

The Four Foundations of Mindfulness

BODY

tactile sensations, sights, sounds, smells, tastes

FEELING-TONES

pleasant (liking), unpleasant (disliking), indifferent (ignoring)

MIND & MENTAL EVENTS

thoughts, emotions, memories, impulses, intentions, consciousness

PHENOMENA

all experience: sensations, feelings, mind and mental contents,
whether subject or object

The four foundations encompass every experience we can have. To cultivate awareness, build from the ground up: feel sensations in the body, then include sensations and the three feeling-tones, then include sensations, feeling-tones, and thoughts and emotions.

The first foundation, the foundation of the 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.

When you can rest in *sensations* as they arise and fall, then include in your awareness any *pleasant (liking), unpleasant (disliking), and neutral (indifferent) feeling-tones* as they arise. Whenever you notice you've been distracted by something, don't try to stop being distracted — just gently return to including the sensations of the breathing body. When you can rest in sensations, then again include pleasant, unpleasant, and neutral feeling-tones as they arise.

When you can rest in *sensations* and *feeling-tones*, then include *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 *feeling-tones*. Then include *thoughts and emotions*.

Finally, rest in the experience of everything: *sensations, feeling-tones, thoughts and emotions, subject (self) and objects*, as they arise in your experience.