

# Mindfulness According to Early Buddhist Sources

## The Threefold and Fourfold Establishments of Mindfulness



# Topics

- 1) Four establishments of mindfulness
- 2) Mindfulness of breathing
- 3) Three establishments of mindfulness

## Four establishments of mindfulness:

- body
- feelings
- mental states
- dharmas

## Discourse versions:

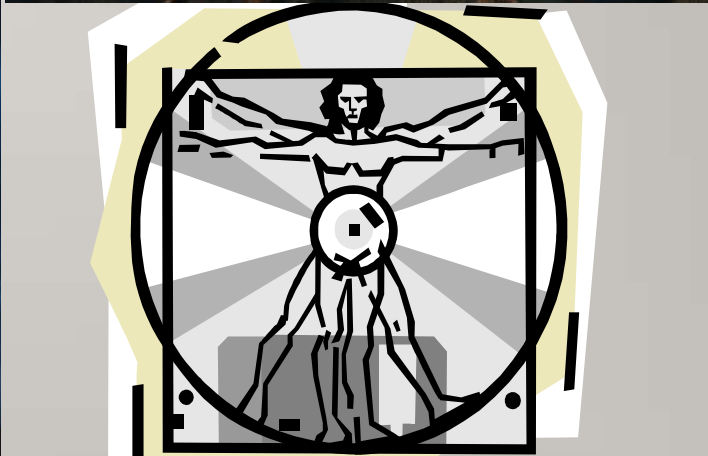
- a) Theravāda – *Dīgha-* and *Majjhima-nikāya*
- b) Sarvāstivāda – *Madhyama-āgama*
- c) uncertain school – *Ekottarika-āgama*

## Body contemplation – common ground:

- a) anatomical constitution of the body
- b) body made up of elements
- c) decay of body after death













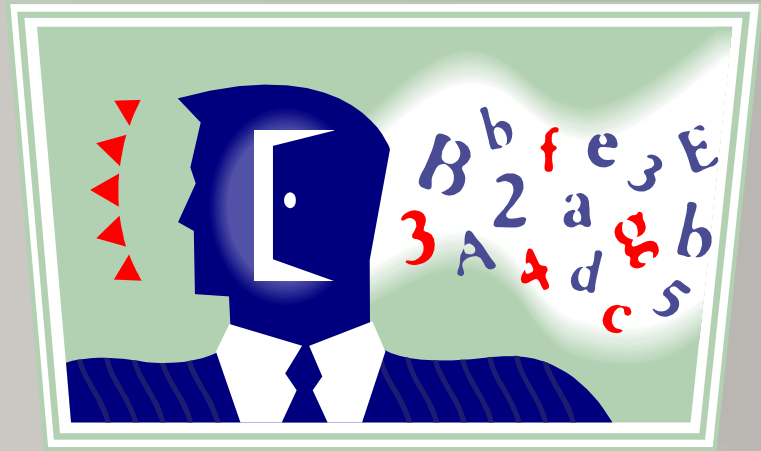
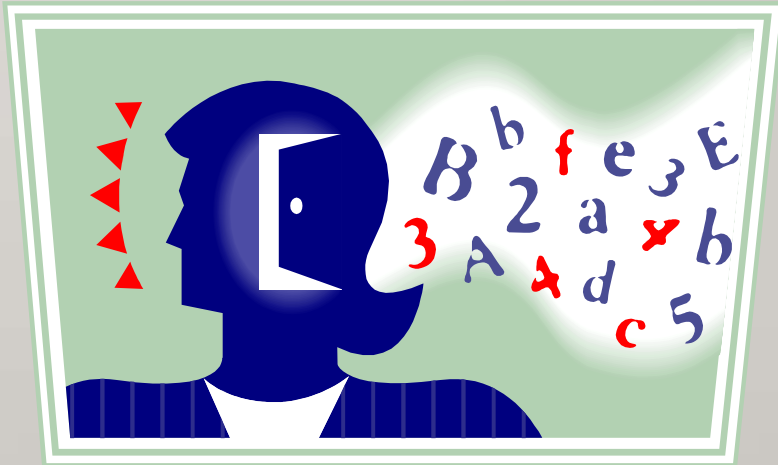
contemplation of feeling – common ground:

- a) pleasant, unpleasant, neutral
- b) worldly and unworldly



contemplation of mental states – common ground:

- a) presence or absence of lust, anger, delusion etc.
- b) presence or absence of higher states of mind





contemplation of dharmas – common ground:

- a) 5 hindrances
- b) 7 factors of awakening

## 5 hindrances:

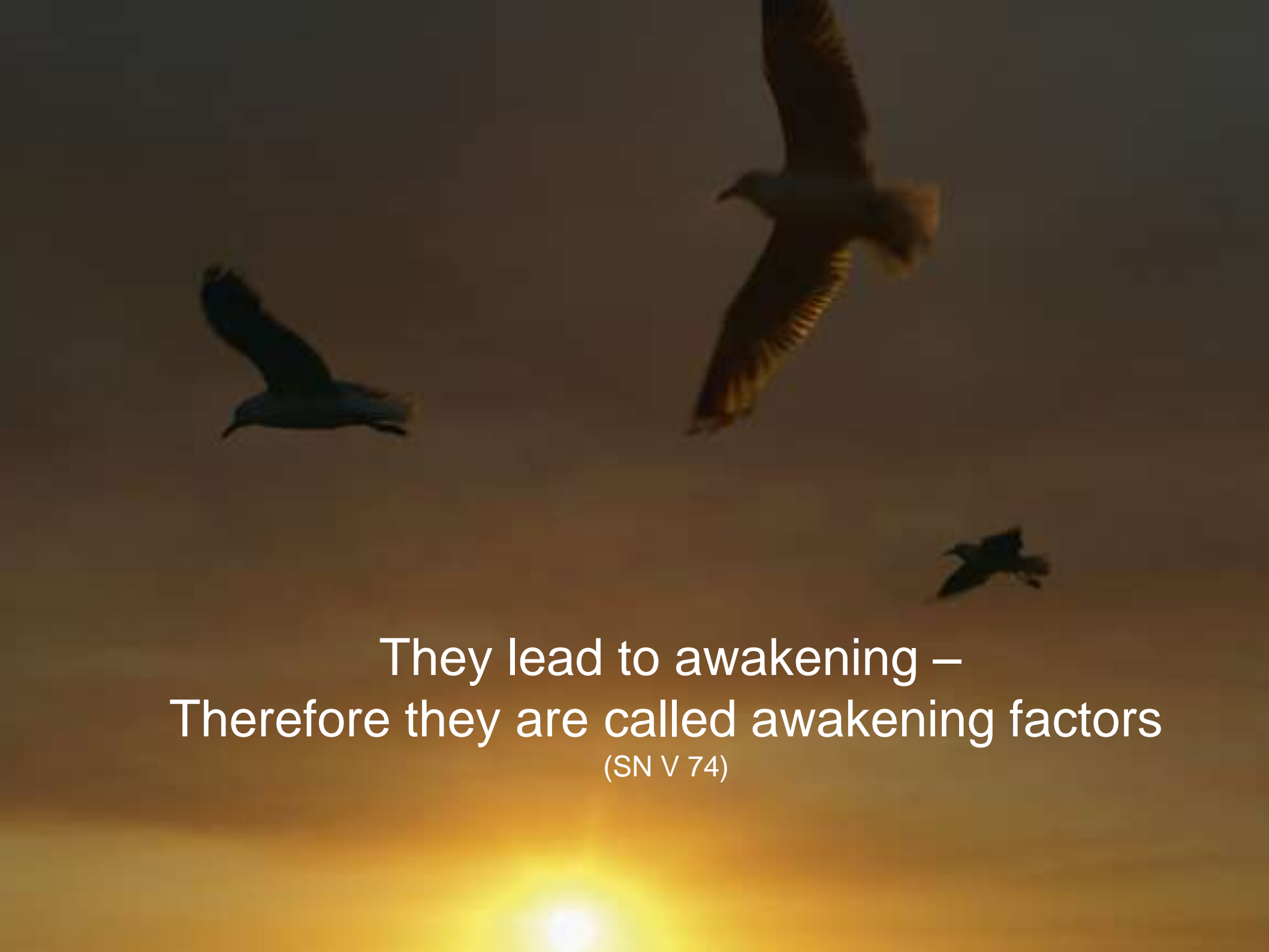
- sensual desire
- ill will
- sloth-and-torpor
- restlessness-and-worry
- doubt



## 7 awakening factors:

- mindfulness
- investigation of phenomena
- energy
- joy
- tranquility
- concentration
- equanimity



A photograph of three birds in flight against a sunset sky. The birds are silhouetted against the bright, glowing sun at the bottom center. The sky transitions from a deep orange near the horizon to a darker, muted orange at the top. The birds are captured in various stages of flight, with their wings spread wide. The largest bird is in the upper right, another is in the middle left, and a smaller one is in the lower right.

They lead to awakening –  
Therefore they are called awakening factors  
(SN V 74)

# Topics

- 1) Four establishments of mindfulness
- 2) Mindfulness of breathing**
- 3) Three establishments of mindfulness

# Mindfulness of breathing

1) contemplation of the body:

- long breath,
- short breath,
- experience whole body (or: all bodily activities),
- calm bodily activities.

