



## Four Foundations of Awareness (four aspects of experience)

### 1st foundation: THE BODY & ITS SENSES

Tactile, visual, auditory, olfactory, and gustatory sensations

### 2nd foundation: THE THREE FEELING-SENSATIONS (*vedana*)

Liking, disliking, indifference. Feel them arise in the body and evolve into emotions, stories, actions.

### 3rd foundation: MENTAL & EMOTIONAL ACTIVITY (*chitta*)

Thoughts, emotions, memories, impulses, intentions, consciousness.

### 4th foundation: DHAMMAS

Dhamma as any *thing* that exists: any object or internal or external phenomena

Dhamma as *law* or *truth*: how things work; the laws of nature

Dhamma as *path*: actions or ways of living that are aligned with the way things are

The four foundations encompass every experience we can have.

To cultivate stable awareness of full experience, build from the ground up:

**1st SENSING IN THE BODY** The first foundation, the foundation of all foundations, is the body. Rest attention in the sensations and movements of the breathing body. Whenever you become dull or distracted, return to the sensations and movements of the breathing body.

**2nd FEELING-SENSATIONS** When you can rest in *sensations* as they arise and fall, then include in your awareness the instinctive feeling-tones of *liking*, *disliking*, and *indifference* as they arise. These feeling-tones are somewhere between physical sensations and emotions.

Whenever you notice you've been distracted by something, don't try to stop being distracted — just gently return to the sensations of the breathing body. When you can rest again in the breathing body, then open to liking, disliking, and indifference as they arise.

**3rd MENTAL & EMOTIONAL ACTIVITY** When you can rest in *sensations* and *feelings*, then open to *thoughts and emotions* as they arise. Don't try to reject, control, or generate certain thoughts or emotions or mind states — just include them as they arise and fall in your awareness. Whenever you become dull or distracted, return to experiencing *sensations* as they arise and subside. Then include *feelings* too. Then include *thoughts and emotions* too.

**4th DHARMAS** Finally, rest in the experience of everything — *sensations, feelings, thoughts and emotions*, and *activity* — as they arise in experience.

Gradually, over weeks and months, by cultivating stable and clear awareness in experience as it arises, you will begin to see the connections between sensations, feelings, thoughts, and actions. This clear seeing (*vipashyana*) is the discernment that leads to the end of struggling with experience. For more on cultivating stable and clear attention, visit [NaturalAwareness.net](http://NaturalAwareness.net)