Energy and Effort

Andrea Fella · Notable Dhamma Teachers — Andrea Fella · 1:00:27

I wanted to start tonight by introducing myself because I didn't have an opportunity to do that before. Having arrived late from Burma on Monday evening, my name is Andrea Fella, and I'll be talking this evening about energy and effort.

In the last few days we've been talking about meeting our experience, receiving experience, and moment to moment being with whatever presents itself. We've talked about meeting the hindrances and how our actual path is created as we meet them. The obstacles that we face moment to moment, if we meet them with mindfulness, become the path itself. Sally talked so beautifully about this—essentially, our spiritual journey, our spiritual path is created each moment as we meet whatever is arising. And as James said, everything is workable when we meet it with mindfulness.

So moment by moment, we meet our experience—pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral—whether it's blissful, easeful, and peaceful, or whether it's resistance, frustration, irritation, annoyance, or anger. We meet the experience with this kind, open awareness. And this is not easy. It takes courage. It takes effort. It takes energy, over and over again, to meet moment by moment what is happening in our experience.

The Pali word for energy is *viriya*. This is often translated simply as energy, sometimes as persistence, and sometimes as courage. This quality of energy to meet our experience has a dimension of courage, of willingness to meet whatever is presenting itself to us.

Energy itself, this quality of *viriya*, is a neutral quality in our mind. It can be directed either skillfully or unskillfully. We can have energy and direct it towards the cultivation of beautiful qualities of mind, such as mindfulness, concentration, and equanimity, or we can direct it towards desire, aggression, and ambition. This same quality of mind, this energy, is a kind of neutral factor, and it depends on what we are cultivating how skillful that energy becomes. So it doesn't really make much sense to talk about energy in the abstract. We have to look at it in terms of how the mind is directed.

We need to look at how energy is coupled with wisdom for our practice. The quality of energy that fuels our practice is an energy that is imbued with wisdom—the understanding of what is skillful and unskillful with respect to what leads to suffering and what leads us away from suffering. The quality of energy on our path of practice is energy directed towards understanding suffering, letting go of the cause of suffering, realizing the release from suffering, and cultivating the path leading to the ending of suffering. These are the Four Noble Truths and the actions associated with them that Howie spoke about the other night.

Energy appears in many of the lists that the Buddha talked about. Most of you are familiar with the fact that the Buddha was a great list maker, and these lists actually give us support and indication of what supports the various qualities within them. Energy, for instance, is in the list of the *paramis*, the ten perfections. In that list, it is preceded by wisdom, which really supports this understanding that wisdom needs to imbue energy in order for it to be effective for our spiritual path.

It's a crucial quality of mind, this energy. In one commentary on the list of the *paramis*, of energy it says: "It is entirely through the spiritual power of energy that the practice of all the requisites of enlightenment succeeds." This is a pretty strong statement. It really depends on energy—that we gather our energy and use it wisely—that we wake up, that we are able to meet our experience moment by moment.

I want to look a little at what supports energy, what supports its cultivation. One commentary says that the proximate cause of this spiritual energy is a sense of urgency around awakening—the sense that when we meet suffering, there must be a way out of or through this suffering. All of you have this quality or you wouldn't be here. You wouldn't have signed up to come for a month of silent meditation, sitting and walking. This quality is a sense that there is a possibility of another way to live our lives, another way to meet our experience. This sense of urgency brings in some energy.

The fact that you have all come here indicates that this energy is present for you. And to some extent, we need desire—we actually have to want to do this. If we didn't want to do this, we would never do it. This is not an easy journey. And this kind of desire is a wholesome kind of desire, a *chanda* that fuels our practice.

As we engage, as we hear the teachings, as we begin to practice them, we develop some confidence. And this confidence is also the ground out of which energy comes. When we have a sense that what we're trying to do is possible, an energy arises that moves us in that direction, that moves us towards the activation of engaging with the practices.

We can also simply have a kind of confidence in the teachings themselves, a sense of, "Well, I'm not sure exactly how this works, but I'm willing to try." That willingness also results in some energy—just a simple, "I'm willing to at least run the experiment here. This is what the Buddha said to try, and I'm willing to try it." So that sense of confidence, whether it's in our own understanding, our own actual experience, or in the teachings themselves, can produce the energy to engage in this journey of meeting experience moment to moment. Being willing to meet our resistance, our frustration without reactivity. Being willing just to be here moment by moment.