# Mindfulness of breathing

## 2) contemplation of feelings:

- experience joy,
- experience happiness,
- experience mental activities,
- calm mental activities.



# Mindfulness of breathing

3) contemplation of mental states:

- experience the mind,
- gladden the mind,
- concentrate the mind,
- free the mind.

# Mindfulness of breathing

## 4) contemplation of dharmas:

- contemplate impermanence,
- contemplate fading away (or: eradication),
- contemplate cessation (or: dispassion),
- contemplate letting go (or: cessation).

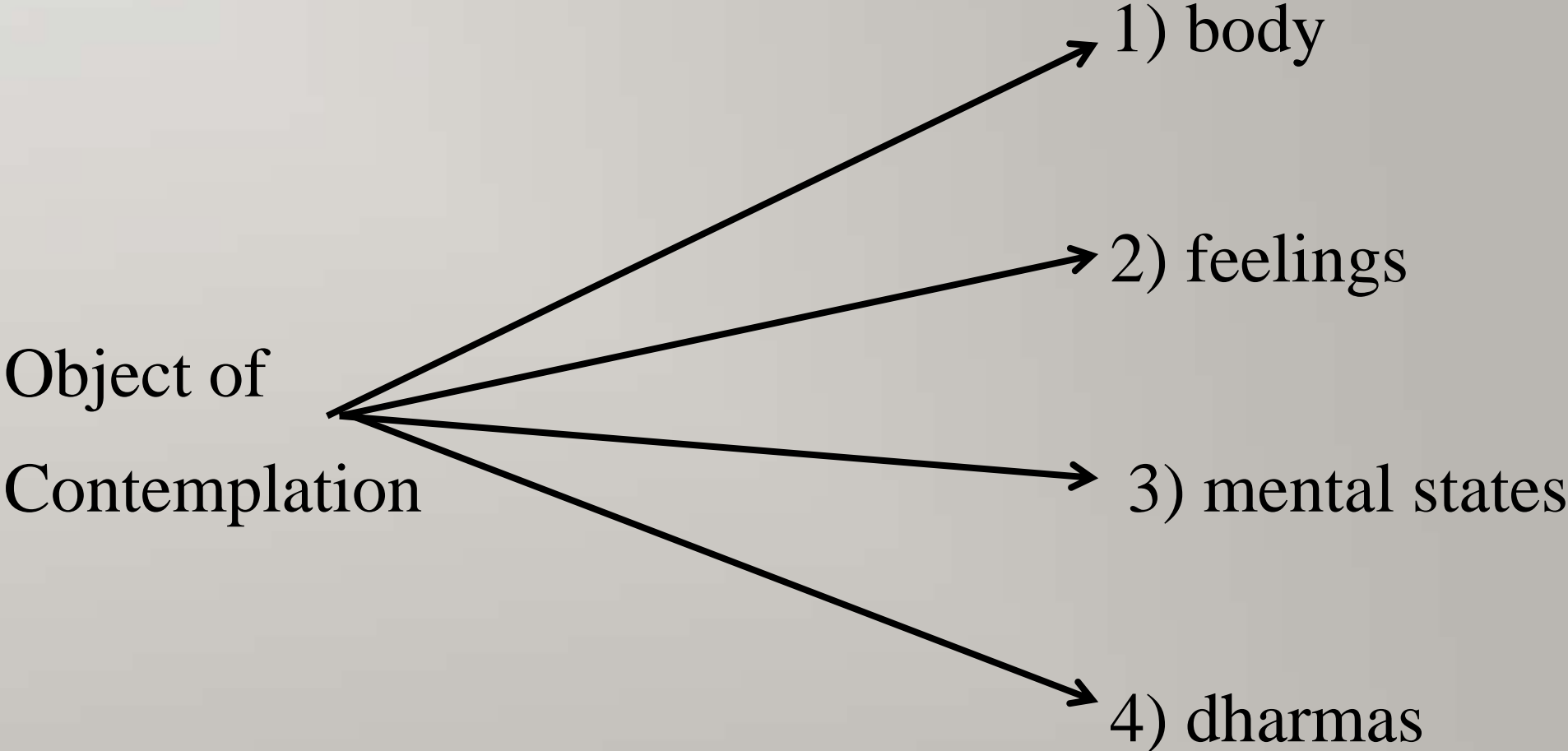
Breathing  $\Rightarrow$  4 establishments of mindfulness:

body: long breath, short breath, whole body, calm bodily activities.

feelings: experience joy, happiness, mental activities, calm mental activities.

mental states: experience, gladden, concentrate, free the mind.

dharmas: contemplate impermanence, fading away, cessation, letting go.





