

Alternatively, one can bring to mind the death of a renowned person. Consider how, despite the person's greatness, she or he had to leave the world. All health slides toward sickness, all youth moves toward aging, all life ends in death. Now one can proceed to the contemplation of the death of dear ones like a parent, spouse, sister, or brother, then to a neutral person. Finally, reflect, "In the same way I shall surely die." It was for no small reason that the Buddha declared:

"All compounded things are impermanent,

When one sees with wisdom,

One is disenchanted with suffering;

This is the path to purity." (Dhp. 277)

Contemplate that at the time of death, nothing helps except one's spiritual practice. Mindfully stir up a sense of urgency to strive harder while life yet remains.

A yogi devoted to mindfulness of death is constantly diligent and thereby acquires the perception of disenchantment with all kinds of becoming. Perception of impermanence grows, leading to the conquest of attachment to life. Unlike those who fall victim to fear, horror, trembling, and confusion at the time of death, the person who made much of this mindfulness dies undeluded and fearless. This meditation subject is called "generally useful" since it is of great benefit for most meditators.

