



# **Ageing, Sickness and Death**

**Patricia McLoughlin**



**Saturday 5 and Sunday 6 August 2023**

# Going for Refuge

Namo tassa bhagavato arahanto sammasambuddhassa  
Namo tassa bhagavato arahanto sammasambuddhassa  
Namo tassa bhagavato arahanto sammasambuddhassa

Homage to the Blessed One, the Noble One,  
the Perfectly Enlightened One. *[3 times]*

Buddham saranam gacchami.  
Dhammam saranam gacchami.  
Sangham saranam gacchami.

To the Buddha I go for refuge.  
To the Dhamma I go for refuge.  
To the Sangha I go for refuge.

Dutiyampi buddham saranam gacchami  
Dutiyampi dhammam saranam gacchami  
Dutiyampi sangham saranam gacchami

For the second time, to the Buddha I go for refuge.  
For the second time, to the Dhamma I go for refuge.  
For the second time, to the Sangha I go for refuge.

Tatiyampi buddham saranam gacchami  
Tatiyampi dhammam saranam gacchami  
Tatiyampi sangham saranam gacchami

For the third time, to the Buddha I go for refuge.  
For the third time, to the Dhamma I go for refuge.  
For the third time, to the Sangha I go for refuge.

# Day 1

0830 – 0900	Opening, Welcome Check-in
0900 – 1030	Refuge Meditation Outline of the 2 days Story of the Buddha & The Divine Messengers Experiential Exercise: Investigating our own Experiences
1030 – 1100	Morning Tea
1100 – 1230	The 4 Noble Truths The 3 kinds of dukkah (suffering) Meeting Impermanence The 5 Remembrances - Guided Meditation
1230 – 1330	Lunch
1330 – 1500	Death Anxiety Rippling and Legacy Relaxing with Impermanence
1500 – 1530	Afternoon Tea
1530 – 1700	The Brahma Viharas Experimental Exercise: Some Days are Life Changing Outstanding questions from today
1700	Close

4

# Day 2

0830 – 0900	Opening and Check-in
0900 – 0945	The 6 Elements Meditation
0945 – 1030	Practitioners' experiences of applying Buddhist principles when facing Ageing, Sickness and Death
1030 – 1100	Morning Tea
1100 – 1230	How to be with ageing, sickness and death Beginner's Mind Presence
1230 – 1330	Lunch
1330 – 1500	Supervision Groups
1500 – 1515	Afternoon Tea
1515 – 1700	Remaining questions, further reflections and integration
1700	Farewell and Close

# Learning Outcomes

- ▶ Recognise deeply the nature of impermanence in our own and the lives of all sentient beings.
- ▶ Understand the relationship between greed, hatred and delusion and sunyata (no self) within Buddhist and existential contexts and the fear, avoidance and suffering this causes.
- ▶ Understand through direct experience the benefits of meditations on Ageing, Sickness and Death and how to skilfully introduce and apply these within one's own psychological practice.
- ▶ Deepen our capacity for and expression of the Brahma Viharas (compassion, loving kindness, altruistic joy and equanimity) within the contexts of loss; death and dying and grief and bereavement

**Samvega**

Urgency: trembling agitation,  
but useful and beneficial

- ▶ What is your worst case scenario of how you will die?
- ▶ How would you really want to die?

- ▶ What are you willing to do to die the way you want to die?
- ▶ What did you learn about sickness, ageing and death from your family and your early education?
- ▶ What have you learnt from your Buddhist practice? How has this influenced your life and your work with clients?



# Four Noble Truths

- ▶ the noble truth of suffering
- ▶ the noble truth of the origin of suffering
- ▶ the noble truth of the cessation of suffering
- ▶ the noble truth of the way leading to the cessation of suffering

## Four Noble Truths

The noble truth of suffering (dukkha) is this: birth is suffering; aging is suffering; sickness is suffering; death is suffering; sorrow and lamentation, pain, grief, and despair are suffering; association with the unpleasant is suffering; disassociation from the pleasant is suffering; not to get what one wants is suffering.

In brief, the five aggregates of attachment are suffering.

*Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta*

**Suffering of suffering**

Blatant pain of war, abuse, chronic illness

**Suffering of change**

Unsatisfactoriness

**All-pervasive suffering**

No solid ground, basic resistance life as it really is

— *Pema Chodron: p6, (How we Live is How we Die)*

## **Dukka-dukkha**

The suffering or distress out of birth, ageing, sickness and death, not getting what we want...

## **Dukka-viparinama**

The suffering brought about by change and impermanence; whatsoever is of a nature to arise is of a nature to cease

## **Dukka-samkhara**

Everything is conditioned; there is no inherent existence or essence; no sustainability...

