

UNITED WISDOM

The ethics of practice: inward experience and conduct

Meaning and Direction

Andrey Zarinsh & Maria Evilkut

P20 · EN

@andrey.zarinsh @ilkutki

The ethics of practice: inward experience and conduct

Epigraph

“be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only.”

— James1:22, first clause after introductory But, King James Version; source comma replaced by editorial closing period.

What this article is about

A strong inward experience can be an important event in a person's life. Its significance nevertheless does not answer every question about conduct. Deep quiet may be followed by a mistake in conversation; an ordinary day by keeping a promise accurately. This essay distinguishes experience, interpretation, intention and a particular action without assigning spiritual ranks. An invented scene involving an erroneous entry in a shared list shows where an inward account ceases to explain an action sufficiently. Aristotle, James's Epistle and the instruction to Rāhula in MN61 retain different philosophical and religious grounds. Their limited comparison establishes neither a common maturity scale nor any practice's efficacy. The question is how to discuss a known action while retaining an experience's personal significance and another person's choice not to share its interpretation. The voluntary final exercise requires no confession or final verdict about oneself.

I. Quiet and an entry in a list

Imagine Natalia, an invented adult reader. After quiet reading she chose herself, she had a strong feeling of clarity and closeness to people. The following day she helps prepare a small meeting and enters in a shared list that an acquaintance agreed to bring books. The acquaintance clarifies that she only promised to check whether she could attend. Natalia initially replies that she now understands the wider connection of things and does not want to become stuck in small distinctions. This is invented: the experience describes no established practice, studied effect or health condition. A known entry and another person's clarification are sufficient for examination. Personal clarity and agreement to bring books have become different subjects.

The clarification denies no experience Natalia had. It reports that a particular agreement was absent. Mixing the questions makes correcting a list appear to require rejection of an important inward event. Yet the acquaintance need not judge that event to describe her promise

precisely, and Natalia need not reject her experience to alter an inaccurate entry. An ordinary action becomes possible: check what was actually said without assigning additional participation to someone else. Personal meaning remains significant, but establishes no fact of another's assent and removes no known entry from examination. A correction can therefore have a modest subject without becoming a contest about which person understands life more deeply.

Nor must Natalia's sincerity about closeness immediately be settled. Even sincerity does not make every subsequent entry accurate. An error alone does not establish that the event was pretence. We distinguish questions to avoid deriving an excessive conclusion from a small fact. Investigating an experience, if wanted, is a separate undertaking; clarifying another person's participation already has a known subject. The invented scene permits correction without a complete explanation of motives. This clarity promises no moral transformation. It simply allows a philosophical conversation to address its own subject while an ordinary clarification handles the entry, without demanding that either provide a complete account of the person.

II. Experience, interpretation and conclusion

Someone may name an event: quiet, clarity or an unusual sense of closeness to the surroundings. They may then interpret it as a sign of religious meaning or personal change, and finally conclude something about future conduct. These are three different acts of description. One reports an experience, another connects it with grounds, and the third asserts something still requiring examination. This essay determines neither every interpretation's truth nor its personal significance. It asks which connection is claimed and whether it sufficiently supports a particular conclusion about an action, promise or relation to another person. The distinction keeps the scope of a claim visible without dismissing the event itself.

For Natalia, the claimed connection between closeness and understanding her acquaintance precisely matters. She may consider herself more attentive, but that claim does not answer whether books were promised. A particular message is available to check. Meaning considered elsewhere cannot quietly replace that message. Another person may hear an account of experience without agreeing with its explanation. Assent to an interpretation does not become the price of clarifying one's own words. The distinction permits conversation without requiring one inward account to become everyone's shared reality. It also lets the account's author speak about meaning while accepting that the other person addresses a different, narrower claim.

The reverse general law cannot be inferred either: every strong feeling makes someone less accurate. The invented scene supplies no such knowledge. An error could arise on an ordinary day; establishing its cause would require another inquiry. This essay replaces none of that

inquiry with a moral label. It considers the sufficiency of a conclusion rather than an experience's effects on a brain or character. That limit guards against either certifying goodness through an inward event or treating the event as inherently suspect. A known action can be discussed independently of how unusual its author considers the experience, without a causal story being supplied simply to make the discussion complete.

