

Five Main Precepts

“loosely based on a version by Vietnamese Zen master Thich Nhat Hanh”

1. ON PROTECTING LIFE

Aware of the suffering brought about by the destruction of life, I vow not to kill any living being. I will do my best to cultivate nonaggression and compassion and to learn to protect life.

2. ON RESPECTING WHAT BELONGS TO OTHERS

Aware of the suffering caused by stealing or taking anything that belongs to others, I vow to not take what is not offered. I will do my best to respect the property of others.

3. ON NOT HARMING OTHERS WITH OUR SEXUAL ENERGY

Aware of the suffering caused by unmindful or aggressive sexual energy, I vow to be faithful to my current partner and not harm others with my sexual energy. I will do my best to be aware of what harms myself and others and to nurture true love and respect, free from attachment. I aspire to serve and protect all beings.

4. ON MINDFUL SPEECH

Aware of the suffering caused by unmindful speech, I vow to cultivate right speech. Knowing that words can create happiness or suffering, I will do my best to not lie, to not gossip or slander, to not use harsh or idle speech, and to not say things that bring about division or hatred. I aspire always to speak the truth.

5. ON PROTECTING THE BODY AND MIND

Aware of the suffering caused by alcohol, drugs, and other intoxicants, I vow to not drink liquor or use drugs. I will do my best to live my life in a way that will increase my inner strength and flexibility as well as my openness to all beings and to life itself.

From Pema Chödrön, *Living Beautifully with Uncertainty and Change*, p. 32-33