

Karma

Karma means action. It refers to cause and effect; the [inter]dependency of causes and conditions with fruition or result. *It is not punishment and reward.*

Karma has a “latency” quality on the heart-mind, which comes to fruition once all conditions “ripen”, like planting a seed.

Karma can also be defined as conditioned patterns of reactivity.

Karma works over lifetimes and can be considered a Universal Law.

Four general characteristics: from *What is Karma* by Venerable Thubten Chodron

1. Positive results come from virtuous/constructive actions and vice versa (planting tomato seeds produce tomato plants not tulips).
 - a. There is no inherent ruling on constructive/virtuous and deconstructive/harmful actions. It is based on the personal feelings and experience of these results, whether happiness or unhappiness.
2. A small cause or action can grow into a big result (virtuous or harmful).
3. If you don't create the cause, then you don't experience the result (value of skillful effort).
4. Karma is definite yet we can interfere with the ripening (nothing is concrete).

Karma involves intentional action

Karmic actions may be through action, word or thought (body, speech, and mind)

Three stages of a single karmic action: from *The Heart of the Buddha's Path* by the Dalai Lama

1. Motivation or intention
2. Actual execution of the act
3. Culmination or completion of the act

Karmic actions themselves are composite (made up of various parts), and their quality can be characterized as the cumulative result of each part or factor.

Karmic results may appear immediate and some appear more long term, even over lifetimes.

There is always a mysterious or hidden component of karma beyond one's perception and comprehension unless one is fully Awakened and Omniscient.