

Hollow Bones Code of Ethics

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T E A R Council

The purpose of our Ethics Policy is to support a culture of integrity, trust, and openness based on reason and fair-mindedness. The core principles of ethics are broadly shared human fundamentals, and as such, they are trans-cultural and trans-religious. These key concepts and principles help guide us in establishing what actions help or harm sentient beings and the environment in which we live.

Ethical reasoning is distinguished from cultural mores and morality by the empathetic recognition and understanding that our actions have direct consequences on the well-being of all life around us. Our conduct can either increase or diminish this quality of life.

In the Hollow Bones Order our code of ethics is based on 5 traditional Buddhist precepts (enumerated below). We take these precepts voluntarily, intuitively recognizing the value in establishing skillful action for positive benefit in life. The summary of all precepts can be stated as non-harming and respect.

It is important to understand ethical reasoning not as external rules and regulations of behavior, but rather as internal reasoning that nurtures an evolving natural empathetic realization of the true interconnection of all life, and the dramatic impact of our thinking and subsequent actions.

All people have the responsibility to investigate their own motivations and intentions, and then to directly intervene with courage and integrity to do that which is consistent with their realization and insight through ethical reasoning. Intervening in our own internal reasoning process is necessary due to our human capacity for self-deception and rationalization.

These 5 traditional Buddhist precepts represent the basis of **non-harming** and **respect**, as a way of being. They are expressed here in the first person – the declaration form – where we each take conscious responsibility. Examine and consider their significance and relevance to ethical living.

1. **Recognizing our interconnection and for the purpose of cultivating benefit for all beings, I undertake the precept of refraining from killing.** I acknowledged our interconnection and have respect for all life. Core to this understanding, I agree to non-harming in all my actions.
2. **Recognizing our interconnection and for the purpose of cultivating benefit for all beings, I undertake the precept of not taking what is not freely given.** This includes awareness and respect of the planet's resources, in dealing with finances, and the sharing of knowledge.
3. **Recognizing our interconnection and for the purpose of cultivating benefit for all beings, I undertake the precept of intelligent use of speech.** I speak what is true and useful and refrain from gossip. I keep in confidence what is told in confidence. I cultivate clear communication based in ethical reasoning, non-harming and loving-kindness.
4. **Recognizing our interconnection and for the purpose of cultivating benefit for all beings, I undertake the precept of refraining from harming others with sexuality.** I honor my relationships according to my agreements and honor others in accordance to their agreements.
5. **Recognizing our interconnection and for the purpose of cultivating benefit for all beings, I undertake the precept of refraining from abuse of intoxicants.**

Recommended reading and study:
Ethical Reasoning by Dr. Richard Paul and Dr. Linda Elder

The Hollow Bones T E A R Council

The Hollow Bones Order has established a **TEAR** (Truth, Ethics, and Reconciliation Council). The purpose of the **TEAR** Council is for addressing and resolving ethical concerns and complaints of a more serious nature, that impact our Sangha and extended family.

The **TEAR** Council is not an 'enforcement' body. Rather, the **TEAR** Council provides guidance, procedures and confidential consulting for those with ethical concerns arising within our community. The power of the **TEAR** Council lies within our ability and willingness to embody compassion and intelligence while employing fair-minded ethical reasoning in our own lives.

- If an individual has a formal grievance or complaint, it will initially be reviewed by an ombudsperson and then may be addressed directly by the **TEAR** Council.
- The **TEAR** Council may appoint one or more ombudspersons to handle the initial inquiry into a matter brought forward for resolution. The ombudsperson provides confidential consulting for those with ethical concerns and then determines whether the ombudsperson and the parties can effectively and equanimously bring the matter to resolution or if the concern is to go to the larger body of the **TEAR** Council.
- With due consideration of any requests for confidentiality, an ombudsperson will provide a report of related activities for review by the **TEAR** Council. Matters considered effectively resolved by the parties may be reported on to the **TEAR** Council. Confidentiality is a guiding principle for the **TEAR** Council.

It is our intention to develop and evolve skillful and effective ways to resolve conflict. Furthermore, it is primary to the intention of the **TEAR** Council to serve the well-being of Hollow Bones participants and others by facilitating resolution and healing, and by supporting transformational processes that fundamentally change ineffective paradigms of punishment and shame and other forms of punitive justice.

This intention is consistent with *also* requiring full accountability for our actions and recognizing that there are implications and consequences for our behavior. Therefore, sometimes difficult decisions must be made as a way of creating resolution and amends with those impacted. Coming from awakened self-awareness and self-responsibility, the **TEAR** Council is a skill means, and instrument, not the true locus of these decisions.

As a guideline we can use the **AAAA** process:

1. **Acknowledge** our actions;
2. be **Accountable** for our actions and their impact;
3. **Apologize**, as part of genuinely recognizing the impact of our actions;
4. make **Amends** in a way that brings about resolution, harmony and balance for all those concerned – if possible.

Communicating Complaints or Grievances

We acknowledge that issues will arise. We encourage an atmosphere of respect and patience when issues arise within our community.

The formal grievance process is initiated by communicating in writing with the **TEAR** Council. This “letter of request” must include:

- A clear statement that a formal grievance process is requested.
- The name(s) of those concerned in the grievance.
- A description of the alleged actions.
- Other means used, if any, to resolve the grievance.
- A statement concerning the resolution desired.

If the **TEAR** Council accepts the grievance, all parties will be contacted discretely, and resolution will be attempted through mediation and dialogue.

If the matter cannot be equanimously settled to the satisfaction of all concerned, it will continue to be discretely investigated and then considered for other modalities of skillful resolution.

After investigation and consideration, the **TEAR** Council will recommend skillful actions based on findings. Everyone directly involved will have a full and fair opportunity to respond to all information – personally, spoken or written.

The **TEAR** Council will also recommend – based on informed consensus – what information may go to the members of the community not directly involved.

Operating through consensus, the **TEAR** Council may make recommendations for action appropriate to the concern at hand, and they may seek non-binding advice from other sources, if necessary.

It is the spirit of the **TEAR** Council to achieve resolution to any and all issues with fair-mindedness, in the intention of clarity, reconciliation and healing.