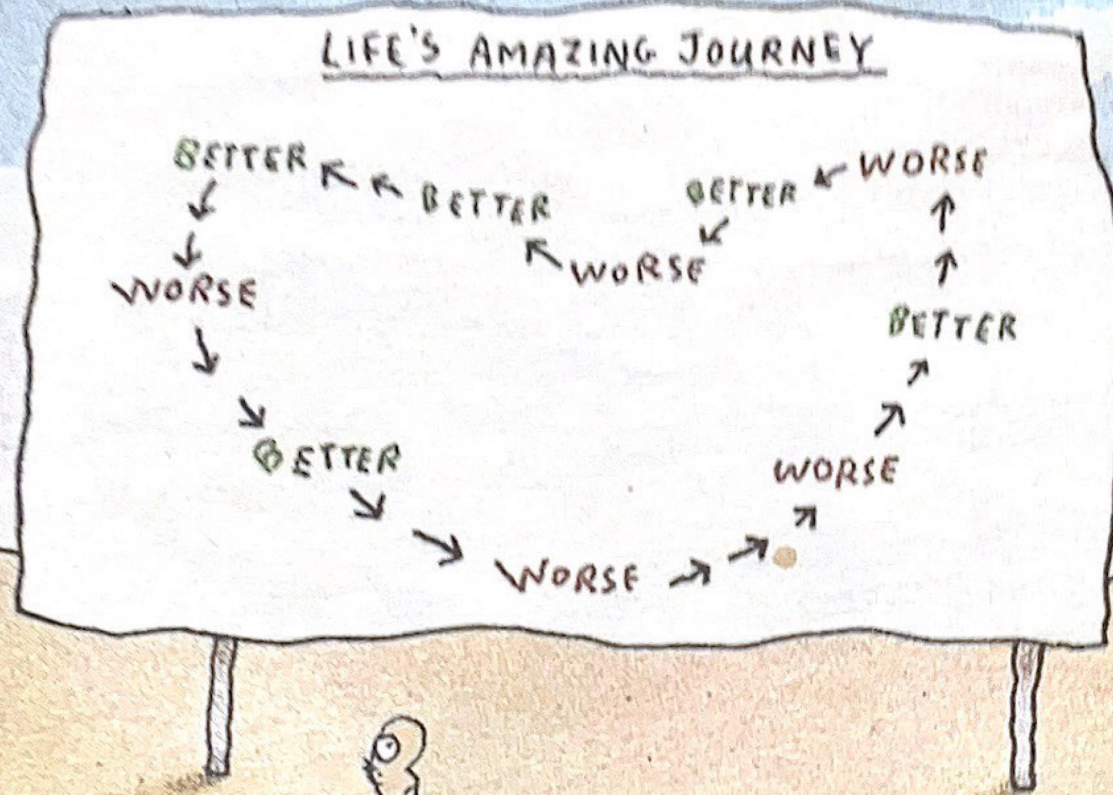
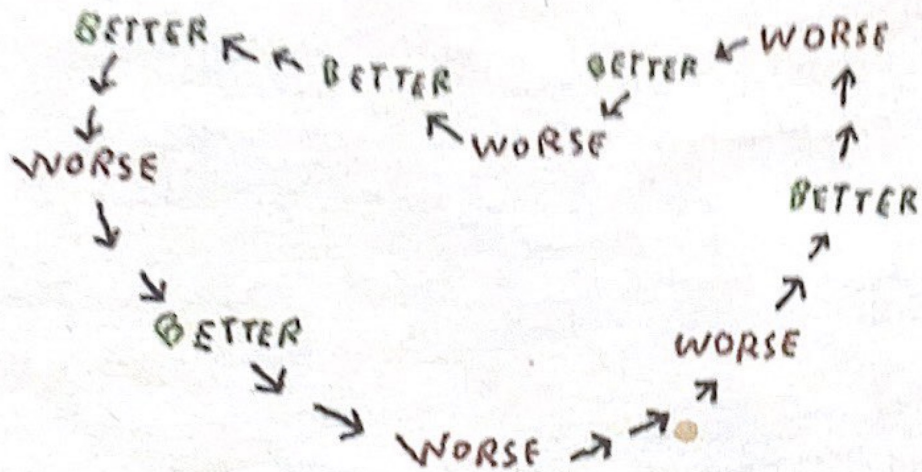
## The Five Remembrances

