

## Three Versions of the Bodhisattva Vow

The Four Great Bodhisattva Vows are a set of four vows that encapsulate the commitment of a bodhisattva, a being who strives to achieve enlightenment to help others. These vows are: to save all sentient beings, to cut through all delusions, to master all teachings, and to attain the Buddha Way. Here's a more detailed look at each vow:

### **1. Sentient beings are numberless; I vow to save them all:**

This vow expresses the bodhisattva's unwavering commitment to helping all beings, not just those closest to them. It acknowledges the vastness of suffering and vows to alleviate it.

### **2. Delusions are endless; I vow to cut through them all:**

This vow acknowledges the pervasive nature of negative mental states like attachment, hatred, and ignorance. The bodhisattva vows to overcome these delusions and cultivate a clear, peaceful mind.

### **3. The teachings are infinite; I vow to learn them all:**

This vow emphasizes the importance of studying and understanding the teachings of the Buddha and the path to enlightenment. It highlights the bodhisattva's dedication to deepening their knowledge and wisdom.

### **4. The Buddha Way is inconceivable; I vow to attain it:**

This vow reflects the bodhisattva's aspiration to reach the highest level of enlightenment and become a Buddha themselves. It acknowledges that the path to enlightenment is profound and requires unwavering dedication.

These four vows are not just a set of rules to follow, but rather a guide to living a life of compassion, wisdom, and dedication to the well-being of all beings.

## **The Dalai Lama's Version, taken from Shantideva**

May I be a guard for those who need protection  
A guide for those on the path  
A boat, a raft, a bridge for those who wish to cross the flood  
May I be a lamp in the darkness  
A resting place for the weary  
A healing medicine for all who are sick  
A vase of plenty, a tree of miracles  
And for the boundless multitudes of living beings  
May I bring sustenance and awakening  
Enduring like the earth and sky  
Until all beings are freed from sorrow  
And all are awakened.

## **Version shared by Diana Winston from Shantideva**

For as long as space exists and sentient beings endure, may I be the living ground of love for all beings.

## **From Jack Kornfield**

You can create your own Bodhisattva vow. Sit quietly for a time. Let your body and mind be at rest. Then, ask your heart, "If I were to make a vow, to set the compass of my heart, to give voice to my highest intention, what would it be?" And then listen for an answer. It need not be a poem. It might be as simple as "I vow to protect those in danger" or "I vow to be kind." Your heart will instruct you.

As you quiet your mind and steady your heart, you can set your deepest intention. It will help you be strong for the long haul. Then get up and joyfully plant seeds for a more compassionate future. Educate yourself about social justice. Stand up against racism and hatred. Give voice, time, energy, care to alleviate suffering and tend our collective well being. Your freedom empowers you to contribute to the world. And your love will show you the way to do so.

<https://jackkornfield.com/the-bodhisattvas-path/>