset my allergies. And the flower that makes you become allergic later is more tormenting than the one that you are allergic to at first exposure, because your immunity may be diminished or dismissed over the long period of time that you are exposed. Then you may not be well prepared, as you did not know that you would become allergic to it.

Anyway, for the people who have chosen marriage, and you are allergic or become allergic later, I think you still have to make the best out of it. It is not nice to just pick the flower and then throw it away when you are sick of it. However, if your life is endangered because of it, I suggest that you run away from it or throw it away with kindness. (Sometimes, you have to run for your life.) If you choose to throw it away, you do not have to step on it or jump on it with your madness. Be kind and be forgiving to anyone with whom you connect and even with the ones with whom you have been hurtfully or wrongly connected. *Kindness and forgiveness never make anyone hurtful or permanently painful, especially for the one who knows how to contain them or know how to give and forgive.*

48. A Person Should Cherish His Friends

The northern direction, or the left-hand direction, represents the relationships we have with others as a result of friendship i.e. our friends - but this also extends to more distant acquaintances that affect our lives and resources.

A person should cherish his friends by:

1. Generosity;
2. Kind words;
3. Helping and acting for their welfare;
4. Being consistent;
5. Never telling them lies.

Friends have more meaning than we can say. No matter how poor or rich, sad or glad, or low or high, we are supposed to cherish our friends with sincerity.

49. Good Friends Should...

Meanwhile, the friends should:

1. Protect their friends when they are off their guards;
2. Help protect their property even when they neglect it;
3. Be a refuge in times of danger;
4. Not abandon them in times of trouble;
5. Show due respect to other members of their family.

Giving and forgiving is a key to making friendships and making relationships. There should be no resentment if any mistakes or misunderstandings occur in relationships. There will always be some times that either you or the other person make a mistake. Sometimes, problems and arguments arise because each individual has different perspectives.

Growing from different cultures or environments and experiencing different things in life differentiate the way of thinking, feeling, and acting in each individual. Therefore, who is right? and who is wrong? should not be the questions in friendships or good relationships.

Being patient and kind extends the limits of our minds in doing and being good. Our expanded minds contribute to our friendship within families, societies, and thus the world.

50. An Employer Should Cherish His or Her Employees

The nadir, or the direction below us, represents the relationships we have with others as a result of earning our living or as a result of being an employer.

An employer should cherish his employees by:

1. Assigning them work according to their strength;
2. Giving them appropriate benefits and due wages;
3. Caring for them in sickness;
4. Sharing good fortune with them (giving them special gifts on appropriate occasions);
5. Giving them holidays and leaves at suitable times.

If you cannot say anything good to your employees, do not say it at all. This is better than pleasing them with insincerity. There is a better way to be both pleasing and sincere such as looking at and mentioning the positive characteristics of the employees. When employees have conflicts, the pleasing or sincere way is to tell them to forgive and get along. We should not say things that make them fight, compete, or talk behind each other's backs more.

To be a good boss: encourage your own growth; do not be afraid to delegate responsibilities, allowing employees to share the responsibility; share credit for work with employees, coworkers, and supervisors; challenge employees to do something outside the job description; give enough benefits and compensation.



51. Employees and Servants Should Serve Their Employers

Meanwhile, employees should serve their employers by:

1. Starting work before the employer;
2. Finishing work after the employer;
3. Talking about only tasks given to them by the employer;
4. Doing their work better;
5. Maintaining and defending the employer's good reputation;

Even if we have a bad boss, the boss still may have points for us about which to feel grateful. At the very least, he or she gives us the opportunities to work to make money to support our lives. Even though sometimes our relationships with our bosses are not perfect, we can still find great positive things that benefit us. In any case, employees should do the very best work possible and take pride even if nobody else can see. Eventually, things will pay off.

“Gratitude and mindfulness of the benefit done are characteristics of the virtuous.” (Buddha)

52. A Person Should Serve His or Her Spiritual Mentors

The direction above us, represents the relationships we have with others as a result of our spiritual vocation i.e. our spiritual mentors, monks, or priests.

A person should serve his or her spiritual mentors by:

1. Kind acts;
2. Kind words;
3. Kind thoughts;
4. Keeping and opening his or her house to welcome them for their teaching;
5. Supplying them with their material needs.