So the sense of spiritual urgency is a source for energy. This wanting, this actual sense of wanting to do this, is a source of energy. Confidence is a source of energy. Investigation, interest, curiosity—this is another source of energy. When we're interested in what we're looking at, again, a kind of natural energy arises to make that investigation.

This investigation that I'm referring to—we haven't explicitly talked much about it, but it's a gentle meeting of experience. It's not a thinking about, it's not an analyzing. Often the term "investigation" produces an idea that it means figuring out, analyzing, understanding in an intellectual way. But what investigation is in this context is really just meeting the experience, coming in contact with experience, moment by moment.

One of my teachers, Sayadaw U Pandita, describes this quality of investigation. And I find for myself, when I actually come in contact with experience and start investigating it, that a natural curiosity begins to arise. It's like, "What is this? What is this experience?" An experience of anger arises. What is this? Meeting that experience in a gentle way.

U Pandita described this investigation not as a digging, not as a probing, but as a gentle rubbing—like polishing a bowl or a glass with a soft cloth. Just meeting, just gently contacting the experience, staying in contact, not digging, not trying to figure out. Just meeting experience in a very gentle way. And as we stay in contact with experience in that way, we start to see its texture. We start to see how it changes as we observe it. We start to understand how it comes into being, how it falls apart. Whether it's hindrances that we're observing or states of concentration, we start to understand the nature of our experience through this gentle investigation. And that leads to a kind of interest and curiosity: "Wow, what is the nature of this? How does this unfold?" So this gentle investigation and contact of experience is another place that energy results from.

Some of you may be familiar with some of these other lists that the Buddha referred to, and you may recognize that I've been talking about some of the qualities in them. In the Five Faculties, the Buddha talks about confidence leading to energy, which then leads to mindfulness, which then leads to concentration, which then leads to wisdom. Now it's not always a linear progression, but he did indicate this link between confidence and energy. And likewise with investigation, interest, and curiosity—in the list of the Seven Factors of Awakening, beginning with mindfulness, leading to the continuity of mindfulness, leading to investigation, and that followed by energy. So these sources of energy that I'm referring to come from the Buddha. He pointed us to these qualities of confidence and investigation as being places to draw from, to support our energy for the practice.

One other source—a teaching that really directs us towards energy—is the teaching on right effort. This is the effort that we make to cultivate and sustain wholesome qualities of mind, and to let go of, avoid, or refrain from unwholesome states of mind. Effort and energy, these two qualities, are often confused and conflated. They're often talked about interchangeably. But there is a difference between them. And one very clear pointing in the suttas to the difference between them, and the connection between them, is this: the Buddha says that energy—the spiritual quality of energy that functions for us on the path—is that mental quality that results from engaging in the practice of right effort.

So there's a very close link between energy and effort. We engage in right effort, and this produces energy.

I'd like to spend a little bit of time looking at this, and first of all, pointing to this interesting factor that making right effort leads to this beautiful quality of energy. We often think—and it is true to some extent—that we need to have energy in order to make effort. We all have some amount of energy. You're all in the room, sitting here awake. There is a certain level of energy in your system that's allowing you to even listen to the talk. That's what we need to begin with. That's the level of energy we need to begin engaging in this practice of right effort. And as we engage in right effort, it produces energy.

We think that making effort uses energy, but in this practice, making effort actually creates energy. This is a really helpful thing to recognize and know—that even if you just have a little bit of energy, just a little bit, all you need to do is make a little bit of effort. And that little bit of effort will create a little bit of energy.

So I'm going to talk briefly about right effort. I think most of you have probably heard a number of talks about right effort, so I'm just going to review and overview this. Right effort is very connected to the understanding of wisdom. It's connected to the understanding of what is skillful and what is unskillful with respect to the creation of suffering and the abandoning of suffering. What is skillful with respect to letting go of suffering? What is skillful with respect to understanding suffering? What is unskillful with respect to the creation of suffering? What should we avoid?

The simplest definition I know of what is skillful and unskillful is that the skillful states of mind are those that support our movement away from suffering. States like happiness, generosity, kindness, compassion, mindfulness, tranquility, equanimity—these are skillful states of mind. The practice of right effort is to cultivate those states, to encourage them when they've arisen.

