



HOW TO OVERCOME DIFFICULTIES

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ABSTRACT:

Are you worried? Are you miserable? If so, you are invited to read this booklet to develop a better understanding of your problems. It is dedicated to you and to those who worry. Fear and Worry Fear and worry are born of the imaginings of a mind that is influenced by worldly conditions. They are rooted in craving and attachment. In fact, life is like a motion picture in which everything is constantly moving and changing. Nothing in this world is permanent or still. Those who are youthful and strong have fear of dying young. Those who are old and suffering worry about living too long. In between these two are those who crave for merriment all the year round. Joyful expectations of the pleasant seem to pass off too quickly.



KEY WORDS: Fear and Worry Fear , dying young , worldly conditions.

INTRODUCTION:

Fearful expectations 2 of the unpleasant create anxieties that do not seem to go away. Such feelings are natural. Such ups and downs of life play with an illusory self or ego, like a puppet on a string, but the mind is supreme unto itself. The training of the mind, otherwise known as mental culture, is the first step towards taming mental unrest. The Buddha had explained, " From craving springs grief, from craving springs fear, For him who is wholly free from craving, there is no grief, much less fear." All forms of attachment will end in sorrow. Neither tears nor long goodbyes can end the transience of life. All compounded things are impermanent. Both the old and the young suffer in this existence. No one is exempted.

Many teenag- 3 ers have growing pains. Being neither frogs nor tadpoles, teenagers are understandably inexperienced at building stable relationships with members of the opposite sex. They try to show off their attractiveness in trying to impress the members of the opposite sex, who are flattered to see themselves as sex objects. Both try to behave not as they really are, but as what they think is adult. They are afraid that if they behave naturally, they will be laughed at. This type of behaviour has the potential for being exploited. There is fear of rejection as well as worry about deflated egos. Unrequited love will often 'break' many teenage hearts because they feel they have made 'fools of themselves'. Some are even driven to commit suicide. But such traumas could be avoided if life is seen as it really is.

Young people must be taught the Buddhist approach 4 to life, so that they can grow and mature in the correct way. "Wheresoever fear arises, it arises in the fool, not in the wise man," said the Buddha.

Fear is nothing more than a state of mind. One's state of mind is subject to control and direction – the negative use of thought produces fear, while the positive use of thought enables our hopes and ideals to be realised. The choice rests entirely with ourselves. Every human being has the ability to control his own mind. Nature has endowed man with absolute control over one thing, and that is thought. Everything that a man creates begins in the form of a thought. Here is the key to help one understand the principle by which fear may be mastered.

A noted British anatomist was once asked by a student what was the best cure for fear, 5 and he answered, "Try doing something for someone." The student was considerably astonished by the reply, and requested further enlightenment, whereupon his instructor said, "You can't have two opposing sets of thoughts in your mind at one and the same time." One set of thoughts will always drive the other out. If, for instance, your mind is completely occupied with an unselfish desire to help someone else, you cannot be harbouring fear at the same time. "Worry dries up the blood sooner than age." Fear and worry in moderation are natural instincts of self-preservation, but constant, irrational fear and prolonged worry are relentless enemies to the human body.

They derange the normal bodily functions. 6 Control your Mind Man's mind influences his body profoundly. The mind has just as much potential to be a medication as it has to be a poison. When the mind is vicious, it can kill a being but when it is steady and diligent, it can benefit others. When the mind is concentrated on right thoughts, and supported by right effort and understanding, the effect it produces is immense. A mind with pure and wholesome thoughts leads to healthy, relaxed living. The Buddha said, "No enemy can harm one as much as one's own thoughts of craving, thoughts of hate, thoughts of jealousy and so on." A man, who does not know how to adjust his mind according to circumstances, is almost like a dead man.

Turn your mind inwards, and try to find pleasure within yourself. 7 It is only when the mind is controlled and properly directed that it becomes useful to its owner and the society. An unruly mind is a liability to both its owner and others. All the havoc wrought in this world is the creation of men who have not learned the way of mind-control, balance and poise. Calmness is not weakness. A man with a calm attitude at all times demonstrates himself as a man of culture. It is not too hard for one to be calm when things are favorable, but it is indeed hard to be composed when things go wrong.

