



WELCOME TO THE FBT COURSE!

We hope you'll find the information here a helpful introduction to the FBT Course.

YOUR USER NAME & LOGIN DETAILS

- When you paid, you should have been issued with a user name, allowing you to sign into the FBT website and create a user account. Your User Name is based on the first name you gave in your application. The programming won't let this be changed, but no one else will see it anyway except us. You will need to choose a "nickname" which will be your "display name" – it will be clearer once you see it. This will be the name that your fellow students will see and respond to. We'd like you to use the name you regularly go by as a display name please.
- If you wish to upload a personal image, or 'avatar' please follow the instructions in our "[Frequently Asked Technical Questions](#)" page. (Found at the bottom of our FAQ's page.)

YOUR LEARNING AREA

- You can access the course from the home page link "My FBT" in the header and footer, and from the drop down Menu. Go into 'My Learner Dashboard'.
- Under 'My Courses,' click through the Four Noble Truths link to gain access to the course material.
- One note of warning! When you come to Week 2, make sure not to be drawn into the Sample Week 2. It seems we cannot make this disappear from your 'My FBT' dashboard, but there is no need for you to enter the sample week. Always access your Course through the 'Four Noble Truths' link.
- Your email will have told you what Tutor Group you are in. Your Tutor Groups are the same as your Forum Groups. Your Tutor Group name will be the same for your whole two years.
- When you want to visit your group's Forum, you can either reach it through the Forum section of your learner area or you can access it under 'My Courses.' Although you will see other Tutor Group's Forums, you will only be able to enter the one to which you have been assigned.

RECOMMENDED READING

- *The Four Noble Truths* by His Holiness the Dalai Lama
- *What the Buddha Taught* by Walpola Rahula
- *The Four Noble Truths* by Venerable Lobang Gyatso
- *Ancient Wisdom, Modern World* by His Holiness the Dalai Lama

INSIDE THE COURSE

- Your first few days on the course will be spent in the Welcome and Orientation section. Please use this opportunity to find your way around your learner area, and watch the video. You should also visit the forum to say hello and share a little something about yourself with your fellow students.
- You might find it helpful to make a habit of checking the week's summary at the beginning of each week. This will give you a snapshot of the workload for the week, as well as any extra materials that lie outside the actual course materials.
- At the end of each week, in addition to 'marking complete' each assignment, the whole week will need to be marked complete before you will be allowed to move forward. This is an eccentricity of the system we are using, and we don't seem to have a way to change it.

USING THE FORUM

When using the Forum, please use the threads provided, rather than starting your own thread. For the first topic, this means clicking on [Four Noble Truths: Welcome and Introduce Yourself](#). Please do not create a new topic in the Forums. In addition, we ask that you refrain from inserting links into your posts. Both these requests are mainly to keep the focus on topic within the Forum threads, and to keep the discussion concentrated on one's own experience.

Much of this may go without saying, but when contributing to the Forum, please do try:

- to maintain confidentiality around things shared in the forum and help us to build a safe space
- to stick as much as possible to the forum topic
- to be kind, thoughtful, open-minded and tolerant
- to be honest, brave, and discerning, you don't have to agree with everyone else, and your point of view is valued
- to be mindful of what you are writing and how it might be interpreted
- to edit yourself to make your thoughts more readable
- to be a student rather than a teacher, guide or lecturer in your field
- to resist trying to convert others to your point of view
- to be as succinct and relevant as possible
- to strike a balance between intellectual analysis and experiential understanding
- to help encourage discussions rather than Q&A sessions
- to be aware that many will have English as a second language, so please avoid colloquialisms and academic jargon
- and please do join in! Everyone's voice is valuable, nurtures community, and helps us all to learn. Even if your ideas are unformed, they may grow as the discussion continues.

DISCUSSION GROUP GUIDELINES

We will have discussion groups a couple times each module. We will coordinate finding a time that is best for the majority of people by using a Doodle Poll, which is an easy to use online service. Generally speaking, please follow the forum guidelines for these discussions too. In addition:

- Please maintain confidentiality around things shared in the forum and help us to build a safe space
- Discussions groups are nearly always challenging for all concerned, so be gentle with yourself and others and please do join in with these even though you don't feel like it – you won't be alone!
- It is good to cultivate the overriding intention to be aware of speaking and listening
- Geshe Tashi often asks those of us who have the tendency to dominate a group to be mindful of stepping back and letting others contribute; and those of us who have the tendency to stay quiet to be mindful of the importance and benefits of joining in.

COURSE WEEKS

Course weeks run Friday to Friday, apart from the first week which begins Monday. We release the following week's material on Thursday at midnight GMT. Because the week ends on Friday, we as tutors will try to make our final comments on that week's Forum by the end of the day the following Monday. You can still make comments after that, but we may well miss them.

STILL HAVE QUESTIONS?

We will no doubt have missed things you'd like to know. Please try your query on our [FAQ's page](#) first, or our [Technical FAQ's](#) for technical issues. This is where we've put the solutions to common issues people encounter when first starting out on the Course. If the answer is not there, please get in touch with us at admin@foundationsofbuddhistthought.org and let us know what we can do to help. We will add your questions to the Welcome Pack and the website FAQ's as we go along.