

## Renunciation Week 1: What is the true spirit of Renunciation?

“The concept “renunciation” does not sound very appealing. It implies deprivation, and a compulsory rejection of what we like and enjoy for some dubious conceptual higher purpose. I know that nectarines tastes good, I like winning, it feels good to have people say complimentary things to me. So let’s add a helpful qualifier to the name of this third Parami: renunciation of *addictions*. Sex, nectarines, winning, and compliments come our way, and they appear to be blessings. The problem comes not with the experience itself, but when we are attached to them, addicted to them, need them, fear we will lose them, anger we don’t have them---all the painful stickiness involved with craving. The Buddha describes that the sensual beauties of the world are there and are agreeable, and that is not a problem. The problem is in our craving intention, the passion in our wanting. ... What we are renouncing are not the pleasures of this world. We are renouncing our own suffering. We are renouncing our futile grasping onto what is impermanent and not ultimately satisfying.” David Cohn

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“If, by giving up a lesser happiness,  
One could experience greater happiness,  
A wise person would renounce the lesser  
To behold the greater.”  
(Buddha, The Dhammapada 290)

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“Inner peace is cultivated by the act of choosing. If you want to live peacefully, you’ll have to make a continuous series of selections that permit and confirm that need. ... The capacities to choose and sustain objectives of attention, to gate out the irrelevant, and to appreciate what one has, are aspects of self-regulation that enable both action and satisfaction. Satisfaction means to feel you’ve done enough.” Paul Fleischmann, *Cultivating Inner Peace*

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“Happiness is not gratification on the hedonic treadmill. It is a sense of well being.” We need to familiarize ourselves with something like this, a sense of well being, so that we have a reference point to sense **what to let go into.**” George Dreyfus, Tibetan scholar

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Reflection: As you reflect on these passages, can you tune into a meaning of renunciation that is inspiring to you? What can you let go into: simplicity, ease, inner peace, contentment, wise choice, letting go, letting be, non-addiction, sobriety, well-being? Let yourself be nourished by any sense of ease or peacefulness this invokes. Recall these feelings to help you make wise decisions when find yourself caught up in sensory addictions or unnecessary activity.