We should serve and respect our spiritual mentors. *They sacrifice their lives to find and accomplish what they seek, such as paths to ultimate or permanent inner peace, withdrawal from suffering thoughts, events, feelings, speeches, and actions, devoting their lives to teaching, giving up the convenient way that most people live. They behave themselves and spend their time searching for spiritual things.*

“An established faith brings happiness.” (Buddha)

53. Spiritual Mentors Should...

Meanwhile, spiritual mentors should:

1. Prevent their followers from evil;
2. Encourage them to do good;
3. Minister to them in kindness;
4. Teach them new or beneficial things;
5. Clarify things that are not clear;
6. Show them the way to heaven.

The followers expect their spiritual mentors to be honest and sincere with their followers and themselves. They should not show preference to a major benefactor.

“The virtuous always take delight in helping other sentient beings.” (Buddha)

54. Making Things Practical.

Each direction in the six directions serves as a good environment. *Within each relationship, we learn from each other through our actions. Our mind is the most powerful thing. If we attempt something, anything can be possible. To accomplish anything, we have to start by doing it gradually. When we observe, we can see things more clearly. When we practice, we become more skilled; and when we learn, we earn more wisdom.* Sometimes we also need meritorious strategy to convince ourselves to make things practical. For example, we may set our goals and schedules for the things we wish to accomplish. We may share the ideas with others. We may have friends practicing these things or the skills with us. We may try to look for both the short- and long-term benefits of what we are doing. We may try to do it in a group, instead of doing it alone.

From a good individual comes a good society, and a good world.

55. How Do We Practice Responsibility?

Those four responsibilities (oneself, society, economy, and environment) are difficult to practice. Yet one who practices will have a peaceful mind. When each of us practices doing goodness then the world can become peaceful. Now we understand the concept of responsibilities. How do we practice these responsibilities?

Buddha's teachings have been given to people for over 2,500 years. *We need to learn these teachings to gain knowledge.* For the world to know the concept of a good person, we should have either public or private organizations that are supported by the government and the public sector. The people who follow this concept can be compared to blocks from a standard mold. *Each individual block is formed by six sides or directions and the whole block is the world, created by peaceful minds and definitely forming a peaceful world.* The main components of the 6 directions are one's parents. Parents have to know what good and bad are. That is why Buddha typically taught how to avoid badness, and then to do goodness. One thing to be considered is the person who can take responsibility. *Responsibility must begin with respect of self.* We especially have to respect the top direction, the monk or the priest who has wisdom about what good and bad are.

Finally, we all need to be dedicated in order to perform these responsibilities well. You cannot shape clay to be a cube and stack it firmly by itself. The human mind should be expressed firmly like stone not like clay. We can make our minds strong like stone by practicing the four responsibilities:

- 1. Self:** follow the four precepts or avoid personal evil (killing, stealing, committing adultery, and lying)
- 2. Society:** avoid the four biases or preferences because of love, hate, ignorance, and fear
- 3. Economy:** *avoid the six causes of ruins (1. drinking alcohol or taking drugs 2. roaming the streets at night 3. seeing bad shows or movies 4. gambling 5. associating with bad friends 6. being reluctant to work for a living)*
- 4. Environment:** do not destroy but instead protect the environment from any possible problem

The four responsibilities above make the human mind strong like stone. Why should we make the mind like stone? This is because when each stone is shaped as a cube with six directions (sides), those stones can be stacked without collapsing and be constructed neatly.

The analogy is; each stone is one good person, and the shaped stone is the well-practiced good person who is responsible for the others. And thus, each person is responsible for the fundamental creation of peace in the world. Building on each other increases the strength of the humanity.

56. How to Be Successful Permanently

Money is one of many important things in our lives, but money is not the most important thing in our lives. So to be successful does not mean that we have to be millionaires. It does not mean that we have to be famous, powerful, and rich. However, those things should facilitate us to help others if we use them appropriately.

Any person's success may be: having money and getting a good job.

A good person's success is: having happiness in life, being a good person, and being useful to himself or herself and others.