Unwholesome qualities or states of mind are those that are basically based in greed, aversion, and delusion. States like anger, hostility, frustration, irritation, annoyance, rage, avarice, lust, wanting—these are the qualities of mind that lead us to dukkha, that lead us into suffering.

We get a very strong taste of that over and over again in our practice. We actually learn firsthand, physically in our bodies, that these states of mind are suffering. And this is not a mistake. It's not a problem. It's actually part of the training, part of the path, that we begin to understand firsthand that the state of wanting is suffering.

We typically fool ourselves or delude ourselves. At some level, this wanting feels like it feels good, and we feel like we're heading in the direction of constructing the world the way we want it to be. And yet when we really touch into that state of wanting, of wanting things to be other than they are in this moment, we see that it just doesn't feel right. And this is an insight. This is not a mistake. It's truth.

So we begin to understand the wisdom. We begin to gain the wisdom, the truth of understanding that these states lead us into suffering. They are not the kind of qualities that are helpful to cultivate if we want to live a life free of suffering. They're the kind of states that we should let go of, abandon, if we want to

live a life free of suffering. We begin to see this directly in our experience. We gain this wisdom, and then we can engage in this practice of right effort with the wisdom, the understanding that it's useful to let go of wanting. It's hard to let go of wanting when we don't see a good reason to let go of it.

So there are four kinds of right effort. There's the effort towards avoiding unwholesome states that are not present in the moment. There's the effort towards abandoning or letting go of unwholesome states that are present in the moment. There's the effort towards the arousal or encouragement of wholesome states that have not yet arisen, that are not present in the present moment. And there is the effort towards sustaining wholesome states that have arisen.

The first one—the effort towards avoiding unwholesome states that are not present in the present moment—is really about beginning to understand what are the causes and conditions that land us in suffering, and learning to avoid those states and those conditions.

Avoiding—we need to be careful to understand what this avoiding means. It can have a very subtle meaning.

For example, you might notice sometimes that when you're in the food line in the dining hall, comparison and judgment arise around other people—around how much food they're taking or how much food you're taking, how they're moving, how slowly or quickly they're moving. All kinds of judgments can arise when we're engaged with other people, particularly in the dining room.

At first glance, we might think, "Okay, I see that I get into this state of self-judgment or other-judgment or criticism when I'm in the food line. So perhaps I should avoid being in the food line when other people are there—I'll go down late. And that way, I won't have this criticism and judgment." That might be skillful, but it also might be motivated out of aversion to those states. We have to be really careful in engaging in this kind of effort towards avoiding conditions that lead us towards suffering, not to be avoiding out of aversion.

Another way to engage with this might simply be, in going into the food line, as you move in, knowing that it is a hot zone for you—a place where criticism tends to arise, where judgment tends to arise—see if you can add some interest to how this criticism comes into being. What is the nature of this criticism? Observe the whole process around the criticism arising, around the judgment arising. Or perhaps see if you can just be really mindful in the line, noting, noticing the seeing, noticing when the mind begins to leap off into judgment.

In the seeing of that process happening, we begin to understand the causes in a different way. It's not as simple as "standing in the food line is the cause of the criticism in the mind." There's a much more subtle cause in the moment, a more direct momentary cause—perhaps a belief, perhaps a self-view of how I should behave or others should behave. Beginning to see that is much more supportive of really beginning to dismantle and untangle our unwholesome states of mind than simply just not going down to the dining

hall until everybody is already through the line.

So be interested in understanding the situations that land you in suffering. When you begin to see situations that over and over again trigger suffering for you, see if you can get interested in that. The interest leads to energy. It leads to the ability to engage in our practice, engage in just that meeting of what is happening.

The second kind of right effort is the effort to let go of unwholesome states that have arisen. This means that we basically notice when we're caught up in an unwholesome state of mind—caught up in anger, caught up in frustration, caught up in wanting. And the wording of right effort says to let go of it. Now, this letting go can have an active quality to it, but I think more often it is about when we can meet that quality, just be with the wanting. The letting go is more about letting be, as has been said in someone's talk—I don't remember who mentioned that. Letting it be. Just meeting that experience of wanting, meeting that experience of anger, aversion, and letting it be.

With mindfulness, meeting the experience and letting it be, it has a tendency to let go of itself. So we don't have to do the letting go. The letting go happens. Because we are connected with the experience without reactivity, without judgment, without aversion. We just meet the experience. Let it be. All experience is impermanent. If we just let it be, it will naturally fall apart, as all things will do.

