

# The Falsehood of Self-View

Self-view is the root delusion of all other falsehoods, including: fixed-views, futuring, pasting, craving, and aversion. If we uproot self-view, all other falsehoods become uprooted as well.

**Self-view:** The mental story you have of who you are. In general, this story is: I am this body, this person. I am the thinker of my thoughts. I am the doer of my life. However, a second way of defining self-view is “identifying with any form.” That form can be a material possession, an ache in the body, a strong emotion, a thought, or a behavior.

As with all falsehoods, the pattern is this: when you believe or identify with the falsehood, you feel afflictive emotions which encourage you to act unskillfully in ways that harm yourself or others.

## **Liberating Insight for Self-View: Your Essential Nature is Formless Awareness.**

All forms are impersonal, conditioned nature, unfolding due to natural laws. None of it is personal. But when we identify with temporary, changing forms, we set ourselves up to suffer and behave unskillfully.

Who are we without self-view, without our story of self? Enlightened beings tell us we are formless awareness. Different wisdom traditions call it different things, and you can call it whatever resonates with you: soul, spirit, atman, neshama, Creator, God, Nirvana, the absolute, and so on.

The formless is eternal, permanent, stable, invincible, and ever-present. No form can harm it, hide it, or take it away from us. The formless is also the source of all love, wisdom, life, energy, creativity, and beauty. The formless is also the essential nature of all life, including you!

## **Helpful Slogans**

Slogans to help us remember this liberating insight include:

**1. What I see, I cannot be.** Just as an eye cannot see itself directly, the formless cannot know itself directly either. The formless cannot be seen, smelt, tasted, touched, or heard. This slogan helps remind us to disidentify from strong emotions, thoughts, strong bodily sensations, and so on.

**2. I am formless, not form.** This one is self-explanatory.

**3. Don't take Shape. Be shapeless. Remain shapeless.** The formless is infinite, having no boundary. Thus, it is shapeless. This helps us remember to be the empty, infinite space, rather than the finite shape of form.

**4. We are all one.** The formless is what allows all other forms to exist. Because the essential nature of all forms is the formless, we are all just different manifestations of the same one life. This reminds us to treat our neighbors as ourselves, with kindness, compassion, love, and skillfulness.

**5. Life alone exists.** (Feel free to substitute the word “Life” with the name of the Higher Power of Your Understanding.) This reminds us of our unity with the divine, and the power we have at our disposal to overcome our challenges.

Feel free to use whichever slogans most help you remember this liberating insight, or create new slogans that speak to you more.

### **Are We Just Supposed to Believe This? No Test It!**

Are we asking you to believe this information and adopt this view on faith? Not at all.

We encourage you to test it out in your own experience. Investigate: who are you when there is no active self-view in the mind? Self-view has been so deeply conditioned in us, that it may take days, weeks, or months to mindfully recognize and experience what living without self-view is like. Be patient, and keep doing the self-inquiry practice explained in the Disidentification Practice handout.

Then, as you mindfully experience moments free from self-view, notice the difference between how it feels to identify with form, versus what it feels like to relate to form without identifying with it. Kindly investigate: which viewpoint enhances my wellbeing and the wellbeing of others? As the benefits and drawbacks of each position become clear, the truth of the matter will become self-evident. No need for belief at all, just a willingness to experiment and see for yourself.

We wish you ultimate success in your mindful investigations!



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# Disidentify Practice

To disidentify, we engage in self-inquiry. Like all investigation practices, self-inquiry involves asking our inner wisdom questions and using our direct experience to feel or intuit the answers. The questions in self-inquiry help us figure out where we position our “I”: are we believing ourselves to be the body (or another form) or the formless awareness? Self-inquiry also helps us investigate the relative merits and characteristics of each position.

## Top Tips for Self-Inquiry

- Useful forms to investigate with self-inquiry include: falsehoods, thoughts, emotions, bodily sensations, cravings, aversions, and material possessions.
- If it is helpful for you to schedule this practice at the same time each day, do that. At that time, you can look in the body-mind for any thoughts, emotions, or bodily sensations present and do self-inquiry on one or more of them. If nothing is there, choose a material possession to investigate.
- Each time you do self-inquiry, do it as if it is the first time. Don't answer the questions from memory. Really try to experience the answers directly each and every time.
- When we use our direct experience to feel or intuit the answers, answers may come as words, or as wordless direct-knowings.
- If an answer doesn't come, be patient and sit with the question as you listen into the silence and feel into the space and stillness. Whatever happens, respond with kind, patient, and compassionate interest.
- If confusion arises, gently notice if you are trying to use your intellect to answer the questions. Lovingly let go of thinking and try to feel the answers directly.
- As you learn this practice, keep this list of questions handy to refer to them. The more you use them, the more familiar they will

become, and the sooner you will be able to remember them and recall them when needed.