1. I am sure to become old; I cannot avoid ageing.	I am subject to aging, have not gone beyond aging.	<i>Jarādhammomhi jaraṃ anatīto....</i>
2. I am sure to become ill; I cannot avoid illness.	I am subject to illness, have not gone beyond illness.	<i>Vyādhidhammomhi vyāधिṃ anatīto....</i>
3. I am sure to die; I cannot avoid death.	I am subject to death, have not gone beyond death.	<i>Maraṇadhammomhi maraṇaṃ anatīto....</i>
4. I must be separated and parted from all that is dear and beloved to me.	I will grow different, separate from all that is dear and appealing to me.	<i>Sabbehi me piyehi manāpehi nānābhāvo vinābhāvo....</i>
5. I am the owner of my actions, heir of my actions, actions are the womb (from which I have sprung), actions are my relations, actions are my protection. Whatever actions I do, good or bad, of these I shall become their heir.	I am the owner of my actions, heir to my actions, born of my actions, related through my actions, and have my actions as my arbitrator. Whatever I do, for good or for evil, to that will I fall heir.	<i>Kammaṣṣakomhi kammaḍāyādo kammayoni kammabandhū kammaḍaṭṭisaraṇo yaṃ kammaṃ karissāmi kalyāṇaṃ vā pāpakaṃ vā tassa ḍāyādo bhavissāmī....</i>

The Buddha advised: "These are the five facts that one should reflect on often, whether one is a woman or a man, lay or ordained."



LIFE'S AMAZING JOURNEY



Leunig

**F**orgetting  
**E**verything is  
**A**ll  
**R**ight





When the appearances of this life dissolve,  
May I with ease and great happiness,  
Let go of all attachments to this life  
As a son or daughter, returning home...

— *Dzigar Kongtrul Rinpoche*



# Buddhist Essentials

*What is non-fear*

Live in the nowhere that you come from  
Even though you have an address here.

— *Rumi*



# Rippling

Each of us creates, often without our conscious intent or knowledge, concentric circles of influence that may affect others for years – even generations. The effect we have on other people is in turn passed on – much like ripples in a pond that go on and on until no longer visible but still continuing at a nano level.

Rippling does not necessarily mean leaving behind your image or your name. Attempts to preserve a personal identity are futile.

Transiency is forever.

Rather leaving behind something from your life experience: some trait, a piece of wisdom, guidance, virtue, comfort, that passes on either known or unknown...'

– *Irvin Yalom: 'Starring at the Sun' pp83-84*

# Rippling

- ▶ Desire to procreate — generative
- ▶ Organ donation
- ▶ Prominence through public achievement
- ▶ Naming foundations, buildings, scholarships
- ▶ Rejoining nature through ashes or green burial — building blocks for future life





رقم القصيد

מפלאי לכל דבר

מד מכל אדם

# COMPASSION

NIGEL WESTLAKE / LIOR  
SYDNEY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