III. Aristotle: an action and how it is performed

In Nicomachean Ethics II.4, Aristotle distinguishes an action of a particular kind from performing it virtuously. The selected Ross translation includes knowledge, choosing an action for its own sake and firmness of character. This is a philosophical account of virtue, not a contemporary spiritual-maturity test. For our topic, a single outward feature or item of knowledge cannot support an overall verdict on someone. These conditions nevertheless become no method of entering another's motives. One corrected list cannot certify Natalia's entire character. It permits precise discussion of a known action without giving that action a wider evidential scope than it has. Aristotle's account retains its own ethical framework.

This does not make particular actions insignificant. Correcting the entry changes an important fact: unwanted participation is no longer assigned to someone else. The correction need not be diminished because it proves no complete virtue. Between an empty gesture and a final certificate of personality lies the real scale of a particular action. Natalia can recognise the error, change the list and take the clarification into a later conversation. Whether attention becomes firm is unknown in advance. One experience guarantees none of it, yet the possibility of a chosen action need not be denied because a completed narrative of moral development is absent. A limited change can matter on its own terms.

Aristotle has his own connection between learning, actions and virtue. Our application is limited to evidence rather than transplantation of all his requirements to every reader. A contemporary person need not accept the whole ancient account to understand the distinction. Understanding nevertheless does not already constitute acquiring a quality. This essay may clarify a question; further action remains the person's action within particular circumstances. No promise makes reading the section an automatic change of habit. Such a limit lets a philosophical text be taken seriously without becoming a label for ranking acquaintances by inward purity. The source provides a considered distinction rather than a universal assessment instrument. For example, knowing the precise wording in a message does not require knowing every motive. Natalia can check it and identify where she added an expectation. Her acquaintance can confirm the corrected subject without confirming the entire account of inward change. These limited actions replace no longer inquiry into character; they simply need not await its completion before the entry is amended.

IV. James: hearing and doing within faith

In James1:22–27, hearing the word is considered alongside doing; the selected scope also concerns speech and aid to those in need. We read KJV and retain Christian address to God rather than turn the text into neutral productivity teaching. It is an interlocutor for the distinction between understanding and action. This essay uses the passage as no universal examination of another person's faith and derives no endless duty to help everyone regardless of actual capacity. The religious requirement belongs to its source; the contemporary scene considers a narrower known message and action. The subjects are not declared identical simply because a limited comparison between them is possible.

Natalia may say that her experience helped her feel attentive to people. That belongs in her personal account. When the acquaintance asks not to be assigned a promise, however, attention gains a particular subject. A large feeling's sincerity need not be proved where a small inaccuracy can be acknowledged. Acknowledgement also requires no public disclosure of all inward content. What was heard, added in interpretation and entered in the list can be separated. The source concerning hearing and doing helps pose that question, but gives this essay's author no authority to judge whether Natalia's religion is true or false. A source comparison retains less scope than such a verdict would require.

Hearing and doing cannot be reduced to a demand constantly to prove personal worth through action. Natalia has limits to participation; her acquaintance may decline to bring books. Correcting the list creates no new unlimited duty for either. If Natalia no longer wants to help prepare the meeting, that change can be named separately. Ending participation differs from completing a promise. The ethical question concerns a known subject rather than a competition in self-giving. A religious text's seriousness can remain without its language becoming pressure upon someone who did not choose that requirement's scope. Limited participation does not itself settle the truth of a conviction or the value of an experience.

V. Rāhula: before, during and afterwards

In MN61, the instruction to Rāhula uses a mirror and repeated examination of actions. In the identified English version by Ṭhānissaro Bhikkhu, an action is considered before, during and afterwards in relation to possible affliction of oneself and others. The whole displayed main discourse was actually read; this essay uses a limited scope concerning bodily and verbal actions. The teaching retains Buddhist religious context, including disclosure to a teacher or companion in the holy life. Here it becomes no compulsory confession to an acquaintance. Comparison shows that an action can still be examined after a powerful inward event, without that event being treated as a final answer to every ethical question.

For Natalia, the question has an available scale. Before entering the list, she could check what assent was known; during preparation, notice a mismatch; after clarification, change the entry. These contemporary actions constitute no complete Buddhist practice and certify no spiritual attainment. They are an editorial application of a distinction between times and subjects. They also assume no advance knowledge of every consequence. Unknown consequences remain unknown, while a clarification already received is available. Ordinary care requires no omniscience. Yet incomplete knowledge cannot justify disregarding a particular message now received. The comparison therefore retains a limited present subject rather than a promise to foresee an entire future.