A successful person is a person who can be responsible for himself, others, society, and the environment correctly. Usually, good people are successful people. Good people know not only how to be responsible following the six directions in the previous chapters, but also need to know how to be good or successful permanently. In order to be successful permanently, we also need to behave as follows:

1. Leave the past behind you and start fresh
2. Maintain discipline

3. Be embarrassed and afraid to do bad things or avoid bad things which lead to unhappiness
4. Be kind to all living beings (including yourself)

If we cannot leave the past, we cannot move forward. The past should be left only as a lesson and a part of our good memory. Because we need to be with others in our society, we need to follow rules strictly. Sometimes we may not want to follow the rules, but we still need to. People who are well disciplined will also know how to be patient. Being embarrassed and afraid of doing bad things prompts us to avoid doing bad. Furthermore, people in our society need things: encouragement, knowledge, and safety in their lives. We should be kind and share these things with each other.

57. Goal in This Life

People should have clear goals in their lives. When we have good goals to accomplish, we will not waste our time and life doing other useless things. There are two categories of goals: goals in this life and goals in the next life. Good people who know how to be responsible in society need to realize these two goals.

A person who is nice, honest, and good, but has no job and no money to maintain his life will not be able to live happily.

There are four elements to complete the goal in this life. The details are in the following four chapters.

*In general, the goals in this life are how to live your life and support your family happily. People need to accomplish these goals, without doing bad things, on the levels on which they can maintain their living conveniently. Therefore, whoever accomplishes these four elements will certainly reduce worry for living in this life. Beyond these four elements, *a goal in this life of good people is the understanding of and maintaining of both their living and goodness.**



58. Have Good Jobs and Keep Doing Good Work

We have to work for our living. Those who have good jobs and keep doing good work need to work hard. *In order to keep working hard, we have to be patient. Likewise, we need to know how to manage our time and our jobs. We also need to know how to deal with people. However, while we are doing these things, we still need to maintain our goodness.* A good job does not necessarily bring big money. It can be any job that is both legal and ethical. Certainly, the job has to give enough income to make a living. Buddha indicated that a human is not supposed to sell weapons, humans, poisons, or drugs. Selling these things causes trouble to both us and others. If we work hard, are patient, plan and think about our work carefully and thoroughly, we will certainly be able to accomplish our goals.

The process of trying to find a good job makes us want to have good physical and educational things. These things support our pleasure for a living. However, these things are not just the major reasons to have a good job. *When we have good jobs, we live well; when we live well, we have no worries about living; when we have no worries about living, we then are able to pursue our perfection and help others without worry.*

When someone at work treats you badly or talks down to you, you can look at it or listen to it, but don't accept it. You just have to keep working hard and doing good work. Never give up! Good karma will always be returned to you.

59. Know How to Save to Save Your Life

People who are nice, honest, and rich without saving their money will eventually be poor. People who know how to save money will avoid debt. In addition, we need to look for items we have lost instead of immediately going out to buy a new one. When something breaks, we should try to fix it before thinking about buying a new one or throwing it away. We may think that it is difficult to earn money for a living. *Actually, saving money for a good living is even more difficult than earning.*

In addition, we need to clear our minds of any thoughts and feelings that make us lose purity, happiness, and peace in our minds. *When our minds are afraid, discouraged, worried, or depressed, we need to fix our minds.* We need to look for the bright side. Usually, we feel afraid and worried, when we think that we will lose some things such as our jobs, money, or people and things that we love.

There are two kinds of problems in this world. The first one is a fixable problem, and the second one is the non-fixable problem. For example, a fixable problem is having debt, and a non-fixable problem is dying. We need to continue to live to fix problems in our lives. *Actually, fixing problems does not mean that we need to worry about them or deal with them right away.* We can fix them by fixing our minds first. For example, practicing

meditation and listening to good, reasonable, and encouraging teaching are good solutions or alternatives. *When our minds are fixed and saved from the bad and unhappy thoughts, we will see the bright sides of the problems. Then solutions will come along.*