It is this difficult quality that is worth achieving, because by exercising such calm and control, a man builds strength of character. 8 The Voice of Nature Modern man does not listen to the voice of nature because of his preoccupation with material gains and pleasures. He is so preoccupied with worldly pleasures that he neglects his spiritual needs. This unnatural behavior of contemporary man immediately results in a wrong view of human life and its ultimate purpose. It is the cause of all the frustration, anxiety, fear and insecurity of our present times. If man is cruel and wicked, and lives against the laws of nature and the cosmos, his actions, speech and thoughts would pollute the whole environment.

Nature that is abused will not provide what man requires for his living; instead, clashes, conflicts, epidemics and disasters will be in store for him. 9 If man lives in accordance with this natural law, leads a righteous life, purifies the world through the merits of his virtues and radiates his compassionate love towards other living beings, he can bring about happiness for mankind. One who really likes peace should not violate another man's freedom. It is wrong to disturb and deceive others. You may be a very busy person, but spend at least a few minutes a day in meditation or in reading some valuable books. This habit will relieve your worries and develop your mind. Religion is for your benefit. Therefore, it is your duty to think about your religion. Spare some time to attend gatherings held in a religious atmosphere. Even a short period spent in the company of spiritually inclined people will produce good results.

10 Mental Health & Criminal Tendencies the increase in all kinds of mental ailments and disturbances is the most alarming trend of all diseases of the modern age. There are more and more mentally sick patients all over the world, especially in the affluent countries. In many cases, the criminal element within our society is mentioned in the same breath as mental illness. One positive and far-

reaching result, stemming directly from the research work of Freud, is the recognition that criminals and delinquents are mentally sick people, who need treatment rather than punishment.

It is this liberal outlook on the problem that is the basis of all "progressive" social reforms to replace punishment with rehabilitation. 11 Know Thy Neighbour When we do not see how other people live, we may not learn the different ways of living. Travel is the best form of education. Personal encounters with people who are different from ourselves make us feel more sympathetic. Intolerance often arises from ignorance of another person's needs and way of thinking. Man's Unhappiness The Buddha taught that all of man's unhappiness results from the selfish desire for more pleasures that money can buy, more power over other men, and, most important of all, the desire to live forever, even after death! The desire for these things makes people selfish. They think only of themselves, want things 12 only for themselves, and do not care about what happens to other people. When their wishes are not fulfilled, they become restless and discontented. The only way to avoid this restlessness is to get rid of the desires that cause it. This is very difficult, but when a man achieves it, he appreciates it. Time will Heal Our Wounds Trouble passes. What has caused you to burst into tears will soon be forgotten. You may remember that you cried but not why you did so! As we grow up and go through life, we are often surprised at how we lie awake at night, brooding over something that has upset us during the day, or how we nurse resentment against someone by letting the same thoughts run through our minds concerning how to have our own back. We may fly into 13 a rage at the spur of the moment over something, and later wonder what it was that we were so angry about, and be surprised to realize what a waste of time and energy it had all been. We have deliberately continued being unhappy when we could have stopped being so and started thinking about something else which is more wholesome. Whatever our troubles are, and however aggrieved we may feel, time will heal our wounds, but surely there must be something we can do to prevent ourselves from being hurt in the first place.

Why should we allow others or our troubles to drain away our energy and make us unhappy? The answer is that they do not. It is we who make ourselves unhappy. You may have some trouble in your working place but you should not infect your 14 home with a bad atmosphere. You should realise that there is an end to those problems. The solutions could be found in achieving freedom from our selfish desires, by eradicating all forms of confusion and ignorance. Whenever we fail to find a solution to a problem, we are inclined to find a scapegoat, on whom we vent our frustration. We are not prepared to admit our own shortcomings. It is easier to put the blame on others. In fact, some even take pleasure in doing so. This is a completely wrong attitude to adopt. We must not show resentment towards others. We should do our utmost, painstakingly and calmly, to resolve our own problems. We must be prepared to face up to any difficulties that we encounter. 15 Healthy Atmosphere Jokes and remarks directed at you in bad taste should be deflected with good humour. This is one way to avoid enmity with anybody. Losing your cool while playing the game will cause you to become strung up. You will forfeit a possible win. That will even spoil the pleasure of those watching the game. There is no way that you can change everyone in this world to your way of thinking. It is not even desirable. If everyone agrees with you, the world will soon run out of ideas. There are many ways of correcting a person when he is wrong. By criticising, blaming and railing at him in public, you will be humiliating him, rather than correcting him. One is certain to make more enemies through criticism. If you can show concern for a per-16 son with kind words, he will thank you for it someday. Never use harsh or unpleasant words whenever you express your views on certain issues. Diplomacy, gentleness and politeness do not hurt anybody. In fact, they will open many doors for more effective communication. Do not feel defensive when your own faults are being pointed out. Your faults are your signposts for learning perfection. Temper is a poor camouflage for shortcomings. When someone loses his temper, he will blurt out too many things which are better left unsaid. Never reveal a former friend's personal secret, no matter how angry you are with him now. You will only degrade yourself in the process and others would never accept you as a sincere friend thereafter. Oth-17 ers will think you could do to them the same thing that you did to hurt a former friend, no one will trust you. Have The Courage to Face Criticism Sweetness causes sickness, while bitterness comes with the cure. Praise is sweetness, an excess of which causes sickness; while criticism is like a bitter pill which cures. We must have the courage to welcome criticism