Intention and consequence also need distinction. Natalia might have wanted to ease preparation, while her acquaintance received an expectation she had not chosen. A good intention makes no expectation agreed. Conversely, an unwanted outcome supplies no knowledge of every motive or an entire personality. Where consequences are disputed, facts and the dispute's subject can be clarified. This essay establishes no single measure of goodness for all traditions. It considers continuing attention to an action when its initial explanation proves insufficient. At this scale, correcting what is available requires neither complete self-denigration nor defence of every action in the name of inward experience. The particular issue can remain particular.

VI. Another person need not confirm our experience

Someone affected by an action need not become a witness to spiritual attainment. The acquaintance can say she did not agree to bring books without deciding what occurred during Natalia's reading. Requiring acknowledgement that the experience was deep changes the conversation's subject: clarification becomes conditional on participating in Natalia's interpretation. That condition does not follow from the known promise. This essay forbids no account of meaningful experience. It distinguishes an account, a request to be understood, and discussion of a fact concerning someone else. Each subject may call for its own conversation, and none creates automatic assent to the others. The acquaintance can therefore answer the relevant factual claim directly.

Personal significance can be reported while a correction is accepted. Natalia can describe the experience as important; her acquaintance can decline its explanation. If preparation continues, agreed participation is enough to clarify. Shared worldview becomes no requirement for an accurate entry. The meeting may concern no spiritual text at all; an inward event does not automatically expand every later conversation's subject. Another person retains an ordinary answer. This boundary devalues no experience. It gives the experience its own place, where it need not certify facts for everyone in the situation or be accepted before others can describe what they did and did not agree to do.

A conversation's availability has limits too. Natalia may keep the event private if her acquaintance does not want to discuss it. She need not accept every interpretation of her motives either. Mutual room for disagreement does not cancel a known message. An explanation of motives can be rejected while one's own entry is corrected. The essay guarantees no acceptance of that reply. It helps avoid requiring one conversation simultaneously to understand deep meaning, assent to faith, and resolve an organisational detail. A specific boundary permits a smaller but honest result without an overall personality judgement or a claim that every inward question has been settled.

VII. Correction and an image of oneself

After an important experience, someone may want a whole life to confirm a change. In this scene that is a possible editorial question, not an established cause of conduct. Natalia might notice that the entry threatens an attractive account of attentiveness. If she wants to consider that, account and action can be separated. A correction does not falsify the event; retaining the account does not make an error accurate. The subjects can coexist without an overall justification. An entire self-conception need not first be rebuilt before an unoffered agreement is removed from the list. A small available correction need not await a completed philosophical or spiritual explanation.

Nor must the error become a final exposure of fraud. Natalia has made a particular mistaken inference, not supplied proof that all understanding is absent. Correcting the entry matters as an action in its own right. A further question about attention may remain without a deadline for becoming another person. This essay proposes no count of errors before and afterwards as an overall measure of spiritual growth; such inquiry would need another subject and evidence. The present conversation concerns this promise, list and possible amendment. Ethical seriousness can be precise rather than expressed through an overall verdict. Acknowledging a fact need not settle every question about someone's development.

Responsibility has a scale here too. Acknowledging an inaccuracy does not mean accepting every assessment or endlessly proving remorse. Natalia can correct an available action and state what changed. Her acquaintance need not immediately trust every later promise or accept an account of transformation. Natalia likewise need not seek a final certificate of goodness through unlimited concessions. Further agreements require conditions of their own. A correction therefore neither completes ethics nor creates a general duty to hand another person control of one's life. It concerns the known action at an intelligible scale. Necessary practical boundaries remain relevant even where an error is genuinely acknowledged.

VIII. Repetition is not a certificate

A practice may be repeated for years without duration answering every conduct question. Natalia might read regularly or for the first time; the known promise remains unchanged. This essay denies no significance to discipline within a particular tradition, with content and requirements of its own. A practice's name, time spent and an impression's strength nevertheless cannot silently become one proof of moral correctness everywhere. Discussing an action requires knowing its subject. A question about the practice itself needs separate inquiry rather than replacing consideration of content with impressive outward features. Different evidence belongs to different claims, even when the claims occur within one personal story.

Conversely, lacking vivid experience does not establish poorer treatment of others. The acquaintance might practise no spiritual reading; her clarification retains a subject independently of that. She need not be assigned insufficient depth to protect Natalia's inward account, or declared morally perfect for one accurate reply. A particular action retains limited scope. This caution does not make every action equal in value. It requires a particular assessment to have particular grounds rather than an overall hierarchy based on unusual experiences reported or names assigned to activities. The absence of an experience narrative supplies neither superiority nor inferiority in the present factual disagreement.

