

The 10 Non-Virtues

Prepared by Ven. Sangye Khadro for teachings at Kadampa Center (Summer, 1996)

(Note: this outline has been compiled from various Lam Rim books, including *Liberation in the Palm of Your Hand* and *An Anthology of Well-Spoken Advice*.)

Each of the ten non-virtuous actions has four components or factors. For the action to be complete, i.e. to bring the full karmic result, all four components must be present. These four are:

1. The **basis** or object of the action
2. The **intention**: the state of mind of the person performing the action. This has 3 parts: **recognition, motive and delusion**
3. The **deed**: actually performing the action
4. The **final step**, or completion of the action

The ten non-virtues are divided into three: three non-virtues of body, four of speech and three of mind.

Three Non-Virtues Of Body

1. KILLING

1. basis: a living being other than oneself
2. intention.
 - o recognition: you recognize unmistakably the person or being you intend to kill.
 - o motive: you intend to kill.
 - o delusion: you are motivated to kill out of anger, attachment or ignorance. For example, out of *anger*, killing an enemy or a being that annoys you; out of *attachment*, killing an animal for its meat or skin; out of *ignorance*, killing an animal as a sacrifice to a worldly god, believing this to be virtuous.
3. deed: you carry out the killing by some means, e.g. weapon, poison, black magic, etc., either directly by yourself or indirectly by ordering someone else to kill.
4. final step: the other person or being dies before you do.

2. STEALING (TAKING WHAT IS NOT GIVEN)

1. basis: something of value belonging to another.
2. intention.
 - o recognition: you recognize unmistakably the object to be stolen.
 - o motive: you intend to steal.
 - o delusion: one of the three poisons. For example, out of *anger*, stealing something from someone you wish to hurt; out of *attachment*, stealing something you wish to possess; out of *ignorance*, stealing or cheating, thinking that it's not wrong.
3. deed: whatever means you use to steal. e.g. taking the object secretly, not paying taxes or fees you owe, misusing donations, etc.; or getting someone to steal for you.
4. final step: you think that the object now belongs to you.

3. SEXUAL MISCONDUCT

1. basis: for lay people, the basis is improper orifice, improper time, improper place, or improper partner; for ordained people, any kind of sexual activity is sexual misconduct. (Some of the Lam Rim books say that the basis is the person with whom you engage in sexual misconduct.)
2. intention
 - o recognition: you must be in no doubt that the act is sexual misconduct. (Other LR books: you must have unmistakable recognition of the object of your misconduct.)
 - o motive: you intend to engage in an improper sexual act.
 - o delusion: one of the three poisons. For example, out of *anger* one might rape the wife of an enemy; out of *attachment*, engaging in sexual misconduct with someone other than one's spouse or with someone who's already married; out of *ignorance*, committing adultery thinking that it's cool, or engaging in sexual misconduct thinking that it leads to enlightenment.
3. deed: the two organs come into contact.
4. final step: you experience the bliss of orgasm.

Four Non-Virtues Of Speech

4. LYING (there are many objects of lying, but most are included in 8: denying something you have seen, heard, experienced with your other senses, or known- or falsely claiming to have seen, heard, experienced with your other senses, or known, something which you have not.)

1. basis: another person who can understand you, and who can speak
2. intention
 - o recognition: you must know that what you are saying is untrue.
 - o motive: you intend to lie.
 - o delusion: one of the three poisons. For example, out of *anger*, lying to hurt someone or destroy their reputation; out of *attachment*, lying to get something you want; out of *ignorance*, not thinking there's anything wrong with lying.
3. deed: conveying the lie by some means, e.g. speaking, writing, making a gesture with your hand or eyes, facial expression, remaining silent, etc.
4. final step: the other person understands and believes your lie.

5. DIVISIVE SPEECH (SLANDER)

1. basis: two or more people, who have a good or bad relationship.
2. intention
 - o recognition: you must have unmistakable recognition of the parties involved and their relationship/feelings for each other.
 - o motive: you intend to cause division or disunity.
 - o delusion: one of the three poisons. For example, out of *anger*, creating hostility and disharmony among people you dislike; out of *attachment*, causing a rift between a couple in order to have a relationship with one of them; out of *ignorance*, believing that disharmony is healthy, or causing disunity among followers of a religion you disagree with, believing this to be positive.
3. deed: you undertake either to cause disunity among friends, or to prevent reconciliation among enemies, by saying something which is either true or false.