Letting it be. When we can meet it with mindfulness—this is a large part of our practice, much of what our practice is about. Meeting our experience and just being with it. Letting it be. When it's an unwholesome state of mind, it will tend to fall apart as we just meet it with mindfulness.

There are times, however, when some states of frustration, annoyance, irritation, anger—some of these difficult states of mind, some of these hindrances, fear—sometimes they can be stronger than our ability to be mindful of them. The power of that habit of mind has been practiced so much and is so powerful that it just swamps any attempt to bring mindfulness to it. When that happens, we can take some action to turn our attention away from that thing.

We don't have to just think that we have to meet everything with mindfulness. We need to have some discernment about whether mindfulness can actually meet the experience. Can mindfulness meet this? If you find yourself in trying to meet something difficult with mindfulness, if you find yourself just continually back, lost in the thoughts, swamped and overwhelmed and sucked back into the pain and the difficulty, then it's time to practice some skillful means.

Not with aversion, but with a kind of compassion, a recognition: this is not the time to pay attention to this. The mindfulness is being overwhelmed. As a compassion for yourself, you can say, "Not now. This is not the time." And simply turn the attention to something else in experience—perhaps hearing, perhaps steps on the ground, just something neutral in your experience that supports your ability to stay connected and mindful. This is a skillful means when we are overwhelmed.

The third kind of right effort is the effort to arouse wholesome states that are not present in the moment. In order to cultivate wholesome states that are not present, there are two ways we can approach this. We can abstain from situations that get in the way of these wholesome qualities, and we can actively cultivate or put ourselves in situations that lead to those wholesome qualities.

This first approach—avoiding situations that block or get in the way of these wholesome qualities—is really what the precepts are about. We engage in abstaining from actions that will tend to land us in suffering. Simultaneously, each one of those precepts is paired with a wholesome quality that is cultivated as you abstain from that action.

For instance, abstaining from killing is paired with compassion. As you abstain from swatting mosquitoes or killing any moths or scorpions you might find in your room, as you gently put them out into the woods, you are simultaneously cultivating compassion. As you abstain from taking what is not given, you're cultivating honesty and contentment. This engagement with the precepts is one way of engaging with right effort.

We can also try to cultivate these positive qualities through an active practice that would tend to arouse a quality. For example, we can engage in the practice of giving, which supports the cultivation of generosity. Daily in our 4:15 sitting, we're engaging in the practice of metta. We're cultivating that quality through a formal practice. This is right effort. And all day long we are engaging in practices that support the cultivation of mindfulness. As my teacher Sayadaw U Pandita says, mindfulness is the most wholesome mind state. Engaging in coming back, recognizing when you've been lost, remembering to bring attention—this is cultivating this wholesome quality. This is right effort.

The fourth kind of right effort is the effort to sustain wholesome states that have arisen. Surprisingly, at least in my experience, this sometimes does take effort. We wouldn't think of such a thing. It's like, well, if happiness has arisen, why would it be a problem to sustain that? But in my experience, at least the way my mind works—and you can look into your own mind to see how yours works—I find that sometimes when I come into these wholesome mind states of calm or peace or happiness, the first thing my mind does is acknowledge it. It recognizes it and says, "Oh, that's nice. That's nice that happiness is here, or that calm is here." And the next thing it does is say, "Now, because the mind is so calm, that's the perfect time to pay attention to the pain in my back." So I turn my attention away from the calm to put it someplace else.

What I've discovered for myself is that this movement was a kind of indication that there was a little bit of discomfort with being with some of these wholesome states. One of the ways to support sustaining the wholesome states is to simply be aware. Calm is present. Happiness is present. With happiness, I found the mind will quickly leap off into trying to figure out how I can stay happy. Then I'm immediately lost in planning, and I'm miserable because I can't figure out how to keep this happiness—as opposed to just being with the happiness. That was a revelation for me. Oh, it's just happiness. And happiness is fueling

this miserable planning.

Another wonderful way to sustain or cultivate these wholesome qualities is to actually recognize the qualities that are being cultivated as we practice. So often we are engaged in working with some difficult state of mind. We're trying to be with anger or wanting, something that feels difficult. We're trying to stay with that, focused on the experience of the anger, the feelings in the body. All of that is very helpful. And it's also helpful to recognize that at the same time you're being with that quality of feeling in the body, mindfulness is being cultivated. Interest is being cultivated. Energy is being cultivated. Confidence is being cultivated—confidence that we can engage.