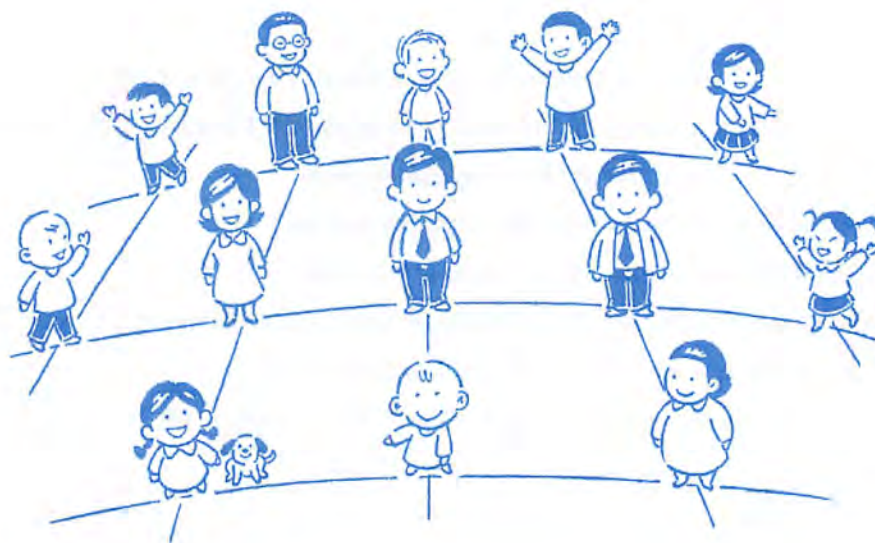
60. Having a Good Network

People who have only material things in their lives without good friends or good people around them will not be completely secure and successful. Before people can have good friends, they have to know how to behave and act correctly. In order to create a good network, we should follow our roles or duties properly. If we follow our roles or duties in the six directions from the previous chapters, it will help us create a good network. Again, this has to start from oneself, through family, friends, teachers, monks, priests, and community. People who have goals in the next life usually know how to behave well. We should learn from them and distribute the good knowledge and teaching to others. One should always remember that “give” is the keyword for making friends.

Ten thoughts to consider everyday for people who want to have or create a good network are:

1. Do I have good manners? How can I have them?
2. I always have to improve myself because I am not perfect.
3. Are my goals to create a good network for others and myself completed?

4. *I have prestigious duties to do (follow the six directions). Therefore, I will never give up.
No matter how many obstacles I encounter, I will be patient. I will try to solve my problems,
improve myself, and move on until I accomplish my goals.*
5. Have I reminded myself to avoid doing anything bad yet?
6. I must consider what I am doing and whether it is right or wrong.
7. People and things that I love will eventually be taken away. Therefore, I need to learn to let them go and let them be. Everything comes and goes.
8. Have I reminded myself that karma follows me? If I do good, I will get good; if I do bad, I will get bad.
9. Time goes by, what am I doing right now?
10. Am I doing goodness today?



61. Knowing How to Spend Money in Your Pocket

After we know how to earn and save money for a living, we then have to know how to spend our money. *Whenever we think about buying things, we have to be able to answer these questions. Why do we have to buy them? How do we want to buy them? How many do we need to buy?* If we can answer these questions reasonably, that means we know how to spend our money. Before we want to spend our money for anything, we have to think about our income and how much money we have left. What we spend should not be more than what we earn.

Once I met a 7-year-old child who is my friend's niece. She and her 3-year-old sister had lunch with me one day. We ate so much and were really full and felt like we were having a food coma. While we were walking back to my friend's house, she said "Mom told me that I should not eat too much. Because when we eat too much, we will get headaches and stomachaches, and we will not be able to think." The way she said that seems funny. It is so true that the food coma is always associated with an inert brain. We should eat when we are hungry. *We should not eat when we only want to eat.*

In addition, associating with bad friends leads us to spend our money in bad ways. In any case, we should not spend our money without being careful until we have eliminated our debts. *No one has debts without worry.* However, we should not hold onto our money too tightly or we become stingy. This is just like those who never want to spend their money for both their own benefit and others.

Some rich people may keep their large amount of money till they die. When they die, they cannot bring their money with them. The people who get that money later may spend the money in a bad way.

If we have more money than we need, we can donate our money to help others in appropriate cases and situations. Thus, people who know how to spend their money for both their own and others' benefit properly are named as the ones who know how to spend the money in their pockets.