4. final step: the other parties understand and believe what you say, and, as a consequence, become hostile towards each other.

6. INSULTING WORDS (HARSH SPEECH)

1. basis: another person whose feelings could be hurt (we can express insulting words to a non-human being or to an inanimate object, but the action is complete only when there's a being who understands and is hurt by our words).
2. intention
 - o recognition: you must correctly identify the person you intend to insult.
 - o motive: you intend to speak insulting words.
 - o delusion: one of the three poisons. For example, out of *anger*, insulting someone you dislike; out of *attachment*, speaking in a harsh or rude way to be accepted by a gang, or insulting the husband out of desire for his wife; out of *ignorance*, using abusive or rude language thinking that it's "cool" to do so, or thinking there's nothing wrong with hurting others' feelings.
3. deed: with a negative intention, you speak words pointing out faults, etc. in the other person, whether true or not, in a hurtful manner; or you get someone else to speak such words on your behalf
4. final step: the other person understands and is hurt.

7. IDLE GOSSIP

1. basis: something meaningless or insignificant, which you treat as important (it's not necessary that another being hears our words).
2. 2) intention
 - o recognition: you believe that what you wish to say is important or meaningful, although it is not.
 - o motive: you intend to express such words.
 - o delusion: one of the three poisons. For example, out of *anger*, chattering idly to in order to disturb someone you dislike who is trying to meditate or do something virtuous; out of *attachment*, indulging in gossip or frivolous talk about things you are attached to, or to spend time with someone you're attached to; out of *ignorance*, thinking there's nothing wrong with spending time in idly gossiping.
3. deed: speaking without purpose, or getting someone else to do it for you.
4. final step: actually expressing the words.

Three Non-Virtues Of Mind

8. COVETOUSNESS

1. basis: another person's property, possessions (includes merchandise in a shop), qualities, children, etc.
2. intention
 - o recognition: you identify correctly the object you covet.
 - o motive: you wish to make the object your own.
 - o delusion: one of the three poisons. For example, out of *anger*, wanting to buy something before someone you dislike has a chance to buy it, or wanting to deprive your enemy of his cherished possessions; out of *attachment*, wanting to possess many things thinking that they will bring happiness; out of *ignorance*,

wanting to buy many things thinking that it's good for oneself or for the economy, or as a habit or obsession.

3. deed: the wish to possess the object becomes stronger.
4. final step: deciding to find a way to make the object your own.

(Note: the motive, deed, and final step are all part of one train of thought.)

9. HARMFUL INTENT (MALICE, ILL WILL)

1. basis: another being who would be hurt if you acted out your harmful thoughts.
2. intention
 - o recognition: you correctly identify the being you wish to harm.
 - o motive: you wish to give harm to this being.
 - o delusion: one of the three poisons. For example, out of *anger*, wishing to harm someone who has banned you or who you dislike; out of *attachment*, wanting to kill your father to get your inheritance, or to harm someone to get his possessions; out of *ignorance*, wishing to harm others because of thinking that violence is good, or that you can do whatever you like.
3. deed: putting more effort into the wish to give harm, so that it grows stronger.
4. final step: you decide to act out your wish and do something harmful.

10. WRONG VIEWS

1. basis: something that exists or is true, e.g. the law of cause and effect, the four noble truths, etc.
2. intention
 - o recognition: you believe that your denial of the object is correct (i.e. you do not recognize that what you are denying is in fact true).
 - o motive: you wish to deny something that exists.
 - o delusion: one of the three poisons. For example, out of *anger*, because of hating someone who holds a correct view, you deny what he/she says and assert the opposite; out of *attachment*, asserting some wrong view in order to get something you desire, or to impress or gain favour from someone in a powerful position; out of *ignorance*, not understanding what is true and correct.
3. deed: thinking about carrying out the repudiation of the object by, for example, telling others what you think.
4. final step: definitely deciding to deny the object.

The Results Of The Ten Non-Virtues

There are 3 different results of a complete karma (i.e. an action that has been committed with all 4 components/factors present):

1. **Ripened result** - the future rebirth state you will experience as a result of having created a complete karma.¹
2. **Results congruent with the cause**
 1. **experiences congruent with the cause** - once your karma to be born in the lower realms has been exhausted and you take rebirth in an upper realm, you will have experiences similar to your original actions.
 2. **actions congruent with the cause** - once your karma to be born in the lower realms has been exhausted and you take rebirth in an upper realm, you will have the instinctive tendency to commit the original action again and again.
3. **Environmental results** - when born in the human realm, you will experience results of your actions in the form of environmental conditions.

