

The Five Hindrances

The Five Hindrances is a teaching about five common ways dukkha (stressful reactivity) appears in our life. They are not just something that happens in meditation, but also in any moment of our life.

The Hindrances might be better called Habitual Visitors, or Invitations, Doorways, or Opportunities to Awaken. They can be very gross, solid, strong, and they can also be subtle, light, and quite well hidden.

It is important to remember:

They happen to all beings: **don't take them personally**

They are not an accurate description of life: **don't believe them**

They are affected by how we meet them: **explore the antidotes**

Five Kinds of Dukkha

- Greedy Demands: **Pulling** towards us, and Grasping onto
- Aversive Rejection: **Pushing** away from us, or Flying away from
- Restlessness and Worry: **Too much** energy for the space
- Tiredness (Lethargy) and Boredom: **Too little** energy for the space
- Doubt and **Confusion**: Hesitation, inaction, lack of trust/faith in our capacity

Antidotes

The antidotes are wise responses we can invite, encourage, or exhibit. Many times they express the opposite kind of energy to the hindrance.

Note, that as the hindrances get more subtle our response cannot be quite as simple as the list below:

- **Greed** can be liberated through **generosity** (dāna) or **renunciation** (nekkhamma) **letting go**.
- **Aversion** can be freed through **kindness** (mettā), and **calming** (samatha)
- **Restlessness** can be harmonised through inviting **more space** in the awareness, or seeing more space in the body (physical form)
- **Tiredness** can be harmonised by **standing up** for something, **gathering** the energy we have, **getting interested** in the state of boredom (what is boredom really like? So few humans have really tried to know).
- **Doubt** dissolves when we try something. Can we manage to **move the dial** a little bit towards freedom? Can we bring a little bit of **wisdom and kindness into** any **action**? Any of the responses to the other hindrances often starts to move things.