Once I watched a TV program about a seemingly beautiful and useful cooking set. I had two old cooking sets in my kitchen at that time. However, I was tricked by the commercials. So I looked for many reasonable answers such as “Oh, it is so durable. You will be able to use it for a long time. The materials are so nice and fashionable for the dining table and kitchen,

etc.” At that moment all the reasons why I should buy it flooded into my head until I could not resist. Therefore, I called to order it. Now it has been several months after I received the cooking set, and I rarely use it. So I learned that buying what you need and what you want are different. And being reasonably impulsive is not always good.

“Being in debt is a cause of suffering.” (Buddha)

“Eat to live, not live to eat.” (Old saying)

62. Goal in the Next Life

Progressing from accomplishing the goal in this life to the goal in the next life, we realize that we need to improve our lives in both the short term (this life) and the long term (the next life). In fact, when we believe in the next life, we tend to be afraid of doing evil. When we feel afraid to do evil, we do not even need laws or police to control our behaviors. People who believe in the next life tend to pursue true perfection. We try to collect the good in or for ourselves, so that the path to pursue perfection will be smooth. I use the word “smooth” meaning that we will have fewer obstacles along our paths. The following 4 chapters are major elements in accomplishing our goals in the next life.



63. We Need Good Faith

Faith is a major component of training ourselves to be good or bad. *When we have good faith, it keeps us doing good. When we have bad faith, it causes us to do bad. People who wish to move ahead in their lives need to respect good people. They need to look for and look at good role models, so that they can continue doing good. They can learn and absorb the principles. Those who have good faith will then have the right understanding. They then will know how to protect themselves from others who are doing bad.*

*In addition, respect is the way we admire people who we have faith in all the time. We need to listen and follow their teaching to keep good faith. Furthermore, we can show our respect by either giving things or following their teachings. We can have faith in those who possess all the good, *sila* (5 Buddhist precepts), and wisdom. Moreover, any good monks, priests, teachers, parents, friends, and employers are those in whom we can have faith.*

64. Controlling Yourself from Doing Bad

Doing good deeds has its own rewards. On the other hand, doing bad deeds has its own punishments. *There are 10 bad things that we need to avoid 1. Killing 2. Stealing 3. Committing adultery 4. Telling lies 5. Being sarcastic 6. Being rude 7. Being boastful 8. Being greedy 9. Being envious 10. Having harmful beliefs.*

In order to control ourselves from doing the 10 bad things, we need to feel both ashamed and afraid to do bad. We feel ashamed to do bad when we think about losing our dignity, our pride in being a good role model for younger people to look up to, our self-respect, our goodness, and our pride in learning from good teachers. We lose our pride when we do bad to someone who has been good to us. We feel afraid to do bad when we think about punishment and bad karma. It is easy to do good when you are among good people and it is easy to do bad when you are among bad people. Likewise, it is difficult to do good when you are among bad people. It is difficult to do bad when you are among good people. Good people usually know how to control themselves from doing bad and remind others to control themselves from doing bad as well.

“To associate with the vicious, like associating with the enemy, always brings suffering. To associate with the wise, like associating with the relatives, always brings happiness.” (Buddha)

65. Being Happy to Give and Forgive

To be happy to give and forgive, we may start by giving happiness to ourselves. We can do it in a simple way by telling ourselves every morning right after we get up, “*I will be happy today.*” We also can send our loving kindness, forgiveness, good wishes, or our good intentions from our minds to others every night before we go to sleep. We are happy when we do not think or worry about our lives in the future. We should give ourselves relaxing, happy, and comfortable moments once or twice a day by doing these things.

If we want to pursue our perfection, we have to start by giving love, loving kindness, forgiveness, and chances to others and ourselves. *Forgiveness should be given to whoever has made or will make a mistake.* We should give chances to ourselves and others to correct and to improve. *These gifts of love, loving kindness, forgiveness, and chances have more value for us than having anything else (having money, no debt, fame, and great jobs).* This is because these gifts give us the most inner peace and happiness, and material things cannot last forever. *People should give without condition, and without expecting anything in return, not even good words.* *Everyone in this world is our friend. They are friends who are in the same situations. We are all born, grow, become sick, and die in our world together.*

That is why we should give or share whatever and whenever we can.



66. Stop Learning, Start Dying, Increasing Your Wisdom

Since we were born, how many times in our lives have we not had to worry about anything at all? There are many things that cause us worry. For example, will we have food to eat tomorrow? Will we pass the exam or not? Will we finish the work on time? Will we get the job? How will our children do? Will we have enough money to pay the bills? Will I get an "A" in the class? Do we need to live without fear? I still think that we do not need to live with fear.