- When learning, go through all of the questions in order. Over time, you will gain an intuitive sense of what questions need to be asked, and in what order, to best help you disidentify with the form.
- As you use the questions, gently notice which questions from each category speaks to you most and most help you disidentify from various forms. Highlight, use, and memorize those questions.
- The words used are not important. If you can ask the same question using different words, more power to you. You can even generate your own questions. If they help you see things clearly, use them.
- Journal any insights gained from these investigations so you can better remember them and review them later.

## The Five Kinds of Self-Inquiry Questions

With self-inquiry, there are five categories of questions to ask about whatever form or situation you investigate.

### 1. Questions that help us see the impermanent nature form.

These questions really help us disidentify from relatively short-lived forms like thoughts, emotions, moods, and sensations. If the form is highly unpleasant, you only need to focus your attention on it long enough to answer the questions.

- Is this form permanent or temporary?
- If I allow this form to be, will it go away on its own?
- Can I be something so temporary?
- Did I exist before this arose?
- Do I exist while it is present?
- Will I exist once it is gone?



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## **2. Questions that help us see the conditioned, impersonal nature of form.**

These questions help us stop identifying with the form.

- Is this form conditioned or unconditioned?
- Is this form personal or impersonal?
- Am I this form? Does it define me?
- If this form disappeared, would I disappear?

## **3. Questions that help us determine the position of our “I.”**

These questions bring clarity as to whether we, in this moment, identify with form or formless awareness. Generally, these questions also gently encourage us to position ourselves as formless awareness.

There may be a strong felt difference between these two positions. For example, pain felt when you believe you are the body may feel intolerable, but when felt from the position of formless awareness, the pain feels bearable and insignificant. Notice this in your own experience.

- Right now, where am I positioned in all this?
- Is there self-view in this? If so, can I include self-view as part of the difficulty of this situation?
- Am I the formless awareness or the person?
- Am I the person or formlessness?
- Am I a shape or shapeless?
- Who sees the form?
- Am I the knower or the known?
- Am I the form or the formless?
- Am I a shape, or the shapeless?
- Who am I?
- What is my essential essence?

## **4. Questions that help us investigate the qualities of formless awareness, and contrast formless awareness with forms.**

These help you get to know and trust the qualities of your true nature. These questions also help you see the wisdom and benefit of positioning yourself as formless nature rather than as the body-mind.

- Can I feel the formless space that surrounds this form?
- Does formless awareness relate to this form with craving or aversion?
- Is formless awareness angry (or whatever feeling you may be investigating)?
- Does formless awareness believe “life is hard” (or whatever thought you may be investigating)?
- Can I feel my formless nature?
- Is my formless, aware nature harmed or affected by this form in any way?
- If this form cannot harm my true self, why all the fuss?

## **5. Questions that help us learn the differences between being identified with form and not being identified with form.**

These questions help us know the difference in these states. Gaining this wisdom, we can more easily see when we are identified, and more easily disidentify from things in the future.

- What does nonidentification feel like? What's its feeling tone?
- What does identification feel like? What's its feeling tone?
- What is the felt difference between being identified with form and not being identified with it?
- Mentally, what is the difference between identification and nonidentification? (Hint: Look to see if one has a story of self and the other doesn't.)
- How would I feel if I could never identify with form ever again?



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# Intention Setting for Week 10

## BALADI

### **Purpose**

Starting new habits takes effort. This intention-setting practice helps you memorize the steps of BALADI, and reminds you how to do it so you can practice it at least once every day this week.

Please read these intentions with the appropriate level of interest and engagement to help you memorize the key aspects and questions of each part.

You may need to keep the handout with you to reference when you start practicing BALADI.

Many investigative questions are offered here to give you a sense of the questions that will help you investigate your experience. The specific wording is not important. If you ask the same question a different way, that's fine.

### **Defining Form**

These intentions refer to forms a lot, so let's define the term. A form is any object that can be known with our senses. That means thoughts, sensations, falsehoods, behavior impulses, behaviors, feeling tones, and the feelings of love are all forms. You can investigate any of these things, so rather than list them all out each time, we just refer to them all as forms.

### **Disidentification**

In the disidentification part, there are many questions. Find which ones most resonate with you and help you disidentify from the forms you investigate. Then use those questions when you BALADI.

### **Progress Not Perfection**

BALADI has a lot of moving parts and things to remember. Love and appreciate yourself as you set these intentions and practice BALADI -- even when you forget things, get confused, or feel it is not working.

Appreciate the effort you put in to reading these intentions regularly, doing your best, and practicing it. The more you practice BALADI, the easier it will become. The easier it becomes, the more you will master it, and the more benefits you will gain from it.

Be patient, and keep practicing with all the love in your heart.

### **Instructions**

The instructions for these intention settings are the same as for all of the other intention setting.

Whenever helpful, review your other handouts on BALADI and its various aspects to refresh yourself on the details of those practices.



# Intention Setting – Week 10

*Instructions and clarifying info are in italics below. You need not read them out loud.*

## Today, I will BALADI (1)

BALADI stands for:

Breathe

Appreciate

Label

Allow

Disidentify

Investigate

At least once today, I will invest 3 or more minutes to practice BALADI. I may do the practice when all is well, or when I notice a falsehood alarm in the realm of my thoughts, emotions, or behaviors. If with other people, I will politely excuse myself, and find a safe and private area to BALADI – Breathe, Appreciate, Label, Allow, Disidentify, Investigate.

