

Balancing the Factors of Enlightenment

There are seven Factors of Enlightenment given by the Buddha.

Mindfulness

Of the seven factors, *mindfulness* is the foremost. It must be developed at all times in full measure.

The other six factors fall into two groups:

- (1) Those which tend to exert the mind when it needs to be exerted.
- (2) Those that subdue the mind when it needs to be subdued.

One important facet of mindfulness is to determine which factor needs developing. The following list gives the methods recommended for developing each factor.

Factors Exerting the Mind

Investigation of States

1. Asking questions of a teacher; studying
2. Making the basis clean; body, clothes, and home clean and neat
3. Balancing the Five Faculties
4. Avoiding persons without understanding
5. Cultivating association of persons with understanding
6. "Reviewing the field for the exercise of profound knowledge"; that is, applying one's Dhamma knowledge to the mental factors as they arise
7. Resoluteness upon the investigation of states

Energy

1. Reviewing the fearfulness of the states of loss (hell, etc.) as a grounds for urgency
2. Seeing the benefits in obtaining the mundane and supramundane distinctions dependent upon energy (that is, *jhana* and enlightenment)
3. Reviewing the Path as "this is the Path trod by Buddhas and is not for idlers"
4. Reviewing the greatness of the Buddha, knowing that "the Buddha praised the energetic, not the slothful"
5. Reviewing the greatness of the heritage, thus "it is the Great Heritage of the Dhamma that I seek and it cannot be obtained by an idler"
6. Removing stiffness and torpor by perception of light, change of posture, frequenting the open air, etc.
7. Avoiding idle persons
8. Cultivating association of energetic persons
9. Reviewing the Four Right Endeavours (encouraging wholesome mental states already arisen and not yet arisen; discouraging unwholesome mental states already arisen and not yet arisen)
10. Resoluteness upon that energy

Joy

1. Recollection of the Buddha
2. Recollection of the Dhamma
3. Recollection of the Sangha
4. Recollection of virtuous acts one has performed
5. Recollection of generous acts one has performed
6. Recollection of deities
7. Recollection of peace
8. Avoiding rough persons
9. Cultivating association of refined persons
10. Reviewing encouraging discourses
11. Resoluteness upon that happiness

Factors Subduing the Mind

Tranquillity

1. Using superior food
2. Living in a good climate (avoiding temperature extremes and other bodily discomfort)
3. Maintaining a pleasant posture
4. "Keeping to the middle"; avoiding extremes of too tense or too relaxed, etc.
5. Avoiding violent persons
6. Cultivating association of persons tranquil in body
7. Resoluteness upon that tranquillity

Concentration

1. Making the basis clean; body, clothes, and home clean and neat
2. Balancing the Five Faculties
3. Restraining the mind when it ought to be restrained
4. Exerting the mind when it ought to be exerted
5. Encouraging the listless mind by means of faith and a sense of urgency
6. Looking on with equanimity at what is occurring rightly
7. Avoiding of unconcentrated persons
8. Cultivating association of persons who have obtained skill in concentration
9. Reviewing of the *jhanas* and liberations
10. Resoluteness upon that concentration

Equanimity

1. Maintaining neutrality toward living beings
2. Maintaining neutrality toward formations and inanimate things
3. Avoiding persons who show favouritism toward living beings and inanimate things
4. Cultivating association of persons who maintain neutrality toward living beings and inanimate things
5. Resoluteness upon that equanimity

Source: Adapted from the *Vissudhimagga* by Punnadhammo Bhikkhu.
Accessed at <http://www.arrowriver.ca/dhamma/bojjhang.html>
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