and not be afraid of it. "The ugliness we see in others Is a reflection of our own nature." A man's life, circumstances and world are reflections of his own thoughts and beliefs. All men are mirrors of themselves, reflecting their own natures, including their pains and ills. 18 Happiness and Materialism Many people believe that they can solve all their problems by just having money. They, however, fail to realize that money itself has its attendant problems. Money cannot solve all problems. Most people never think properly. All through their lives, they are like race-track greyhounds running after a rabbit decoy. When the chase ends, all the excitement disappears. This is very much like the nature of sensual happiness in the wonderland of materialism. As soon as the desired object is obtained, the happiness ends and new desires arise. Getting the object appears not quite as satisfying as the chase itself. When we lose something, remember the following advice:- 19 " Say not that this is yours and that is mine, Just say, this came to you and that to me, So we may not regret the fading shine, Of all the glorious things which ceased to be." Wealth is not something for you to accumulate for craving's sake. It is intended for your welfare, as well as the welfare of others.

Try to make the world around you a better place to live in. Use your wealth wisely to reduce the sufferings of the poor, the sick and the aged. Fulfill your duties to your people, your country and your religion. When the time comes for you to leave, you will have immense peace and bliss as you recall the past good and selfless deeds that you have done. Seeking wealth through gambling is like expecting a passing cloud to shelter us from the sun. On the other hand, aspiring for pros- 20 parity through diligent work is as secure as building a permanent shelter from the sun and rain. "Your property will remain when you die. Your friends and relatives will follow you up to your grave, but only the good or bad actions that you have done during your lifetime (karma) will follow you beyond the grave." Fulfilling dreams of riches may sound magical, but fear and worry always lie in wait for such magic to wear off. A rich lifestyle brings its share of mental disturbance. With an abundance of ill-used wealth, it becomes impossible to attain the simple things in life such as friendship, trust and confidence, which are taken for granted in humbler circumstances. When a lifestyle begins to generate a sense of insecurity, wisdom is required to put oneself on the right track again. Riches 21 have their trade-offs — the happiness of owning them is diminished by as much fear and worry about losing them. For our personal happiness, we should acquire wealth righteously. "Blessed are they who earn their living without harming others," said the Buddha. Our happiness cannot be long-lived and meaningful if our wealth leaves sorrow and suffering in its wake. Wealth that is flouted arouses envy, but wealth that is well managed earns respect. Your wealth can edify your house but not you. Only your own virtues can edify you. Your dress can adorn your body but not you. Only your good conduct can do so. Ultimately, it is blissful to know that "happiness is a perfume that you cannot pour on others without getting a few drops on yourself." The world may not be what you 22 want it to be, but you can tune your heart to find happiness within it. It is only when you have suffered for doing good that you can rise above others in understanding and personal happiness. "If we want to find happiness, let us stop thinking about gratitude or ingratitude and give for the inner joy of giving. Ingratitude is natural — like weeds. Gratitude is like a rose. It has to be fed, watered, cultivated, loved and protected." (Dale Carnegie) Act Wisely Man must know how to use his youth, wealth and knowledge at the proper time and place and in the proper way, for his own benefit, as well as the benefit of others. If he misuses his privilege, it will only cause his 23 downfall. "Man must be strong enough to know when he is weak, brave enough to encounter fear, dignified and having moral courage in honest defeat, humble and gentle in victory." Some people have the blessings of sudden wealth through chance or inheritance, but not many are endowed with the wisdom to protect it, conserve it or put it to good use. Anything that is not earned through the sweat of hard work tends to be squandered through abuse. Adjust Ourselves Customs and traditions are important channels for the learning and sharing of human experiences in any community. The dilemma that we face in an ever changing world is whether to live with or break with the past. There will always be a 'generation gap' be- 24 tween the old and the young because of different perceptions of changing circumstances and values. The older generation fears that the young people may lose their heritage while the young people worry that an ancient past may become a stumbling block in modern living. Change must always be considered carefully. Popular culture creates momentary idols and folk heroes who portray images of