1. KILLING

1. **Ripened result** - rebirth in one of the 3 lower realms.
2. **Results congruent with the cause**
 1. **experiences congruent with the cause** - later, in a human rebirth, one will have a short life, ill-health, many troubles, no success in your activities
 2. **actions congruent with the cause** - you will have the habitual desire to kill and harm others
3. **Environmental results** - being born in a place where there is much violence, war, many problems, etc. and where food, drink and medicine have little power

2. STEALING

1. **Ripened result** - rebirth in one of the 3 lower realms
2. **Results congruent with the cause**
 1. **experiences congruent with the cause** - lack of wealth, possessions and resources; your things will be stolen or lost.
 2. **actions congruent with the cause** - you will have an instinctive tendency to steal
3. **Environmental results** - being born in a barren place, where crops do not grow or are destroyed and there are shortages of food, and bitter frosts, hail, etc., and your business ventures will fall.

3. SEXUAL MISCONDUCT

1. **Ripened result** - rebirth in a lower realm
2. **Results congruent with the cause**
 1. **experiences congruent with the cause** - you will be unable to keep relationships with, and will have to quickly separate from, your spouse, family, friends, students, employees, etc.
 2. **actions congruent with the cause** - having the tendency to be unfaithful
3. **Environmental results** - having to live in a muddy or dirty place

4. LYING

1. **Ripened result** - rebirth in a lower realm
2. **Results congruent with the cause**
 1. **experiences congruent with the cause** - others do not believe you, even when you tell the truth
 2. **actions congruent with the cause** - having the tendency to lie and deceive others
3. **Environmental results** - having to live amongst people who cheat, and you can't find anyone you can trust.

5. DIVISIVE SPEECH

1. **Ripened result** - rebirth in a lower realm
2. **Results congruent with the cause**
 1. **experiences congruent with the cause** - being lonely, having few friends, followers or employees; having difficulty developing good relationships
 2. **actions congruent with the cause** - having the tendency to cause disunity
3. **Environmental results** - having to live in a rugged, uneven, inhospitable environment where communication is difficult.

6. INSULTING WORDS

1. **Ripened result** - rebirth in a lower realm
2. **Results congruent with the cause**
 1. **experiences congruent with the cause** - others will abuse you, and even when you speak pleasantly, they will interpret it negatively
 2. **actions congruent with the cause** - having the tendency to be critical and hurtful
3. **Environmental results** - having to live in a place where there are many tree stumps, brambles, nettles, sharp rocks and thorns

7. IDLE GOSSIP

1. **Ripened result** - rebirth in a lower realm
2. **Results congruent with the cause**
 1. **experiences congruent with the cause** - others will not take your speech seriously or listen to what you have to say
 2. **actions congruent with the cause** - having the tendency to talk continuously and fill any quiet moment with the sound of your voice
3. **Environmental results** - having to live in a place where crops do not grow properly, rain falls at the wrong time and activities are not successful

8. COVETOUSNESS

1. **Ripened result** - rebirth in a lower realm
2. **Results congruent with the cause**
 1. **experiences congruent with the cause** - you will be unable to achieve your aims and get what you want

2. **actions congruent with the cause** - being continuously dissatisfied and grasping; your attachment increases
3. **Environmental results** - having to live in a place where the crops are poor and material resources are easily destroyed or lost

9. HARMFUL INTENT

1. **Ripened result** - rebirth in a lower realm
2. **Results congruent with the cause**
 1. **experiences congruent with the cause** - you will be a person who easily becomes frightened and panicky
 2. **actions congruent with the cause** - having the tendency to hurt others, your anger and hatred increase
3. **Environmental results** - having to live in a violent place where there is war and contagious diseases

10. WRONG VIEWS

1. **Ripened result** - rebirth in a lower realm
2. **Results congruent with the cause**
 1. **experiences congruent with the cause** - being ignorant of correct views, and finding it difficult to develop realisations and correct understanding
 2. **actions congruent with the cause** - having the tendency to draw wrong conclusions again and again, your ignorance will increase
3. **Environmental results** - having to live in a place where water dries up in the wells, crops fail, etc.

¹ Pabongka Rinpoche said in *Liberation in the Palm of your Hand* (p. 452): "Great non-virtues will lead to rebirth in hell; medium non-virtues to rebirth as a hungry ghost; small ones to rebirth as an animal."