

For the wise

How to know and live the Buddha Dhamma
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The last of the 6 virtues of the Buddha Dhamma, the true teaching, is that “**It is to be personally known by the wise**” (*paccattarū vedītabbo viññūhi*).¹ The Buddha Dhamma is the path of awakening and the awakening itself.

The **path** refers to 2 important transformations we must go through:

- (1) bodily transformation: our actions and speech are positive;
- (2) mental transformation: our thoughts and feelings are positive.

Meaning of “positive”

Here, “**positive**” means to be “calm and clear” like still water in a beautiful mountain lake. Our actions are positive when we respect life, cultivate true happiness and show love (these are the values or spirit of the first 3 of the 5 precepts).

Our body is truly **calm** when we cherish the **3 values** of life, happiness and love. These 3 values should motivate us to **truthfully** communicate them so that others, too, especially our near and dear ones, will fully develop their body healthily to support a healthy mind.

When we do this habitually, we are said to be bodily developed (*bhāvita, kāya*).

This is a simple meaning of “**personal**” (*paccattarū*): it begins with working for a healthy mind in a healthy body.

Clear mind

A calm body, then, is the basis for not only a calm mind but a **healthy** one, that is, a clear mind. What is a “**clear mind**”? It has 3 habitual qualities:

- (1) When thinking, we try to avoid using the words “I,” “me” and “mine.”
 - (2) Whenever we are not sure, we ask: “What is to be done next?”
 - (3) Our problems start with us; we do not look outside for their solutions.
- We examine how we think.

In this way, we avoid narcissism, doubt and superstition. Then, our mind is ready to know what is real, true and good for us. “**real**” means we can experience or feel it for ourself. “**true**” means it affects everyone else in the same way. When I think negative, others can feel or sense it, too. When I feel **good** or positive, others can know it, too. This simple truth works for everyone. It is just a matter whether we know it or not: a matter of time. This we can all **know**.

¹ See **Dhammānussati**, SD 15.9 (2.6).

To be wise

When we understand all this and accept them, we **know** what is truly good. When we know how to apply this effectively to ourself, we are then **wise**. To be wise means we apply knowledge for our own good, for the good of others and the environment (social and natural).

The Buddha's teaching (from the suttas), as a rule, teaches us to be **wise**:

- (1) to be self-reliant yet not to be narcissistic;
- (2) not to doubt our ability to help ourself or makes others happy;
- (3) to understand that all our problems depend on how we think and feel.

Avoid being mentally ill

To be self-reliant and yet not narcissistic means that value our **health**, bodily and mental. When we are not well, or we are ill, it is difficult to do anything or to do it rightly. It's worse when we are **mentally ill**: this means that:

(1) We are mentally ill when we are carried away by unhelpful **desires**. We should not desire what others have, even to be what others seem to be. We should learn to notice how **others** really behave and think.

(2) We are mentally ill when we are darkened by **hatred**. We should not hate others simply because they are different or disagree with us. We should examine what it is that we are really upset about (the way we think). Watch how **we** really behave and think.

(3) We are mentally ill when we are blinded by **delusion**. We should not think that a person is special by his way of dressing or by looks. People are not holy because they know religion or look respectable or old. Looks can and do deceive.

No one can really solve our problems; we are our own refuge: we start to self-help by carefully watching and correcting how we think and feel.

Then, we are starting to **personally** know ourself because we are becoming **wise**. This is a practical way of using the Buddha Dhamma to better us. Keep the Dhamma inside us so that we can be **personally known by the wise**. Then we are the wise one: we truly know ourself. We are heading for true happiness.

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