

Ten Non-Virtues and Ten Virtues

Virtuous actions (positive deeds coming from wholesome intentions) sow seeds of future happiness. On the other hand, non-virtuous actions (negative deeds arising from unwholesome motivations) sow seeds of future suffering. These karmic seeds can remain dormant in our mind until the conditions for them to ripen occur – and then they produce their effect.

The ten non-virtuous actions, and their opposites, are presented in the table that follows – three actions of the body, four of speech, and three of the mind.

Bodily actions: killing, stealing, sexual misconduct

Verbal actions: lying, slander (divisive speech), harsh speech (hurtful words), and gossip (idle chatter)

Mental actions: covetousness (greed), harmful intent (hatred), and holding wrong views (ignorance)

<i>Ten Non-Virtuous/Ten Virtuous Actions</i>	
<i>Actions of Body</i>	
Killing	Protecting the life of other beings
Stealing	Giving – practicing generosity
Sexual misconduct	Maintaining moral conduct
<i>Actions of Speech</i>	
Lying	Truthfulness – speaking the truth
Divisive speech – using words to harm others or to cause conflict between them	Reconciliatory speech – creating harmony among others; bringing foes together
Harsh words – using mean language such as swearing	Kind words – speaking peacefully and politely
Idle gossip – meaningless talk	Meaningful talk – speaking that which is important
<i>Actions of Mind</i>	
Covetousness	Non-attachment – and being content with what one has
Harmful intent – malice and thinking ill of people	Loving-kindness – goodwill and being kind to others
Wrong views	Right view
<p>Source: Adapted from Gill Farrer-Halls, <i>Working with Karma: Understanding and Transforming Your Karma</i> (London: Godsfield Press, 2007), 14; and Geshe Tashi Tsering, <i>The Four Noble Truths</i> (Somerville, MA: Wisdom Publications, 2005), 130-131.</p>	