Recognizing the qualities that are essentially being pulled along with the engagement in mindfulness practice supports their continuing. Often we miss that in our practice.

We're engaging in mindfulness, but we're not recognizing the quality of mindfulness itself. We're engaging with investigation, but we're not really noticing that interest and energy have arisen. Beautiful qualities of mind come along for the ride as we practice. Recognize them. Appreciate that this is happening.

Sometimes people ask about or wonder about the teaching on right effort, because the teaching on mindfulness is very much about being with what is. Can you just meet what is happening? And the teaching on right effort sounds like very much a doing—we're trying to encourage wholesome states and let go of unwholesome states. But the practice of mindfulness that we are doing actually includes the four right efforts.

As we engage in moment-to-moment mindfulness of our experience, for example, if we're cultivating mindfulness of being angry, if we're cultivating mindfulness of that experience of anger, this supports the letting go. It's that letting be—we're just meeting it with mindfulness. And it supports the letting go, the abandoning of that experience of anger. It helps to prevent reactivity. Being with that state of mind and body without reactivity helps to prevent the arising of reactivity to anger. So it's preventing the arising of an unwholesome mind state to just be with it. So often when we're working with these difficult states, or when we're not mindful of these difficult states, immediately reactivity comes in. Mindfulness helps to avoid that quality of reactivity—avoiding the arising of unwholesome states that are not yet present. And it supports the arousing and maintaining of beautiful states of mind as we engage in meeting that experience. It supports equanimity. It supports the quality of mindfulness, of concentration. It supports wisdom. It supports beginning to understand how the mind can let go.

So in a sense, when we look at right effort in this way, it's like four sides of a single process. Anytime we're engaging in our practice, all four of these things are really happening simultaneously.

Part of the challenge of making effort is to continue, to keep going. I'm going to read a quote from the Dalai Lama: "No matter what is going on, never give up. Develop the heart. Too much energy in your

country is spent developing the mind instead of the heart. Be compassionate, not just to your friends, but to everyone. Be compassionate. Work for peace in your heart and in the world. Work for peace. And again, I say, never give up. No matter what is going on around you, never give up."

This is what we have to do with our effort—never give up. Keep this gentle persistence of effort going.

As we engage in this gentle persistence of effort, it leads to energy. Part of my understanding of how this happens is that when we're engaging in wise effort, we find that we're letting go of clinging, letting go of reactivity, letting go of resistance to the way things are. As we engage in this practice, we align ourselves with truth instead of resisting truth. And resisting truth takes a lot of energy. So as we come into alignment, a lot of energy is freed up. Engaging in this practice of wise effort, not only does the very act of taking those steps of making effort create energy, it also frees up energy that's been bound into resistance to the way things are.

This balancing of energy, this balancing of effort, is the art of meditation. We're often on one side or the other of the energy equation. Too much energy often results in restlessness—we feel like jumping beans, there's just so much energy in the system, we can't sit still. Too little energy often results in sloth and torpor—sleepiness, dullness, difficulty bringing our attention. So we need to monitor our energy and see how we can bring it into balance.

One of the ways to balance energy is through our level of effort, because effort and energy are so closely connected. There's a beautiful exchange from the suttas that illustrates this. A deva asks the Buddha, "How did you, dear sir, cross the flood?"—meaning the flood of defilements, the flood of samsara, the flood of suffering. "How did you cross the flood?"

The Buddha replied, "Without tarrying, friend, and without hurrying, did I cross the flood."

"But how did you, without tarrying, without hurrying, cross the flood?"

The Buddha replied, "When I tarried, friend, I sank. When I hurried, I was swept away. That is how, without tarrying, without hurrying, I crossed the flood."

To me, this points to how we have to simply meet each moment as it arises. Don't sink into a stupor around it and don't try to rush past it. Moment by moment—what is happening, without tarrying, without hurrying? At times in my practice, just saying that to myself was so helpful. Without tarrying, without hurrying. That is the kind of way we apply our effort.

