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*the kindest care*

## Care of the mind

# Purifying mistakes

While it is unlikely we will get through life without doing things we regret, we have the freedom to deal with our mistakes in a positive way. Buddhism offers a purification practice called “The Four Powerful Remedies”. These are linked to the types of suffering that are caused by non-virtuous actions.

There are four consequences resulting from non-virtuous actions:

1. An unfortunate future rebirth
2. Being harmed in the future in the same way we have harmed others in the past
3. Experiencing unfavourable conditions and environments in the future
4. Habitual patterns of behaviour which leads to easily making the same mistakes in the future

The Buddhist purification practice is a process of clearing the imprints negative actions have left on our mind streams. This prevents experiencing the four consequences listed above. The Four Powerful Remedies can be done alone as meditation practice or it can be done under the guidance of a trained Buddhist Spiritual Carer.

### The Four Powerful Remedies

#### 1. The Power of Regret

Be clear about the action you want to purify and acknowledge you have made a mistake. Recognize that it has caused suffering for others and will cause suffering for you in the future as well. Regret protects you from receiving the same harm you have caused to others.

#### 2. The Power of Reliance

Most negative actions involve harming others so the power of reliance involves generating love towards others, especially those you have harmed. Your negative actions also distance you from your potential state of perfect purity as symbolised by Buddha. Thus, the power of reliance also involves renewing your faith in and connection to Buddha and your aspiration to achieve your full potential. This power prevents the resultant suffering of taking an unfortunate rebirth in the future.

#### 3. The Power of the Opponent Force

Intentionally do something virtuous to create the cause for meeting favourable conditions in the future. Some examples are

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saving animals that are going to be killed, caring for those who are experiencing pain and suffering, reading spiritual texts, reciting prayers and mantras, and making images of the Buddha.

### 4. The Power of Promise

Make a commitment to refrain from the negative action you are purifying, in order to counter habitually repeating the action in the future. Your promise can be to refrain from ever doing such a thing again or you may need to be more realistic and commit to not repeating this type of action for a certain period of time (e.g., a day, a week, a month).

### Practice Technique

Bring to mind the non-virtuous action you wish to purify. Accept the reality of what has happened and practice the following steps:

1. Re-establish a heartfelt connection with the Buddha and all other beings.
2. Regret what has been done
3. Create a new virtuous action
4. Commit to not doing this action again for a specific period of time.

By purifying your non-virtuous actions, you will have peace of mind and no regrets at the end of your life.

Karuna also has experienced people you can talk with on:  
07 3632 8300 or [karuna@karuna.org.au](mailto:karuna@karuna.org.au)



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