

## Working with subtle filters and impulses (vedana)

Vedana is one of the most subtle, quick and tricky aspects of the human mind. It is the way we personally take in our experience--the way sights, sounds, smells, tastes, sensations, and thoughts get immediately filtered as pleasant, unpleasant, or neither.

We don't just see color as it is, we automatically see a color we like, or don't like, or don't care about—a color that is good, bad or unimportant. We may even be surprised if another person experiences the same color differently.

This filtering is a deep “survival strategy” based on our blind sense of separateness or smallness. We unconsciously try to protect ourselves “in here” by treating the outside world with aggression, seduction, and shutting down or ignoring.

With echoes of the story of Eden, Gautam Buddha said that vedana--the way we “know” our experience as right or wrong—is the “weak link” in our chain of suffering.

How can we help open the chain into freedom?

Practice more often in ways that let joy arise from out of nowhere—this meditative ~ joy is not just “pleasant vedana.”

Notice when a sense of lack, smallness or poverty stops us from experiencing things ~ as they are. A sense of humor helps take the “small mind” less seriously.

Notice the normal responses: wanting more of the “good” and less of “bad,” and ~ getting bored and restless in the face of the neutral.



Notice how vedana interacts with experiences, thoughts, and moods. A few minutes ~ of an “unpleasant” sound may lead into an hour of bad mood if we do not notice the “unpleasant” filter going on.

Don't take this personal reaction personally—we have all got vedana. Let vedana ~ come and go by themselves and simply stay aware without getting caught up in them.

