

## THE 3 BLIND MONKS

*Some monks in Sāvatti noticed a group of non-Buddhist monks quarrelling with each other about some philosophical or theological issue. Later, they mentioned what they had seen to the Buddha and he said, 'Wanderers of other sects are blind and unseeing. They don't know the good and the bad and they don't know the true and the false. Consequently they are always quarrelling, arguing and fighting, wounding each other with the weapon of the tongue.' Then the Buddha related his famous parable. 'Once here in Sāvatti, the king called a certain man and said:*

*"Assemble together in one place all the men in Sāvatti who were born blind." Having done as the king commanded, the king then said to the man, "Now show the blind men an elephant." Again the man did as the king commanded, saying to each as he did, "Oh blind man, this is an elephant and this is its head. This is its ear. This is its tusk. This is its trunk. This is its body. This is its leg. This is its back. This is its tail. This is the end of its tail." This having been done the king addresses the blind men saying, "Have you seen an elephant?" and they replied, "We have sire," "And what is an elephant like?" he asked. And the one who had touched the head said, "An elephant is like a pot." while the one who had touched the ear said, "An elephant is like a winnowing basket." The one who had touched the tusk said, "An elephant is like a plough pole" while the one who had touched the trunk said, "It is like a plough." The one who had touched the body said, "It is like a granary," and the one who had touched the leg said, "It is like a pillar."*

*The one who had touched the back said, "It is like a mortar"; the one who had touched the tail said, "It is like a pestle" while the one who had touched the end of the tail said, "An elephant is like a broom." Then they began to quarrel saying, "Yes it is!" "No it isn't!" "An elephant is like this!" "An elephant is like that!" until eventually they began fighting with each other.' Having told this story, the Buddha summed up its meaning in a terse little verse – 'Some monks and priests are attached to their views and having seized hold of them they wrangle, like those who see only one side of a thing.'*

### THE 3 BLIND MONKS ASSIGNMENT

*This lesson of this story is to look at multiple perspectives so one does not miss the whole picture. Write down as many ways as you can that you can apply this lesson to your treatment and your life. Part of this will require you to gain perspective from others, which means you have to ask others their perspective of how you can improve or be more successful.*

