

THE 5 ENEMIES OF GROWTH

1. Sloth and Torpor. This is where you become sleepy, lazy, or energetically heavy in body, mind, and spirit. This enemy may present itself because you are not paying attention to your health. What you are eating, getting enough rest, and having emotional and creative outlets all can affect this feeling. It is important to not give in and stay attentive! If the mind is getting so sleepy that you cannot stay away, you may do a few minutes of intentionally hard breathings. If that doesn't work, perhaps splashing some cold water on your face or even a minute of jumping jacks. Meditation is not sleep and it is essential to stay vigilant!
2. Agitation and Restlessness. Sometimes this enemy is so strong we may not even meditate to begin with. During meditation, it may present itself in the form of physically moving and fidgeting. Closing the eyes is one of the first signs of relaxation, therefore it may be challenging to keep them closed or close them at all if we are feeling agitated. Every little sensation or sound is extremely annoying and disturbing to our practice in this state.
3. Craving. This is searching for something pleasant that is not actually there. A common expectation is that meditation will be a blissful experience and most students generate tension or frustration by looking for some preconceived notion of what it should be. When reality is not the same as what we expected we generate craving. This can become a huge barrier to our progress. Mastery in meditation, and also in life, depends upon us reconciling our minds between what we feel is ideal and what we are actually experiencing. Joy and freedom are available to us no matter what the circumstances are.
4. Aversion. This is located on the other side of craving. Aversion is generating tension and reactivity around something that is not possible in the moment. Imagine you are standing in a river with the water flowing around you. Craving is trying to grasp on to the water as it flows. Aversion is as if you are trying to push it away and stop it from flowing. Neither is really possible because the water is going to flow no matter how hard you try in either situation. Our lives keep flowing in this way just like the river and we can waste large quantities of energy trying to hold on too tight (craving), or resist too hard (aversion).
5. Doubt. This can be extremely paralyzing, as it can cause you to stop working seriously and create a roadblock to further progress. it makes itself known three ways:
 - The first doubt is in the technique you are working with.
 - The second is doubt in the teacher.
 - The third is doubt in oneself.