לך אדם  
לך בן

عن ابن خلدون رحمه الله  
في طرفة الله

ما وثني الحد إلا  
قلاتي وإن كان المس  
اشفت على سر فبجنت به ولا مد

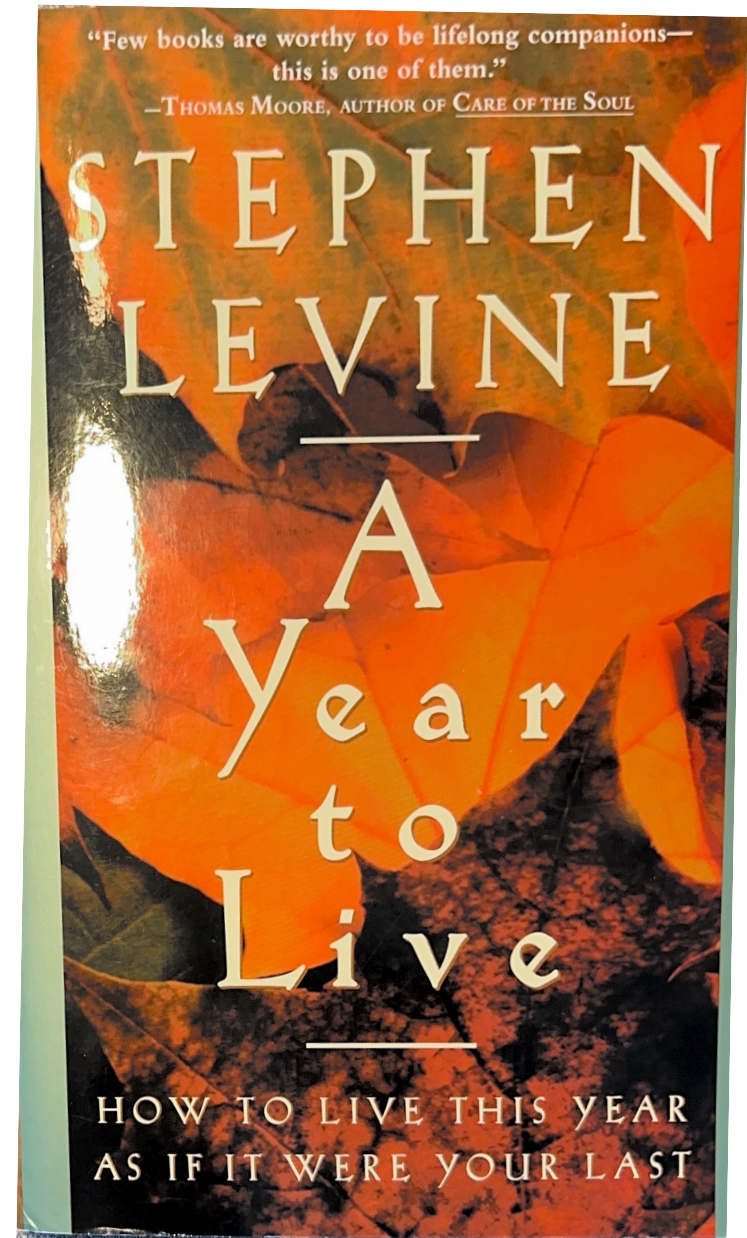
אל-תקשו לבק  
הגר אתכם. ואהבת לו קם

رَوَّ الصَّلَاةَ عَنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ  
شَ حَسَنَ صَاحِبِ

قصيدة

**This could be the last  
day in this body...**

**How do I want to live?**



# The Brahma Viharas

- ▶ Loving-kindness (metta)
- ▶ Compassion (karuna)
- ▶ Sympathetic joy (mudita)
- ▶ Equanimity (upekkha)

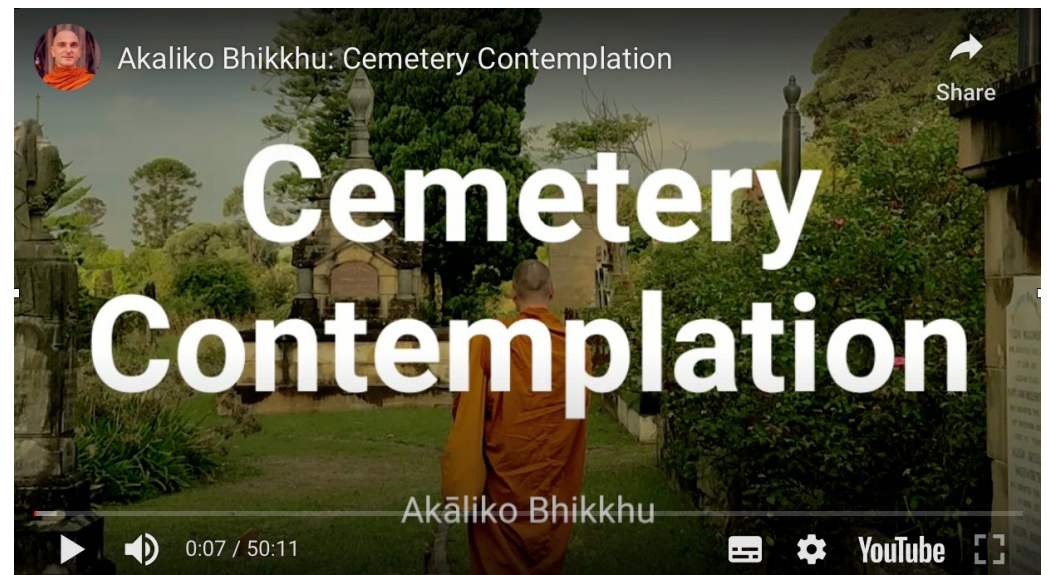
# The Brahma Viharas

Search on YouTube for  
**Ajahn Brahm - The Four Brahma Viharas**



# Cemetery Contemplation

Search on YouTube for  
[Akaliko Bhikkhu: Cemetery Contemplation](#)









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**Show Up!**

- ▶ **Not Knowing**
- ▶ **Bearing Witness**
- ▶ **Compassionate Action**

*after Glassman / Halifax*



Frank Ostaseski  
Founder, Metta Institute

Turn Toward Suffering



# Practice Phrases

- ▶ May I offer my care and presence, even though it may be met by gratitude, indifference, anger or anguish.
- ▶ May I offer love, knowing I can not control the course of life, suffering and death.
- ▶ May I find the inner resources to truly be able to give
- ▶ May I be forgiven for mistakes made, things left undone and may I forgive myself for mistakes made, for things left undone
- ▶ May I forgive those who have harmed me, intentional or unintentional, may I see my own limits with compassion just as I view the suffering of others.