How many times in our lives have our minds been peaceful, joyful and become still deeply inside until we are free from worry and thought? *Meditation makes our minds stop thinking about any thoughts, worries, or emotions. We will have happy minds. Once there was a king who asked the Buddha. "Do you sit and sleep well with the uncomfortable seat and place in the wood?" The Buddha said "If your mind is happy, you can sleep, sit, or walk everywhere with happiness. If your mind is unhappy, no matter how expensive and comfortable the bed on which you sleep is, you still cannot be happy."* Meditation makes our minds contain only one emotion - joy. *Meditation also makes us see things the way they are. It makes us see the causes of suffering and the way to solve problems in our lives. These benefits from practicing meditation usually improve with practice like any other learning. After we practice*

meditation until we become familiar with it, we will find that our minds can be in their own pure and crystal-clear places.

The more you practice meditation, the more wisdom you will learn, and the more ignorance will be reduced.

The more your mind is free from any thoughts and worries, the more peace and joy you will gain.

However, as with any other learning, a good teacher is needed.

Reading good books, talking with good people who have right understanding, learning with good teachers, and following good patterns of how to live our lives happily in both this life and the next life are the correct ways of increasing our wisdom.

In addition, meditation helps us remain calm and see things more clearly. We will find the inner peace and know the importance and truth of our lives. Our minds will be free from fear. We will know that the inner peace, which has occurred in our minds, is the most stable happiness that we can rely on without requiring money, fame, and power.



67. Conclusion of Living in Peace without Worry

Living in peace is the way that we practice what we should do to others and ourselves with right understanding. Those who practice the teaching of each chapter in this book wisely or bring the teaching to their daily life practice will live in peace without worry. They will live without worry that they will lose their jobs, their families, their friends, their fame, and even their lives, because they have goals, and they try to follow the path to accomplish the goals in both this life and the next life.

When our minds are pure, we can think clearly, and when we can think clearly, nothing can worry us. When we are in peace, we don't want anything more. When we feel our lives are fulfilled or sufficient, we can let worry go.

People need to realize that we all are in both good and bad situations in our lives as follows:

1. Being lucky
2. Being unlucky
3. Being powerful
4. Being powerless

5. Being happy
6. Being unhappy
7. Being praised
8. Being criticized

Buddha called these things the “8 worldly conditions”. These things come and go in our lives. No one can avoid these things. Therefore, we should keep our minds stable and peaceful. *We need to be ready to accept these common situations. We should not let our minds be fluctuated and distracted by these situations.*

When things get chaotic or problematic, we can use the phrase “at least”.

For example,

I got in a car accident and my car was totaled. At least, I still have my life.

My work was sub-par today. At least, I did not lose my job.

I lost my job. At least, I still have food to eat tonight.

My husband walked out and is living with another woman. At least, I still have a place to

stay.

“At least” is a simple phrase, but makes us optimistic and reduces our worry or anxiety. It makes us look for the good even in bad situations. Let’s be thankful for and optimistic about what we have and what we can do.

We should not be afraid of or worried about anything, if whatever we have done and will do comes from our good and pure intentions and minds.

Yesterday has passed; tomorrow has not arrived; the future is too far to cause us worry. Live our lives day by day with happiness. What we worry about may or may not happen. Many times problems are solved by doing nothing. Let our minds be stable and with brightness and purity inside. Life is not easy, but it should not be too difficult.

