

POCKET PARAMIS

Virtue



Commit to coexist with other sentient beings—even the spiders on the ceiling or mice in your garage. Would you want to be squashed or caught in a trap?

Ethical conduct means keeping our physical and verbal behavior in check. If the language of restraint seems harsh, consider Insight Meditation teacher Leslie Booker’s reminder that we practice the precepts to support, care, and protect ourselves as well as others.

Sila brings lightness and ease to meditation. [The] last things we need in meditation are sticky burrs like regret and guilt, yet we invite them into the mind through misconduct.” —*Roshi Bodhin Kjolhede*

Take a mental inventory when the day is done, suggests Joseph Goldstein. Recall when you did anything harmful, when you helped, and when you nearly caused harm but stopped yourself.



If you need a little “shamespiration,” heed this scathing indictment from the late Burmese Vipassana teacher Venerable Sayadaw U Pandita: “Quite frankly, people who lack basic morality are disgusting! No matter how expensive their jewelry or clothing may be, they’re unattractive and offensive. It’s as if they smell bad. In contrast, sila is like a fragrance or an ornament. We have a saying, ‘Sila makes the wearer beautiful.’”



It’s not all about the here and now: ethical conduct benefits the present life and future generations. U Pandita called sila “one of the most important tasks a human being can undertake,” not only for Buddhists but for the whole world.

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