Understanding a practice's relation to conduct, if wanted, needs more than this essay's account. Content, conditions and evidence proportionate to the claim require clarification. The invented scene replaces no efficacy study and sets no method for observing people. At a personal scale, a question can remain about decisions chosen and information considered. Its answer need not appear immediately. A particular amendment is possible without a general theory of change. Practice then ceases to function as a certificate presented in place of conversation. It can remain a chosen activity with meaning of its own and consequences not established here, rather than being required to answer every later ethical objection.

IX. Ethical conversation without spiritual rank

Clarifying an action may sound like assessing an entire person, especially where inward experience is discussed. The scene permits a narrower subject to be named in advance: who promised what, and what the list says. That guarantees no calm exchange but clarifies the claim being examined. Reference to a source needs precision too. Aristotle, James and MN61 give no common authority to call someone unspiritual for disagreeing. Their own ethical and religious requirements remain distinct. The contemporary editorial scene turns none of them into an instrument assigning personal ranks to meeting participants. A relevant source can clarify an issue without authorising a verdict beyond the comparison's scope.

Interlocutors may correct an organisational fact without reaching one explanation of experience. Natalia may retain a religious interpretation and her acquaintance another position. An accurate entry requires no shared answer about consciousness or every tradition's truth. Setting aside an excessive question may make an available action possible. This demands no permanent avoidance of difficult subjects. If both want, a separate conversation can be chosen with conditions of its own. Distinguishing scales retains freedom of inquiry while keeping ordinary coordination independent of a final resolution of life's deepest questions. An incomplete metaphysical agreement need not prevent a complete correction of the particular entry.

If no further conversation is chosen, the known result can be enough. A list is corrected or participation clarified; experience questions remain personal or open. A small result need not be called superficial, but it cannot certify complete ethical agreement either. Precision means allowing each conclusion its own subject. Moral responsibility is not concealed behind an inward explanation, and inward experience does not become hostage to a demand immediately to prove its entire worth to others. Those two boundaries permit serious discussion of an action without a compulsory spiritual tribunal. An ordinary outcome can retain significance without having to represent a completed shared worldview.

X. Meaningful experience and an available action

Natalia can retain an experience's significance while recognising an inaccurate entry. The claims conflict only if an unsupported promise of complete infallibility is added. An available correction requires no denial of clarity and confirms no religious explanation. It has its own subject. If Natalia wants to remain attentive to people, particular messages can be considered; declining further preparation is a different decision. No action needs to be chosen to prove an overall spiritual level. Precision of scale leaves room for responsibility, limits to participation and unfinished understanding of experience. The question becomes what can be honestly understood and done now, rather than what will certify an entire life.

The selected texts remain different grounds for conversation. Aristotle explains virtuous action, James addresses doing the word within faith, and MN61 retains Buddhist instruction about examining actions. This essay compares a limited question rather than reducing the texts to one teaching about inward states. The contemporary scene and voluntary exercise belong to editorial reasoning. They cannot be named a verified common method of the traditions. Further understanding needs each source's context and is not replaced by similar words. Retaining the difference makes comparison substantial: a related question and non-identical grounds for answering it can both become visible, without either source being made to certify the others.

The experience's strength is declared neither an advantage nor a deficiency here. Its meaning can be investigated in a chosen domain without replacing every known fact. Conduct can be discussed through a particular subject while inward life may remain private. No deadline demands that everything join into a completed account. Yet one available action can already be precise: assign no unoffered assent, correct a message, choose participation or refusal at an understood scale. The ethics of practice then concerns present action and its grounds, rather than competition in vivid experience or issuance of final certificates to people. Meaning may remain important without becoming the sole answer to every question.

What this means in practice

If you wish, choose one small ordinary action about which enough is known. No difficult experience, assessment of spiritual level or investigation of another's motives is required. Name the action separately from what you thought about it. A meaningful inward interpretation may remain in a separate private record or be undisclosed. Clarify which message from another person is actually known and which assent was only assumed.

If wanted, consider one moment before, during or after the action. Neither a whole life's sequence nor unknown consequences need reconstruction or prediction. A particular mismatch may prompt a question about an available amendment. Insufficient grounds can simply be marked. Recognising an error does not require assent to every assessment, and good intention creates no automatic participation for others. Necessary assistance and practical limitations retain significance of their own.

An amendment, another question or a choice not to continue now is possible. There is no demand for public confession, proof of remorse or a final transformation story. This is a voluntary editorial exercise in philosophical attention, not diagnosis, spiritual examination or an established method of changing conduct. Its efficacy is unproved. The sources remain limited interlocutors rather than a common exercise manual. Keep the record private or retain no record: its subject is clarity about one action, not certification of an entire inward life.