It's not hard to be mindful. In an instant, mindfulness is here. How hard is it for you to know the pressure of your body on your chair or cushion or bench? How hard is it for you to feel and know the sensations of your hands? How hard is it for you to know that you're hearing the sound of my voice? It's not hard. For most of us, just hearing those things points us to them almost automatically. Oh yes, there are the sensations of my body. There's the sound of the voice. There's the feeling of the hands. It's not hard for a

moment to be mindful.

What's hard to do is sustain it over time. And this trying to sustain our mindfulness over time is often where we over-effort, we over-exert, we exhaust ourselves trying to be present. We come into the hall, sit down, and try to muster up the energy at the beginning of the sitting to be present for the whole sitting. And that is exhausting.

So the level of effort that's most helpful is to not think about trying to sustain mindfulness over a long period of time, but rather to only make the effort needed to stay present for a short period of time—a second, half a second. As Joseph says, half a breath. The secret teaching of the art of meditation is to just make enough effort to stay present for half a breath. And then at the end of that half a breath, do it again. Make enough effort to stay present for the out-breath. And then at the end of that out-breath, enough effort to stay present for the in-breath.

Moment by moment, reminding yourself just to come back, rather than trying to force the mind to be present. Gently reminding it—oh yes, come back, come back, come back. In this way, we can pull ourselves along with this light touch of effort, rather than a forceful, heavy pushing into trying to be present. It can be very light, very gentle. And that kind of effort is much more sustainable.

One of my teachers talks about lifting weights. He says it's kind of like going to a gym with a goal of lifting fifty-pound weights. If we start by trying to lift fifty-pound weights, we're going to injure ourselves. So instead, let's start with one-pound weights. And then when we can do that with ease, move to two-pound weights, then increase slowly over time. Gradually we can get to lifting heavier weights. It's kind of like that with the effort we make—we don't start by trying to be present for a long period of time. The mind isn't quite capable of that. So we stay present for a few moments, and then remind ourselves to be present for the next few moments, and the next few moments, and the next few moments.

The art of meditation is learning how frequently to remind yourself to be mindful. That's the effort we make—reminding ourselves to be mindful, over and over and over again.

At the beginning of a sitting, at the beginning of a retreat, we need to remind ourselves frequently. And it's not a heavy thing. This is just really light. Oh, the breath, the sound. It's reminding yourself frequently. Over time, the energy begins to develop, and it sustains us. It lasts for longer periods of time. So we can begin to tune our level of reminding to the energy that is available. It doesn't make a lot of sense if the mind is pretty continuous and steady already to be reminding yourself every second—that's getting in the way. But you need to kind of have a sense of how much effort to make. And this is really the art of meditation. This changes hour to hour, day to day, even minute to minute—the level of effort that we need to make changes.

Sometimes when I find myself over-efforting—and I think this is a very common phenomenon, particularly with people in our culture—we tend to really want to do it right. We want to be present. We

want to get our mindfulness going. We have this very strong efforting culture. So when I begin to notice that there's a little bit of that efforting and striving going on, or sometimes even a lot of that efforting and striving going on, one game I play with myself is to ask: How little effort do I need to make to be mindful? Kind of backing off on the effort and seeing—if I don't try so hard, is the mind still here? Just letting go, backing off, backing off. And quite often I find that I actually need to make much less effort than I thought I needed to make.

Sometimes we need to make strong effort, which doesn't mean bearing down and forcing. Rather, it means really just continuously being with the breath, noticing the breath, dedicating yourself: Can I be mindful for the out-breath? Can I be mindful for the in-breath? You can do this in walking as well. If you find your mind is getting scattered in the walking, pick a place on the path, one or two steps out. Can I be mindful until I reach that point? And then do it again. Can I be mindful until I reach the next point, two steps away? In this way we can really pull ourselves along. And the effort begins to balance, the energy begins to balance, as we tune our effort to the level of mindfulness and energy that are present.

I'd like to close with a couple of quotes. One from the Dhammapada, just a brief injunction: "It is up to you to make strong effort. The Tathagatas simply point the way." So it's up to us. We are the ones that have to engage in the practice. Nobody can do it for us. We need to engage.

This last quote is by Piyadasi Thera: "We must, by our own resolute efforts, rise and make our way to the portals of liberty, and it is always, in every moment, in our power to do so. Neither are those portals locked, nor the key in possession of someone else from whom it must be obtained by prayer or entreaty. That door is free of all bolts and bars, save those we ourselves have made."

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