### **B is for Breathe**

To Breathe, I will take a mindful pause for 10 breath-cycles or as long as it takes to feel mindful, centered, and grounded. This will help me “be the knower, not the known.”

### **A is for Appreciate**

To Appreciate, I will give thanks: for whatever I am genuinely grateful for in

the moment. Appreciation adds some joy and brings inner resources to the situation.

The remaining steps help me investigate my experience. To do this, I will ask relevant questions, then use my direct experience to feel or intuit the answers. Answers may come as words, or as wordless direct-knowings.

### **L is for Label**

Labeling helps me “name it to tame it.”  
To Label, I will ask:

- What is being known? (*Mental storm, sensations, thoughts, falsehoods, behavior impulses, states of being, etc.*) I will label what is known using the “[Blank] is being known” format.

For each form known, I will ask:

- What is the form’s feeling tone? (*Pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral.*)
- Is this feeling tone worldly (*sense-based*) or spiritual (*not sense-based*)?

As things become more settled, I will ask:

- What falsehoods, or states of being, are being known?



*(Falsehoods include: Futuring, Pasting, Fixed-View, Craving, Aversion, Judgment, Self-View, etc. States of being include: Kindness, Compassion, Peace, and Joy.)*

I will take the primary (*loudest and most disturbing*) falsehood as the focus of my investigation for the rest of the steps. If no falsehood is present, I will investigate a state of being or another form that is present.

### **A is for Allow**

Since “what we resist, persists,” I do my best to allow and remember that “this belongs.” To Allow, I will ask:

- Is any aversion arising to this form?
- Can this form be allowed?

If there is no aversion, I will go to the next BALADI step.

If there is aversion, I will ask the same questions of that aversion. I will continue to do this until I find an aversion that is allowed. Then I will take this aversion as the focus of my investigation for the rest of the BALADI steps.

### **D is for Disidentify**

Disidentifying helps me “take the backwards step” into formless awareness. It reminds me to not identify with

temporary forms, since “this, too, will pass.” It reminds me that “what I see, I cannot be.” To Disidentify, I ask:

- Is this form permanent or temporary?
- If I allow this form to be, will it go away on its own?
- Can I be something so temporary?
- Is this form conditioned or unconditioned?
- Is this form personal or impersonal?
- Am I this form? Does it define me?
- Am I the knower or the known?
- Is my true self (*formless nature/awareness*) harmed or affected by this form?
- Does formless awareness relate to this form with craving or aversion?
- Is formless awareness [blank]? (*In the blank, name any feelings you feel such as: fearful, lonely, sad, angry, etc.*)
- Does formless awareness believe [blank]? (*In the blank, name any thoughts that arise such as: I hate this, etc.*)
- Can I feel my formless nature? (*It may be known as spaciousness, emptiness, silence, or stillness*)
- Can this form harm or affect my formless nature in any way?
- Who or what am I when there is no self-view in the mind?
- What is my essential nature?



## I is for Investigate

Investigating helps me recognize the patterns between falsehoods, emotions, and behavior impulses, and see their unkind, untrue, and unhelpful aspects. It also helps me see the wisdom, love, and truth of liberating insights.

*These liberating insights include:*

- *All life is sacred.*
- *If it's not kind, it's not true.*
- *The now is all there is.*
- *What you believe, deceives.*
- *This, too, shall pass.*
- *What I see, I cannot be.*
- *All forms are impermanent, impersonal, and cause suffering when identified with.*
- *I am one with all life.*

To Investigate, I will ask:

- Where in the body do I feel this form (*falsehood, state of being, emotion, etc.*)?
- What does this form feel like in the body?
- What is the feeling tone of this form?
- How is this form: Unkind? Untrue? Unhelpful?
- If the form is a falsehood, how would I feel if I could never believe this falsehood again?
- What contributes to the arising of this form?
- What contributes to the cessation of this form?

- If the form is a falsehood, how can I prevent this form from arising?
- What spiritual lesson is this form here to teach me?
- If the form is a falsehood, what is an honest, kind, helpful loving response to this falsehood? How does this loving response feel in the body? What is the feeling tone of these feelings? How do these feelings inspire me to respond?

If investigating falsehoods, after investigating one falsehood thoroughly, I will return to Labeling to see what other falsehoods remain and start the process again. I will keep doing this practice until the body becomes calm, peaceful, and grounded.

The next time I journal, I will write any insights generated from this practice, so I can better remember, review, and integrate these insights into my life.

The next time I use my meditation log, I will log one investigation for every BALADI practice attempted.

*\* Take a one-breath-cycle-long mindful pause \**

*Way to be skillful! Give thanks for completing your intention setting, and celebrate with your celebratory move. Mark in your log that you completed this intention setting, then have a glorious day!*