# Topics

- 1) Four establishments of mindfulness
- 2) Mindfulness of breathing
- 3) **Three establishments of mindfulness**

## Three establishments of mindfulness:

- disciples do not listen
- some do not listen, some listen
- all disciples listen

The Buddha remains equanimous in each case

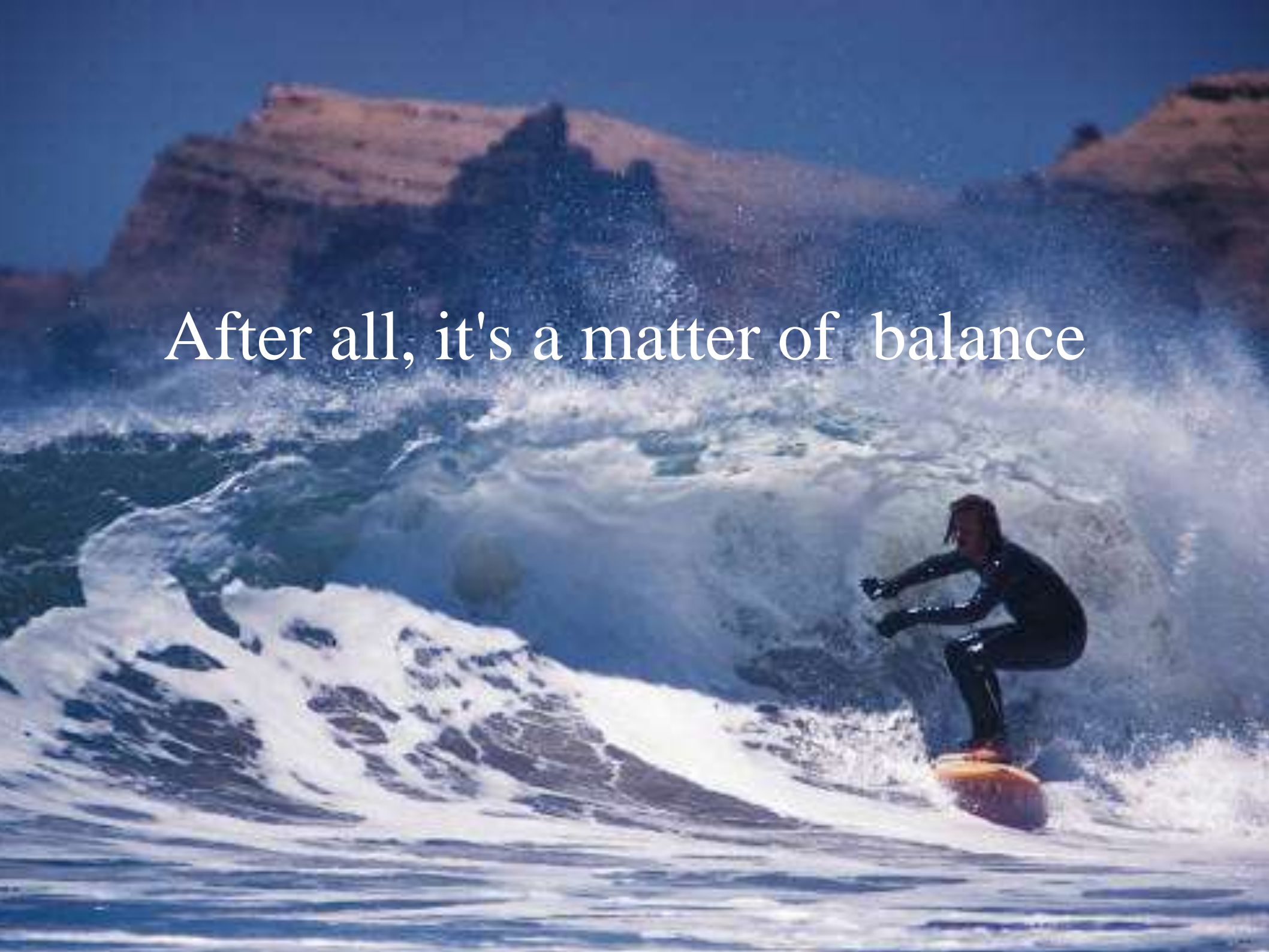
## mindfulness and evaluation:

- a) know: body is "not beautiful" / "impure"
- b) know: feelings is "worldly" or "unworldly"
- c) know: mind is "lustful", "angry", "deluded"
- d) know: "sensual desire" or "ill will" is present

common ground of the three and four  
establishments of mindfulness:

**aware & equanimous**

After all, it's a matter of balance





**Those who always proceed with mindfulness  
... proceed evenly among what is uneven (SN I 17)**