

Lojong (Mind Training)

Slogan:

Work on the Strongest of Your Emotional Defilements First

We should scrutinize ourselves and examine which of our defiled emotions is the most powerful. If desire is strongest, we should try to concentrate upon its antidote, which is ugliness. If anger is to the fore, we should try to generate the remedy of patience. If by nature we are inclined to ignorance and dullness, we should exert ourselves in the cultivation of wisdom. If we are jealous, we should work to develop equanimity. In this endeavor to subdue these defilements, we should concentrate all our Dharma practice. For if we are able to free ourselves of our grosser defilements, the lesser ones will also naturally subside.—Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche



Gurdjef used to say to his disciples - the first thing, the very first thing: "Find out what your greatest characteristic is, your greatest undoing, your central characteristic of unconsciousness." Each one's is different. Somebody is sex-obsessed... somebody is obsessed with anger, and somebody else is obsessed with greed. You have to watch which is your basic obsession.

So first find the main characteristic upon which your whole ego rests. And then be constantly aware of it, because it can only exist if you are unaware. It is burnt in the fire of awareness automatically.

And remember, remember always, that you are not to cultivate the opposite of it... People move from one thing to the opposite. That is not the way of transformation. It is the same pendulum, moving from left to right, from right to left. And that's how your life has been moving for centuries, it is the same pendulum.

The pendulum has to be stopped in the middle. And that's the miracle of awareness. Just be aware that "This is my chief pitfall, this is the place where I stumble again and again, this is the root of my unconsciousness." Don't try to cultivate the opposite of it, but pour your whole awareness into it. Create a great bonfire of awareness, and it will be burned. And then the pendulum stops in the middle.

And with the stopping of the pendulum, time stops. You suddenly enter into the world of timelessness, deathlessness, eternity.—Osho

All beings within the cycle of rebirth suffer to a greater or lesser degree from emotional afflictions, but different individuals have different specific afflictions that predominate. Our main defilement may be desire, aggression, arrogance, jealousy, or ignorance. We should look within and judge which one is the most serious and then apply the necessary opponent forces to purify it first.

If attachment or desire is most intense, we should meditate specifically on impermanence and the impurity of the body. If hatred and aggression dominate, we should cultivate love. If it is ignorance or blank indifference, we must meditate on emptiness and cultivate intelligent awareness. For pride and arrogance, we meditate on impermanence, the suffering of our own life, cyclic existence, and especially the misery of the three lower unfortunate realms. If jealousy predominates, we should practice rejoicing in the virtues of others. Our afflictions are countless, and since they are active in no other place than within us, their destruction can only take place internally.—Geshe Rabten AND Geshe Dhargyey

Examine your personality to determine which disturbing emotions are strongest. Concentrate all dharna practice on them in the beginning, and subdue and clear them away.—Jamgon Kongtrul

You should work with whatever is your greatest obstacle first - whether it is aggression, passion, pride, arrogance, jealousy, or what have you. You should not just say "I will sit more first, and I will deal with that later." Working with the greatest defilements means working with the highlights of your experience or your problems. You do not just want to work with chicken shit, you want to work with the chicken itself.—Chogyam Trungpa

The time is now, not later. This slogan is suggesting that you start where you feel most stuck.

Because the larger obstacles like rage or jealousy or terror are so dramatic, their vividness itself may be a reminder to work with the practice of tonglen. We may*

so take for granted the multitude of daily irritations that we don't even think of them as something to work with. To some degree they are the hardest obstacles to work with because they don't reveal themselves. The only way you know that these are arising is that you feel righteous indignation. Let righteous indignation be your guide that someone is holding on to themselves, and that someone is probably you.—Pema Chodron

<http://lojongmindtraining.com/>

for *Lojung* and *Tonglen*
proverbs and commentaries

Mind Training is a practice in the Buddhist tradition based on a set of proverbs formulated in Tibet in the 12th century by Chekawa. Through the practice, we undertake to connect with our world in an unconditionally positive way and also to take full responsibility for our experience of it.

Unlike many practices, it does not require that you sign on to a

particular system of beliefs; nor is it something that you can only do on your meditation cushion. In fact, the best practice is often done out in the world with exactly those people and situations that upset and irritate you the most.

The twin foundations of the practice are Ultimate Bodhicitta, which could be very roughly be translated as 'Open-Mindedness', and Relative Bodhicitta, which

could be translated, again very roughly, as 'Compassion'.

The fifty-seven or so proverbs form a very skillful set of antidotes to the bad mental habits, paranoia, and fixed ideas that cause us so much suffering. Tonglen* is one of them: Sending and Taking should be practiced alternately. These two should ride the breath.