

## Truth of Suffering

The First Noble Truth describes the nature of life and our personal experience of this impermanent, ever-changing world. All beings desire happiness, safety, peace, and comfort. We desire what is satisfying, pleasurable, joyful, and permanent.

However, the very *nature of existence is impermanent*, always changing, and therefore incapable of fully satisfying our desire. Inevitably, we experience frustration, anger, loss, unhappiness, and dissatisfaction.

Life is in constant change, and changes such as birth, old age, sickness, and death can bring dissatisfaction or suffering. Suffering may arise from being associated with people or conditions that are unpleasant, from being separated from people we love or conditions we enjoy, from not getting what we desire, or from getting what we desire then losing it.

Even our own thoughts and feelings are impermanent, constantly changing. Inevitably, all physical, emotional, and mental conditions will change.

*Insight into the First Noble Truth:* To overcome dissatisfaction and suffering, it is essential that we (1) understand and accept the ever-changing, impermanent nature of life; (2) acknowledge the presence of dissatisfaction and suffering; (3) understand the very nature of suffering, and (4) embrace suffering compassionately, without fear or avoidance.

**Source:** Information used with permission from Neil Cohen at Naljor Prison Dharma Service, PO Box 1177, Mount Shasta CA 96067.

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