conflicting lifestyles. The mass media helps to reinforce this and young minds are prone to accept everything that the mass media propagate. There may be political or social messages in movements such as the Hippie or Yuppie movements but it is vital for the young to have the wisdom of the older generation to separate the good from the bad. The timetested and proven good old values do not change. Values such as thrift, honesty, liberality and hard work for dignified living remain fresh in any community. In an Asian setting, the customs and traditions associated with marriages and funerals are very important. The question is whether we should spend so much money and time to carry out these customs and traditions in the modern world. Are they really necessary? There is no better advice than what the Buddha gave in the Kalama Sutta: "When you know yourselves that these ideas are unprofitable, liable to censure, condemned by the wise, and if they are being adopted and put into effect, they would lead to harm and suffering, then you should abandon them.... When you know yourselves that these things are wholesome, blameless, commended by the wise, and if they are being adopted and put into effect, they would lead to welfare and happiness, then you should practise them and abide by them." Every man is a creature of the universe. So long as man is concerned with making our society more humane and re-ordering the world for the better, time will always bridge the gap between the young and the old. Worry and fear over the direction of change will lose their grip. The older people only have to remember how their own parents had objected to certain ways of living that were considered modern at the time when they were young. Tolerance to differences on an issue is a virtue. An open attitude can only be a happy one.

27 Mind Your Own Business It is blissful to be able to attend to your own affairs without entertaining doubts about others. Here is the Buddha's advice: "Let none find fault with others; let none see the omissions and commissions of others, but let one see one's own acts, done and undone." "He who is always observant of others' faults, and irritable, increases his own defilements. He is far from the destruction of defilements." "The faults of others are easily seen, but one's own is difficult to see. One winnows others' faults like chaff, but hides one's own as a crafty Fowler covers himself." No one is free from blame and criticism. The Buddha said, "People blame others for their silence. They blame those who talk much and those who talk in moderation. There is, therefore, no one in this world who is not blamed." He further said, "There never was, there never will be, nor is there now, anyone who is wholly blamed or wholly praised." Not all who criticize you are your enemies. You can use their remarks to find out the weaknesses in yourself which you cannot see. You should not give up good work just because of criticism. If you can admit your own weaknesses, indeed you have the intellectual strength to succeed. "The noble ones swerve not from the right path, let happen what may and no longer crave after worldly joys. The wise ones remain calm and constant in mind, alike in joy and in sorrow."

29 Be Unbiased You should not come to any hasty decision regarding any matter when you are in a bad mood or under provocation. Any decision or conclusion reached during such a period would be a matter that you could regret one day. Allow your mind to calm down first and think. Then, your judgement will be an unbiased one. Cultivate tolerance, for tolerance helps you to sympathise with other people's troubles. Avoid unnecessary criticism. Try to realise that even the finest human being is not infallible. The weakness that you find in your neighbour can be found in yourself. It has been said that you should not throw stones at others while staying in glass houses.

30 Humility is the wise man's measure for knowing the difference between what is and what is yet to be. "The Buddha Himself started His ministry by discarding all His princely pride in an act of self-humiliation. He attained sainthood during His life, but He never lost His naturalness and never assumed superior airs. His dissertations and parables were never pompous. He had time for the most humble of men. He never lost His sense of humor." Do Not Waste Your Time to waste a man's existence in worrying about the future, in grieving over the past, in idleness or in heedlessness, is to show his lack of fitness for the noble place that he holds as the best of earthly creatures. He will thus create bad karma which will relegate him to a place befitting his unworthiness. Bear this in mind, and do good while life lasts. By wasting your time, you harm not only yourself but also others, for your time is as much others' as it is yours. Patience and Tolerance Be patient with all. Anger leads one along a blind path. While it irritates and annoys others, it also hurts oneself. Anger weakens the physical body and disturbs the mind. A harsh word, like an arrow discharged from a bow, can never be retracted even if you offer a thousand apologies. Certain creatures

