Chapter 4 Dealing with Laxity and Excitement (Action Eyes)

Training Card Skills Training
How to build abilities

- D) Targeted training for not 'forgetting the instructions'
  - Cue phrase to prevent forgetting instructions (gatekeeper + spy)
  - Mindfulness at the gate → introspection appears
  - Off-cushion drills + chapter add-ons
  - 1) Micro-check cadence (build the habit)
    - Light check 'again and again' without leaving the object (quality-control ping)
    - Goal: faults detected early, even subtle signs before they grow
  - 2) Session sizing (skill first, duration later)
    - Shorter sessions while antidote-application is weak; lengthen as facility increases
  - 3) Subtle laxity warning (the quiet saboteur)
    - 'Relaxed' can hide subtle laxity; insist on brightness + stability together
  - 4) Intention drill (so you don't freeze when you notice a fault)
    - Rehearse 'Correct now' before sitting (like a fire drill)
- E) Chapter 4 add-ons (what the text adds to the protocols)
  - 1) The chapter's two questions (why it can feel repetitive)
    - What to do when laxity/ excitement occur
    - What to do when they are absent (don't over-apply)
  - 2) Definitions that matter in practice
    - Excitement: an unquiet state, a derivative of attachment, pursuing pleasant objects; it interrupts abiding
    - Pleasant-object bias: 'pleasant' is imputed by mind (not inherently pleasant)
    - Distraction/scattering: straying under influences other than attachment (near cousin of excitement)
  - 3) Gatekeeper & thief motif (why recognition comes first)
    - If you can't recognise the thief (fault), you can't prevent entry
    - So: train recognition of subtle laxity and subtle excitement
  - 4) The key causal claim (your diagnosis)
    - Mindfulness is the main cause for introspection to arise and function
    - So 'forgetting instructions' is not minor—it disables the whole system
  - 5) Immediate correction principle
    - Don't ignore slight faults; habituation makes mastery difficult
  - 6) Antidote specificity (example given: laxity)
    - Laxity often begins with over-withdrawal; remedy is brief outward energising via faith-joy, then return
    - Avoid sorrow-heavy energisers when sinking
- F) Śamatha–vipaśyanā bridge (kept light in Ch 4 but essential)
  - 1) Introspection as proto-wisdom
    - It knows the mind's quality while attention stays on the object (quality-control as 'wisdom')
  - 2) Excitement's fuel meets emptiness-of-self
    - Excitement rides on attachment + a tacit 'me who needs pleasant objects'
    - Śamatha trains non-obedience to the pull; vipaśyanā later cuts its root via self-emptiness analysis
  - 3) Mini analytic 'wake-up' bursts (allowed as remedy for laxity)
    - Short, precise reasoning can energise (then return to placement)
    - Keep analysis as a tool, not a detour (avoid turning the session into discursive thought)
- G) Diagnostics + pitfalls + pocket reminder
  - Diagnostics
    - If it feels calm but progress stalls, suspect subtle laxity (clarity down, grip slack)
    - If you can't tell what happened in the sit, introspection is weak —strengthen mindfulness first
  - Pitfalls
    - ⚠ 'Just relax' → subtle laxity persists; years can pass without true śamatha
    - ⚠ Ignoring slight faults → habituation and slow progress
    - ⚠ Over-fixing → agitation/tightness; equanimity is an antidote too
  - Pocket reminder
    - Hold (mindfulness). Spy (introspection). Switch (intention). Fix minimally. Return. If clear—stop fixing (equanimity).

