

Selected Quotes from Gil Fronsdal's *Unhindered: A Mindful Path through the Five Hindrances*  
Chapter 5 – Ill Will

Mindfulness practice is dependent on our ability to choose [where we place our] attention..... Through sufficient investigation, understanding and non-reactivity, [the hindrances] can lose their power to preoccupy our attention. With enough insight, we can even become free of them.

Ill will ..... is the desire to strike out at something. It is motivated by hostility. It manifests as wanting to attack, push away or turn away. It can range from the subtlest inclinations of the mind to the grossest behavior. Emotional states that express hostility paired with ill will include anger, fury, rage, resentment, indignation, irritation, vexation, discontent, loathing, abhorrence, grudge, spite, resistance, avoidance, denial, boredom, criticalness, fearfulness and complaining.

Being caught up in aversion and ill will is itself painful. It constricts the mind and heart. It can also predispose us to focus on what is undesirable which can then trigger more ill will.

Because wisdom is acquired through familiarity, .....for ill will, this involves a willingness to shift our attention away from whatever we are hostile toward and instead turn our attention toward the experience of ill will itself. .... It is useful to be mindful of it in a non-judgmental and non-reactive way. This involves holding it in our attention without either acting on it or pushing it away..... Doing so helps strengthen many of the qualities important to Buddhist spiritual life..... mindfulness, resolve, patience and stability.

Being mindful of ill will includes feeling the ill will physically. It can be very helpful to stop thinking about the ill will and instead bring mindfulness to the many sensations and feelings associated with this hindrance. Spreading one's attention broadly throughout the body is one way to feel these sensations and feelings in an open, spacious, and hopefully relaxed manner.

One [of the many] areas of investigation is to examine the beliefs that underlie the ill will. How might we believe aversion is beneficial or justified? What views do we have about ourselves that trigger anger? What assumptions do we carry about how things are "supposed" to be?

It is useful to consider .....the purpose of our ill will. .... self-protection? ....sense of vitality?.....supporting a self-identity? By recognizing what we hope to accomplish through our aversion we can consider alternative approaches. Are there other, more suitable, ways of creating the same outcome?

A dramatic, time-honored Buddhist reframing is to consider difficulties as teachers.

Because ill will often occurs together with tension, it is useful to relax.

One way of redirecting attention is to focus on antidotes. There are ways of brightening up the mind with a positive disposition. The classic Buddhist antidotes are goodwill, friendliness, and metta. [Doreen might suggest holding an aversive experience with compassion, placing hand on heart, saying "Yes, this is hard".]

..... having ill will is an ordinary part of life. With no aversion to aversion, mindfulness can bring us independence from aversion.