cannot see in the daytime whilst some others are blind at night, but a man, who is driven to intense hatred, does not observe anything, either by day or night. 32 When you are angry, who do you fight with? What do you fight with? You fight with yourself, for you are the worst enemy of yourself. The mind is your best friend but it can easily become your worst foe. Some types of heart trouble, rheumatic disorders, and skin diseases are traceable to chronic resentment, hatred and jealousy. Such destructive feelings poison the heart. They foster the development of latent diseases by reducing the body's natural defenses against disease microbes. Returning Good for Evil If you want to be rid of your enemies, you must first kill the greatest enemy within you – your anger. If you are perturbed by the distractions from your enemies, it means that you are fulfilling the wishes of your enemies by unknowingly entering their trap. 33 You should not think that you can only learn from those who praise you, help you, and associate with you very closely. You could learn many things from your enemies. You should not think that they are entirely wrong just because they happen to be your enemies. They may also possess certain good qualities. You cannot get rid of your enemies by returning evil for evil, you would only make more enemies in this way. The best method to overcome your enemies is to radiate your compassionate love towards them. You may think that this is impossible or does not make any sense, but it is the proven way of every cultured man. When you know that there is someone who is very angry with you, you should first try to find out the main cause. If it is due to your mistake, you should admit it and do not hesitate to apologise to him. If 34 it is due to certain misunderstandings between both of you, you must enlighten him with a heart-to-heart talk. If it is due to jealousy, try radiating your compassionate love. You could influence him with your mental vibrations. You may not be able to understand how it works but the experiences of many people have shown that it is the most powerful, intelligent and easiest method to win friends. It is highly recommended in Buddhism. Of course, to do this, you must have confidence and patience with yourself. By doing this, you will be able to make your enemy understand that he is in the wrong. Besides, you would also benefit in various ways for not accommodating enmity in your heart. 35 Compassionate Love As long as there is one fellow creature whom you can console with your kind words, whom you can enliven and cheer by your presence, whom you can help with your worldly possessions, however little that charity may be, you are a precious member of the human race. You should never be disheartened or depressed. There may be times when those whom you love do not seem to care for you, and you are apt to have a heavy heart, but there is no justification for feeling dejected. What does anything matter so long as you know that you are full of compassion for your fellow men? One should never depend on others for one's happiness. He who expects to secure satisfaction in life from others is worse than the beggar who kneels and cries for his daily bread. 36 The Menace of Drug Abuse & Alcoholism Alcohol has been described as one of the prime causes of man's physical and moral degradation. Currently, another more vicious form of abuse, the use of harmful and dangerous drugs, especially heroin, has created a much more serious human and social problem. This problem is now worldwide. The repercussions of drug abuse are more serious and deadly than those of alcoholism. Theft, robbery, sex-related crimes and swindling of vast sums of money have occurred under the pernicious influence of drug abuse. Drug lords, not being content as death merchants; have even tried to control weak governments through corruption, bribery, subversion and bombings. As a matter of 37- public policy, governments have to protect their citizens against drug abuse. Yet, drug lords, with their devilish schemes, have threatened the very foundation of society — human dignity. Spokesmen of conscience and their families constantly run the risk of death because they dare to cross the lawless path of the drug lords. Without international co-operation to stamp out this evil, the vitality and the future of many nations will be bleak indeed. Countless millions of hard-earned dollars have been spent worldwide to help the addicts get rid of their evil habits but the maddening craze persists. It is our duty to help in whatever manner we can, to eradicate this dreadful menace and prevent our children from getting near drugs. 38 Life as a drug addict or an alcoholic is a life of torture and hell on earth, leading one to an early death. Drunkenness Drunkenness expels reasons, Drowns memory, Defaces the brain, Diminishes strength, Inflames the blood, Causes external and internal incurable wounds. It is a witch to the body, A devil to the mind, A thief to the purse, The beggar's curse, The wife's woe, The children's sorrow, 39 The picture of a beast, And self-murder. A drunkard drinks to others'

health, And robs himself of his own. As human beings, we should have self-control to distinguish between what is good and evil. Keep away from drug abuse and alcoholism and help others to do so. That will be the greatest service to humanity. You Create Heaven and Hell Here "If you want to live in this world peacefully and happily, allow others to live peacefully and happily too, so that you can make this world worthy of life." Unless and until you adjust yourself to live according to these noble principles, you cannot expect happiness 40 and peace in this world. You cannot expect to get happiness and peace from the heaven simply by praying. If you act according to moral principles by upholding human dignity, you can create your own heaven right here in this world. You can also create the hell-fire on this earth itself if you abuse valuable human life. By not knowing how to live according to this universal cosmic law, we often stumble. If each man tries to lead a harmless and respectable life, people can enjoy real heavenly bliss better than the kind that some people hope to gain after death.

