# Contemplating Your Own Death

Settle yourself into meditation, coming to as much stillness as you can before beginning the contemplation. Then, allow the mind to imagine what it would be like if you die today or tonight, or if you die after the next breath. Try to be as realistic about this as you can while maintaining mindfulness and clear comprehension. View your own body with compassion and equanimity. Where do you imagine the body to be? Where would you like it to be? Who do you imagine being there? How will your death affect the people in your life? What will happen to your possessions?

If you can imagine yourself leaving your body and observing from the other side of death, how do you imagine feeling about it? Would you cling or regret? Do you think you could move on peacefully, with acceptance, or maybe even a sense of curiosity or adventure?

Before finishing the meditation, fill the heart with loving kindness or compassion.

Use this contemplation to bring up a sense of urgency to practice and as a means for identifying the things you want to do to prepare for death.

# The *****Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta: The Foundations of Mindfulness*****

For the full text visit: [www.wisdompubs.org/landing/satipatthana-sutta](http://www.wisdompubs.org/landing/satipatthana-sutta)

(For this meditation, also settle yourself first into as much stillness as you can and observe with kindness and compassion, as well as mindfulness. Finish with some time flooding the heart with loving kindness or compassion.)

The Nine Charnel Ground Contemplations  
“Again, bhikkhus, as though he were to see a corpse thrown aside in a charnel ground, one, two, or three days dead, bloated, livid, and oozing matter, a bhikkhu compares this same body (his own body) with it thus: ‘This body too is of the same nature, it will be like that, it is not exempt from that fate.’

“In this way he abides contemplating the body as a body internally, externally, and both internally and externally … And he abides independent, not clinging to anything in the world. That too is how a bhikkhu abides contemplating the body as a body.

“Again, as though he were to see a corpse thrown aside in a charnel ground, being devoured by crows, hawks, vultures, dogs, jackals, or various kinds of worms, a bhikkhu compares this same body with it thus: ‘This body too is of the same nature, it will be like that, it is not exempt from that fate.’

“ … That too is how a bhikkhu abides contemplating the body as a body.

“Again, as though he were to see a corpse thrown aside in a charnel ground, a skeleton with flesh and blood, held together with sinews … a fleshless skeleton smeared with blood, held together with sinews … a skeleton without flesh and blood, held together with sinews … disconnected bones scattered in all directions—here a hand-bone, there a foot-bone, here a shin-bone, there a thigh-bone, here a hip-bone, there a back-bone, here a rib-bone, there a breast-bone, here an arm-bone, there a shoulder-bone, here a neck-bone, there a jaw-bone, here a tooth, there the skull—a bhikkhu compares this same body with it thus: ‘This body too is of the same nature, it will be like that, it is not exempt from that fate.’

“ … That too is how a bhikkhu abides contemplating the body as a body.

“Again, as though he were to see a corpse thrown aside in a charnel ground, bones bleached white, the colour of shells … bones heaped up, more than a year old … bones rotted and crumbled to dust, a bhikkhu compares this same body with it thus: ‘This body too is of the same nature, it will be like that, it is not exempt from that fate.’

Insight  
“In this way he abides contemplating the body as a body internally, or he abides contemplating the body as a body externally, or he abides contemplating the body as a body both internally and externally. Or else he abides contemplating in the body its nature of arising, or he abides contemplating in the body its nature of vanishing, or he abides contemplating in the body its nature of both arising and vanishing. Or else mindfulness that ‘there is a body’ is simply established in him to the extent necessary for bare knowledge and mindfulness. And he abides independent, not clinging to anything in the world. That too is how a bhikkhu abides contemplating the body as a body.