Key quotation

> *“are to be done with repeated reflection.”*

— MN61, instruction to Rāhula, closing clause after the list of bodily, verbal and mental actions; Ṭhānissaro Bhikkhu translation on dhammatalks.org.

Connections between traditions

Question	Both bases and locators	Mechanism, difference and limit
One action and a person's character	Aristotle II.4,57–63: an action's kind differs from performing it with knowledge, choice and firm character; James1:22–27: hearing the word is compared with doing within faith.	An ancient virtue account and a Christian requirement retain different grounds. This essay distinguishes a known correction from an overall verdict: an action matters without certifying a whole person. This supplies no spiritual examination, licence to guess motives, or proof that vivid experience produces firm character.
Understanding and continuing action	James1:22–27: hearing and doing concern the word, speech and aid; MN61,58–68: bodily and verbal actions are examined before, during and afterwards.	Doing the word and Buddhist examination of skillful action cannot be reduced to productivity. Comparison allows examination after an inward event. It establishes no common conduct-changing technique, requires no endless assistance and makes the contemporary exercise no complete practice of either tradition.
Intention, manner and consequence	Aristotle II.4,59–62: virtuous manner includes choosing an action for its own sake; MN61,59–68: possible and known affliction of oneself and others enters reflection.	Choice in Aristotle's ethics and skillfulness in Buddhist instruction have different grounds. Applied to Natalia, intention to ease preparation differs from another's unchosen expectation. Good intention creates no assent; an unwanted outcome supplies no knowledge of all motives or an entire personality.
Correction without compulsory confession	MN61,62–63/67–68: reflection after an action includes disclosure to a teacher or companion in the holy life; James1:26–27: speech and action have a religious subject before God.	Each source retains its religious discipline rather than giving it to our contemporary scene. A known inaccuracy can be stated and a list corrected without disclosing an entire inward history to an acquaintance. This neither claims that the sources cancel their requirements nor requires a reader to accept them as one present procedure.

Question	Both bases and locators	Mechanism, difference and limit
Reading and an acquired quality	Aristotle II.4,63: theoretical refuge differs from performing actions; James1:22–25: hearing does not constitute doing.	The philosophical virtue question and the Christian doing-the-word question help distinguish understanding a distinction from acquiring a quality. This proves neither reading useless, a guaranteed result from this essay, nor authority to rank people by the name of their practice.
Non-identical grounds of comparison	Aristotle II.4: knowledge, choice and character; James1:22–27: word and religious action; MN61,58–68: Buddhist reflection on actions and results.	The related question concerns an inward explanation's sufficiency for a particular action. Virtue, faith and skillfulness retain different grounds. The invented scene confirms no single consciousness theory, efficacy of any practice, or moral superiority of people reporting powerful experiences.

Primary sources

1. Aristotle, complete Nicomachean Ethics II.4. Identified W. D. Ross translation; the entire section57–63 and translation heading were read. Its conditions belong to an ancient virtue account rather than a contemporary psychological measure.

2. James1:22–27, KJV. All six selected verses and translation identification were read. Christian grounds remain distinct from a neutral productivity rule or universal faith examination.

3. MN61, The Exhortation to Rāhula at Mango Stone. Ṭhānissaro Bhikkhu English translation, identified through the official index. The entire displayed main discourse27–80 was read; argument uses the limited58–68 block. Religious disclosure becomes no compulsory confession for a contemporary reader.

Russian quotations are United Wisdom's own translations from the named English editions; English wording was checked against them. The first excerpt's shortening and closing punctuation are marked. Natalia and the list are invented. The editorial exercise is voluntary, efficacy unestablished; it is no common exercise of the three traditions.

Tags

ethics, practice, experience, conduct, action, inward life, choice, attention, responsibility, intention, consequence, assent, promise, word, understanding, interpretation, virtue, faith, tradition, correction, conversation, boundary, uncertainty, clarity, Aristotle, James, Rāhula, Buddhism, agency, path

About the authors

Andrey Zarinsh is the author and founder of United Wisdom. He explores inner transformation, the unity of traditions, intercultural dialogue, and contemporary spiritual discipline. Instagram: @andrey.zarinsh.

Maria Evilkut is a co-author of United Wisdom. Alongside her research, she seeks to test these ideas in practice and observe how principles of unity and mutual understanding work in real life between people and cultures. Instagram: @ilkutki.