Key hidden danger

Key hidden danger

Pre-flight check

Prevents over-tightening

Training Card Session Protocol
What to do in the sit

- Cushion Card
  Hold → Check → Name → Apply → Return → Release
  - **Hold**— Mindfulness: keep the object continuously present (no drifting)
  - **Check** — Introspection: quality-control 'spy' (detect laxity/excitement early)
  - **Name** — One word: 'laxity' or 'excitement' (no analysis)
  - **Apply**— Intention/application: decide immediately to correct
  - **Return** — Back to the original object with tempered strength
  - **Release** — Equanimity: if balanced, stop fixing (don't over-apply)
  - Antidotes (minimum effective dose)
    - If **Laxity** (dull/sinking/unclear)
      - Slight: strengthen attention on the SAME object (do not switch objects)
      - Gross/repeated: briefly energise with 'faith-joy' objects (light / Buddha / teacher / sunlight), then return with tightened concentration
      - Do NOT use sorrow-heavy themes (death/impermanence/ saṃsāra suffering) as energiser when sinking
    - If **Excitement** (restless outward pull / chasing pleasant objects)
      - Restore the middle: neither too tight nor too loose (tempered strength)
      - Re-establish stable placement: reduce outward leaning; return to object cleanly
- A) Operating System
  Five faults and their antidotes
  - Fault: Laziness (not wanting to start or continue) → Antidotes:
    - faith (confidence in the value/ benefit of concentration)
    - aspiration (wanting to practice)
    - effort (actually applying energy)
    - pliancy (the ease that grows from practice and then sustains it)
  - Fault: Forgetting instructions/object → Antidote: Mindfulness (continuous holding)
  - Fault: Laxity & excitement → Antidote: Introspection (detect early & subtle)
  - Fault: Not applying antidotes (seeing fault but not fixing) → Antidote: Intention/application (the switch)
  - Fault: Over-application (fixing when fine) → Antidote: Equanimity (stop fixing)
  - Action eyes: Meditation = feedback loop (detect → correct → return → stop correcting when balanced)
- start energy/intention
- B) Pre-session (60–90 sec) — prevent'forgetting' before it starts
  - 1) Name the object: 'My object is ___'
  - 2) Name the job: Hold (mindfulness) + Check (introspection)
  - 3) Pre-load the two corrections (so you don't have to 'remember' later)
    - If sinking → brighten/energise (faith-joy objects)
    - If restless → settle and re-place on object with tempered strength
  - 4) One clean resolve: 'If detected, I correct immediately' (intention/application primed)
- C) In-session: the six-step antidote protocol (use exactly this order)
  - Step 1 — **Hold** (Mindfulness)
    - Keep the object continuously present; hold it without drifting
    - Don't substitute 'remembering what to do' for actually holding the object
  - Step 2 — **Check** (Introspection)
    - Repeatedly 'ping' the quality: clarity? grip? outward pull? sinking?
    - Train toward early detection: catch faults as they arise / on the verge of arising
  - Step 3 — **Name** (micro-diagnosis)
    - **Laxity:** sinking, dimness, heaviness, slack grip, fog
    - **Excitement:** outward pull, chasing pleasant objects, restlessness, scattering
    - Keep it simple: label + respond (no debating)
  - Step 4 — **Apply** (Intention/ application = the switch)
    - Generate the crisp decision: Correct now (no delay, no bargaining)
    - This is the antidote to 'not applying antidotes'
  - Step 5 — **Remedy** (smallest effective correction)
    - A) Laxity remedies (graded)
      - (1) Slight laxity: strengthen attention on the SAME object (no object-switch)
      - (2) Gross/repeated laxity: briefly energise with faith-joy objects (light/Buddha/teacher/sunlight), then return to original object with tightened freshness
      - Hard rule: do NOT use sorrow-heavy themes as energiser when sinking
      - Optional 'wake-up burst': very brief analytic reflection (including emptiness-style reasoning) ONLY to activate the mind, then return to placement
    - B) Excitement remedies (calibration)
      - Recognise its fuel: attachment pulling toward pleasant objects
      - Restore 'middle effort': not too tight (agitation), not too loose (laxity)
      - Return cleanly to object; reduce outward leaning; re-establish stable placement
      - Keep spirits bright (discouragement becomes another disturbance)
  - Step 6 — **Release** (Equanimity)
    - If balanced: stop fixing; continue holding the object steadily
    - Over-application becomes its own obstacle (tightening a tightened string)