

Beings are numberless: may I free them all
Reactions are endless: may I release them all
Doors to experience are infinite: may I enter them all
Ways of awakening are limitless: may I know them all

~ Four Zen Vows, version by Ken McLeod

May I be of help to others.

May I not be overwhelmed by my own suffering.
May I remember that others struggle and suffer just as I do. May I see how my suffering and their suffering are inseparable. May I completely unite awareness and compassion.

May I remember that others also suffer from confusion, anger, neediness, desire, jealousy, and pride.

May I not ignore the suffering that comes from poverty, cruelty, slavery, rape, war, environmental destruction, storms, earthquakes, cold, heat, exhaustion, busyness, fear, prejudice, loneliness, depression, old age, illness, loss, and grief.

May I remember the animals, plants, and other beings with whom I share this world. They provide me with food, clothing, shelter, the very air I breathe, companionship, and beauty. They too suffer, they too wish to be happy and free.

May the struggling and suffering of the world make me utterly sad, and move me to try to help others as much as I can.

May I offer material wealth such as food and clothing to those who need them.

May I offer protection to the fearful.

May I extend kindness and compassion and a listening heart to those who need to be heard.

May I offer the teachings of calm abiding, insight, and skillful means to anyone who requests them.

May I be able to relate to others with kindness, clarity, and ethical behavior.

When I cannot help others, may I still see their suffering, still feel sadness, and still feel compassion and kindness. May I offer heart-felt prayers and may those prayers be the seeds of future abilities and the happiness of all.

May the ocean of suffering not overwhelm me; may I be even more compassionate and more inspired to free myself and others from suffering and the causes of suffering.

May I not misunderstand the nature or cause of my own or another's suffering. May I remember that nothing is permanent, ultimately satisfying, or separate from causes and conditions. May I not be overwhelmed by sadness. May I not offer help unskillfully.

May I recognize others' lives and karma to be their own, and let them live without interference from me.

May I recognize the nature of my own experience and conditioning. May I not offer help to others with the aim of benefiting myself.

May my mistakes and limitations not be the cause of more suffering; may even my clumsy or deluded actions still help others in some way.

May I remember that there is suffering, there is an end to suffering, there is freedom, peace, and joy.

May I be happy when I see another is happy.
May I rejoice when another is freed from suffering.

May I see that my freedom and happiness and the freedom and happiness of others are completely intertwined.

May my practice, pleasure, happiness, good fortune, and virtue be of benefit to every being.

May every being be safe, healthy, happy, at ease in their body, at home in the world.

Composed by George Draffan to remind himself of the aspiration to free himself and others from confusion and suffering.