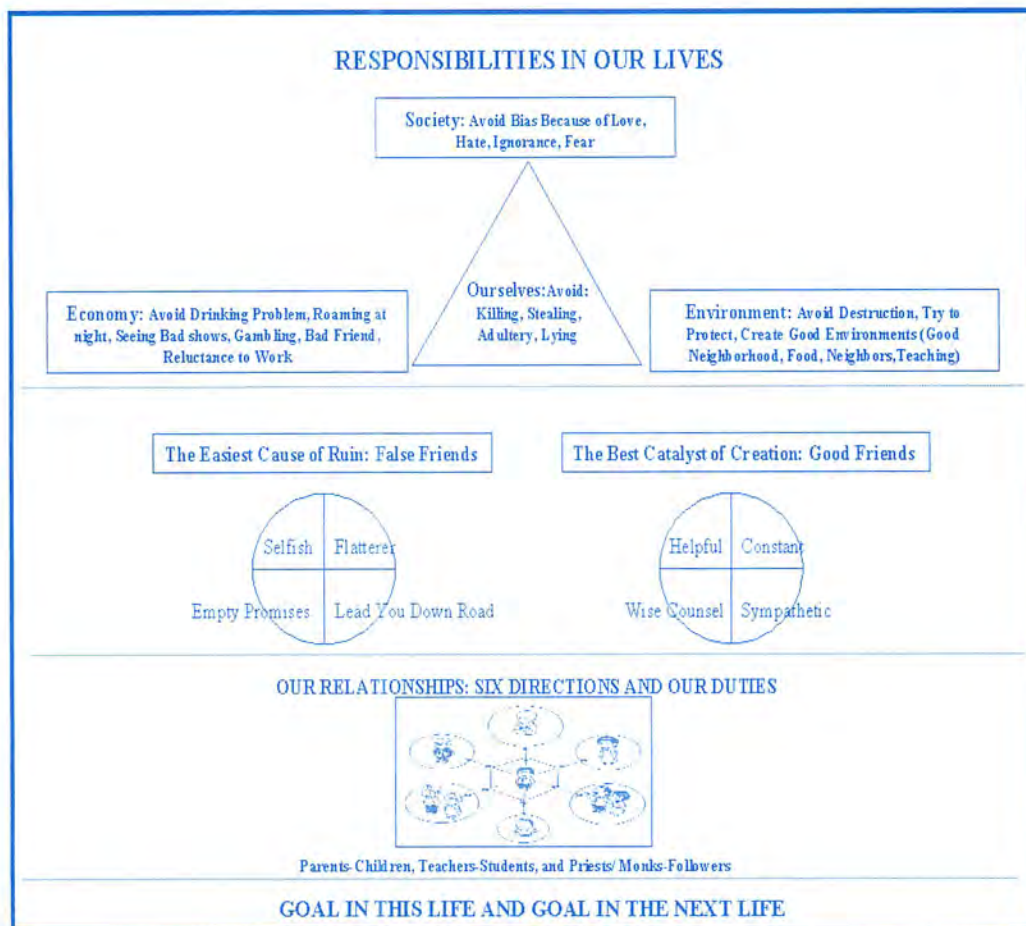
“The virtuous are protected by their own virtues.”

“Those who follow the Dhamma live a happy life.”

“Peace is the highest bliss” (Buddha)



**Summary and Integration of All Levels of the Teachings from Luang
Por Datta to Gain an Overall Concept of Understanding of *Living in
Peace without Worry***



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Dr. Srisuda Dhamwichukorn (Crystal Moon) is an environmental biotechnologist who has been interested in meditation since she was five years old. She has applied the benefits of meditation to her studies, career, and problems in life with kindness and optimism.

Dr. Dhamwichukorn and over a million friends who have attended meditation at the Dhammakaya Foundation around the world have shown that meditation is the most beneficial, yet least expensive method, for gaining true peace and happiness in life. The world can be at peace through inner peace or meditation.

In the scientific world, Dr. Dhamwichukorn has been involved in using and developing cutting edge technologies such as bioinformatics and genomics for her environmental improvement research. However, philosophical teachings from her teachers and the great benefits of meditation have inspired and given her faith that genuine world peace can become a reality with the peace of each individual stable, bright, and pure mind. She is determined to share the teachings and the optimistic wisdom with everyone because building on each other increases the peaceful strength of humanity.

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- 1. The Right Understanding, the Beginning of the Prosperous Life**
- 2. Being Patient: How Can We Be?**
- 3. The Nobility of Eightfold Path: The Noble Truth for the Cessation of Suffering**
- 4. The Highest Thirty Eight Blessings: 38 paths for coping with all levels of difficulties in life and gaining success and prosperity in our present and future lives.**

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For Dhamma questions to ask Luang Por Datta, please also send emails or mail us to the addresses as above. If you are interested to attend Luang Por Datta's teaching or a meditation practice or retreat, please let us know as well.

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