It is superfluous to create a heaven elsewhere to reward virtues, or a hell to punish vice. Virtues and evils have inevitable results in this world itself regardless of religious faith. Compassion for all beings is the only way to 41 create heaven. We can have this irresistible, luminous ideal for the good of society and mankind, by cultivating tolerance, compassion and concern for others' progress and happiness. We have progressed to this stage as a human race because illustrious individuals have shown us the way. By helping others morally, you help yourself and by helping yourself morally, you help others. A Happy Married Life In a true marriage, the husband and wife think more for the partnership that they share than for themselves. Marriage is a bicycle made for two. A feeling of security and contentment comes from mutual efforts. Impatience and misunderstanding are responsible for most family problems. A wife is not her husband's servant. She deserves respect as an 42 equal. Though a husband has the breadwinner's duties, helping out with household chores does not demean a husband's masculinity. At the same time, a nagging and grumpy wife is not going to make up for shortages in the home. Neither will her suspicion of her husband help to make a happy marriage. If her husband has shortcomings, only tolerance and kind words will help him to see the light. Right understanding and moral conduct are the practical aspects of wisdom. Marriage is a blessing but many people turn their married lives into a curse. Poverty is not the main cause of an unhappy married life. Both husband and wife must learn to share the pleasure and pain of everything in their daily lives. Mutual understanding is the secret of a happy family life. 43 Do Not Worry The secret of happy, successful living is to do what needs to be done now, and not worry about the past or the future. We cannot reshape the past, nor can we anticipate everything in the future. There is but one moment of time over which we have some conscious control and that is the present. Many people just worry about the future. They have to learn to adjust themselves to the circumstances. Whatever castles they may build in the air, whatever dreams they may have, they must always remember that they are living in this world of constant friction and change. "There are no stars which we could trust, there is no guiding light, and we know that we must BE GOOD, BE JUST, BE RIGHT." 44 Pillars of Success Failures are but the pillars of success. To learn from our failures is to achieve success. Never to have failed is never to have won. Unless we experience failure and its bitterness, we would never appreciate the sweetness of victory. It becomes merely a turn of events that is of little or no interest. Failures not only help us to succeed, they make us energetic, enthusiastic, and rich in experiences. "We live and work and dream, each has his little scheme; sometimes we laugh, sometimes we cry, And thus the days go by." The Real Beauty Physical ugliness is not a handicap to a 45 charming personality. If an ugly person cultivates the virtue of compassionate love, that love will show in so many winning ways – serenity, radiance, kindness and gentleness. That kind of attractiveness will easily compensate for any shortcomings in appearance. By comparison, a handsome person, with airs or conceit, will look very unappealing and repulsive. Inner charm is the real beauty. It has a special quality and attractiveness. Why is it Difficult to Depart from this World? For most people, death is an unwelcome event. With so many cravings to be satisfied, the business of living in spite of enormous suffering is never quite finished. People feel more comfortable with the illusion of happy-46 ness than with the reality of death. If they have to think about it at all, it only has a slot at the eleventh hour. Attachment to worldly life creates a fear of death, but the truth is that all life is nothing but suffering. Death is natural and inevitable. It is not half as frightening as

the thought of dying itself. The mind has an ability of its own to create and to stretch phantom images of death. The reason is that a mind, which is not trained to see life with all its impermanence and unsatisfactoriness, is likely to cling to illusions just as a drowning man will cling even to a straw. It creates uneasiness even for those who pray fervently to an imaginary supernatural being for forgiveness and a place in heaven, when life seems hopeless. Of course, the fear of death is a manifestation of instinctive self-preservation, but there is a way to overcome that fear. Do some selfless service for the welfare of others to gain hope and confidence in the next life. Altruism purges all selfish attachments. Purity of the mind and detachment from worldly things will ensure a happy parting from this world. It is the constant contemplation on death to understand the impermanence of life, and the wisdom to correct the wrong way of living, that take the fear out of death. Strengthen the mind to face the facts and realities of life. Avoid unrealistic and impracticable ambitions. Develop self-confidence. Then you will be more relaxed in overcoming your difficulties in life. 48 Dedication May all sentient beings have happiness and its causes. May all sentient beings be free of suffering and its causes. May all sentient beings not be separated from sorrow-less bliss. May all sentient beings abide in equanimity, be free of bias, attachment and anger.

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