

# Vedana - Feeling Tone

Each and every experience we know has with it a vedana - feeling tone. The Buddha offered this teaching as part of the 5 aggregate map or schema for the reduction in clinging to, grasping at, and pushing away of experience.

The feeling tone is not an emotional quality but is an initial categorisation of sense input.

It offers us a view of our reaction to whatever arises by simplifying it into 3 types of vedana.

1. Pleasant
2. Unpleasant
3. Neither pleasant nor unpleasant

Feel into your body now, it has a vedana to it. It either feels pleasant to you, or unpleasant, or neither pleasant nor unpleasant. Or to put it more simply it either feels nice, not nice, or somewhere in between ( nice and not nice ). This is a conclusive list, there isn't a fourth type of vedana, and two wouldn't be enough either.

Your mind state also has a vedana. This moment has a vedana. All experience, and all elements that make up experience, have a vedana. Vedana is a natural arising phenomena with experience. We perceive experience as pleasant, unpleasant or neither.

The point of this teaching is that if the vedana goes unnoticed it will escalate to some degree of craving, aversion, or delusion. Whereas if we do notice the flavour of the vedana we can remain at contact to some degree.

If our experience is pleasant it can lead to the contraction of desiring more of that experience and subsequently when it passes a certain degree of dukkha - unsatisfactoriness - will arise. But note the contraction ( and contraction = dukkha ) is in the desiring also.

If our experience is unpleasant it can lead to the contraction of hostility and disliking, and we will detach and pull away from, or reject and push away, our experience, giving rise to dukkha in the here and now. Additionally this will lead to fantasy about a 'better' and more pleasant future, and rumination about how to avoid such unpleasant experiences.

If the vedana is neither pleasant nor unpleasant it can lead to our mind almost passing over the phenomena and the dukkha of boredom or confusion will arise. Although to some degree more pleasant than a directly unpleasant vedana, this response will escalate the experience into a more unpleasant feeling tone, which we will try to escape from.