

# ***The Five Aspects of Right Livelihood***

Handout by Ratnaprabha

## 1. Non-harming

Avoiding livelihoods that, for example, involve weapons, exploitation, drugs, or whatever hurts people; and helping others avoid them, too. The Buddha: "A lay follower should not engage in five types of business.... business in weapons,... living beings,... meat,... intoxicants,... poison." (*Anguttara Nikaya*, V. 177)

**Suggestion:** choose a 'precept' to adopt each week.

*Q: Is there anything at work where you may ethically fall down? How could you treat self, colleagues, employers, customers, world etc better?*

## 2. Appropriate happiness

a) Happiness of Having. **Joy in what you've got.** (Enjoying the career and work that you already have, and the benefits you get from them, including financial.)

*Q: what fun, satisfaction and rewards are you getting in your work as it is?*

b) Happiness of Producing. **Joy in what you do with it.** (This is enjoying the products of your work -- creativity and as well as material productivity.)

*Q: what enjoyment do or could you derive from what you are producing/creating?*

c) Happiness of Freedom from Debt (or dependency). **"Joy in non-dependency".**

*Q: Can you enjoy having the initiative?*

d) Happiness of Freedom from Blame or Fault. **"Joy in a free heart".**

*Q: what pleasure and satisfaction can you derived from your existing ethics?*

## 3. Growth and Awareness

'Waking up' in your livelihood. Practising mindfulness, and facing reality in your work.

A progression: wrong livelihood → ethical work → vocation and/or Buddhist team.

**Suggestions:** Mindfulness triggers, pauses, engagement, insights from difficulties...

*Q: how can you use your work as practice?*

## 4. Simplicity

Keeping your work uncomplicated and straightforward, using it to support a simple life, not consumerist.

**Suggestion:** drop one complicating element from your work.

*Q: is your work compatible with a simpler life?*

## 5. Service

Seeing your livelihood in terms of offering benefit to others, acting in a loving and selfless way.

**Suggestion:** decide on one thing to do or say for a colleague.

*Q: review how your work is or could be of service to others.*

The five aspects are presented by Jack Kornfield (his Householder series of talks, on the Web as <http://www.cheraglibrary.org/buddhist/kornfield/jkliveli.htm>); each is traditional, but the list may be his. The Four Appropriate Happinesses were taught by the Buddha to his wealthy disciple, Anathapindaka (*Anguttara Nikaya.II.69*).