

Antidotes to the Afflictions

The following was compiled by Wendy Mickle from the notes of Barry Flaming, Patti Jo Shockley, Stephen Harris, Bob Wilson and Wendy Mickle from Discussion groups at Sept. 2003 Retreat on 7 Point Thought Transformation with Ven. Thubten Chodron.

Recognize the affliction when it arises and apply the antidote!
Applying the antidote is a temporary turning away.
Completely eliminating afflictions requires realizing emptiness.

Observe:

What is the "flavor" in the mind when an affliction arises?
What is the happiness you predict by getting the object?
What are the things/objects that I am prone to be triggered by?
How can I avoid or come to peace with those objects?
When an affliction arises separate from the feeling by stopping and acknowledging it, then apply the antidote.

Antidotes to Attachment

Think of the disadvantages of attachment:
an obstacle to concentration
causes emotional turmoil
the main cause of staying in samsara
causes rebirth in the lower realms
attachment breeds dissatisfaction and is the thief of happiness

Think of the advantages of abandoning attachment:
avoiding all the disadvantages.

Think of the disadvantages of cyclic existence:
realize attachment is part of how we suffer in cyclic existence

Meditate on:

death:
remembering death helps us reprioritize, with objects of attachment ending up much lower on the list.
impermanence of the object. You can't take the object of attachment with you.
the emptiness of the object of attachment.
the unsatisfactory quality of cyclic existence
if the object of attachment will make us happy: Play an attachment feature movie in your mind to its conclusion. Ask, "Even if I get the object, what happiness will it bring? Will it be lasting?"

Remember:

that the object will not help us at the time of death.
the unpleasant or unsatisfactory aspects of the object. Take a realistic look at its qualities
how attachment to the object affects our ethical discipline: Think how we turn others into 2-dimensional objects, or how we treat them as chess pieces, moving them around to get what we want

Examine or dismantle the object to find its attractiveness. Remember that the object does not contain the happiness you anticipate.
Offer the object of attachment to the Three Jewels.
Contemplate the negative karma associated with procuring and protecting the object.
Be mindful of how attachment makes us feel: tight.
Ask, "If I don't get it, what resources internally and externally do I have to cope?"

Antidotes to Anger

Think of disadvantages of anger:

- destroys merit
- transgresses vows
- stops realizations
- creates negative karma
- stay in samsara
- destroys relationships
- causes rebirth in lower realms

Think of the advantages of abandoning anger and practicing patience:

- Freedom from all the disadvantages
- happy mind
- good relationships with others. People trust us
- good rebirth

Meditate on:

- patience (See *Working with Anger, Healing Anger, etc.*)
- emptiness
- death
- kindness of others
- impermanence
- hell realms
- you are not your anger
- compassion and loving-kindness
- thought transformation verses
- taking and giving—give blame to self-cherishing

Remember:

- that all beings just want to be happy and avoid suffering
- the teachings on how to eliminate self-centeredness and self-grasping
- how anger disturbs concentration

Think:

- it is only a mental factor and will pass
- do I want to be right or do I want to be happy?
- that anger doesn't benefit me or the other person
- this situation is arising as a result of karma
- having problems is the nature of samsara
- anger is based on exaggerated negative views
- my enemies could be enlightened and teaching me—gratitude

Ask, "if there is something I can do about it, why be angry?"

and if there is nothing I can do about the situation, why be angry?"

See the unpleasant situation you're experiencing as the ripening karma and rejoice

See the suffering of the other person and develop compassion

Deconstruct anger/the situation/the object

Don't get defensive—nothing to defend anyway
Generate patience and generosity
Be grateful to enemy

Antidotes to Pride/Arrogance

Think of disadvantages of pride:
hindrance to practice
we look pathetic
we can't learn

Meditate on:
emptiness
kindness of others
impermanence
good qualities of the 3 Jewels and His Holiness, the Dalai Lama
everything comes from the kindness of others
everything we know is due to the kindness of those who taught us
equanimity
buddha-nature

Remember:
our broken vows and areas of weakness
kindness of others
difficult topics such as the 18 elements

Think:
pride only harms me and doesn't do anything for me
there is more I don't know than I do know
pride interferes with learning Dharma
all of our accomplishments come from others' teaching, guiding, and encouraging us
of the things you don't know (e.g. 12 links, emptiness, rocket science, etc.)
of qualities of Triple Gem, His Holiness
when others are praising you that they are praising Chenresig
about the perfections of the Buddhas
what does arrogance get us?

Practice 7 Point Thought Transformation
See how silly you look
Identify with what you are condescending towards
Do purification practices
Be generous and praise others
Rejoice in others' good qualities
Generate humility
Do prostrations, confession and offerings
Go on retreat

Antidotes to Jealousy

Think of disadvantages of jealousy:
mind unsettled
can't sleep

destroys relationships
creates negative karma
causes lower rebirth
it is painful

Meditate on:

emptiness
kindness of others
impermanence
emptiness
equanimity—they want happiness like me

Think:

we can't take the person or object that we're attached to with us when we die
jealousy doesn't get you what you're jealous about
what you're jealous about doesn't bring ultimate happiness
jealousy does not benefit us in any way

Consider the karma others created to get what we're jealous

Practice generosity

Rejoice in others' good fortune and good qualities, Doing so creates great merit and makes our mind happy

Praise others

Do purification practice

Antidotes to Laziness

Think of the disadvantages:

create karmic obstacles to encountering the Dharma in the next life
no progress
stay in samsara
rebirth in lower realms
doesn't bring lasting pleasure

Meditate on:

precious human life
death awareness
buddha-nature
advantages of practicing
joyous effort
karma—we may not meet the Dharma in the future
qualities of the Three Jewels
the qualities of the Buddhas
lower realms
impermanence
kindness of others

Remember:

your precious human life and the opportunity it brings
the faults of samsaric pleasure

Look at the part of ego that doesn't want to change

Application/ just do it

Cultivate joyous effort

Do prostrations

Schedule 'Dharma dates' so you practice with a friend—accountability
Practice at a Dharma center; remember you're part of the group and others are counting on your presence.
'Practice like your hair's on fire'

Antidotes to Discouragement

Think of the disadvantages:
no progress
suffering of samsara

Meditate on:
death and impermanence
qualities of Three Jewels
buddha-nature
love and compassion
precious human life
bodhicitta—not just for yourself
karma
emptiness
patience

Remember:
bodhicitta, that you're not just doing it for yourself
the Buddha nature

Think:
what our teacher has accomplished
the Buddhas and bodhisattvas were once ordinary beings like us, but they practiced and became enlightened. If they can do it, so can we.

Take refuge
Rejoice in progress so far and qualities of others
Request Dharma teachings
Recall the long-view—patience over many lifetimes
Focus in on things you have faith in
Evaluate your progress—10 years ago, 5 years ago, etc.
Talk to a Dharma buddy
Go on retreat
Do purification practice
Generate faith by remembering the transformative power of the Dharma

Antidotes to Ignorance

Think of the disadvantages:
effect on karma
it's the root of samsara

Meditate on:
emptiness
dependant arising
impermanence
true nature of the mind

Request Dharma teachings
Attend teachings and Dharma classes
Listen, study, learn, contemplate, meditate, apply teachings
Practice Manjushri
Work to release self-grasping
Go on retreat
Do Purification practices
Examine our life
Notice how far you've come
Meditate on emptiness