

Dawa Tarchin Phillips

*The Three Principles of Awakening*

Week Four: “Understanding Emptiness”

April 25, 2020



Hi, and welcome back. I'm Dawa Tarchin Phillips and this is the fourth part in my series on the three principles of awakening. One can summarize the three principles of view, meditation, and action in relative and absolute terms. In a relative way, view, meditation, and action are a way that we look at life, and the way that we cultivate that perspective on life, and the behavior that results based on that perspective. In the absolute sense, it is a cultivation of the realization of the true state of being, what we call the natural state, a state devoid of confusion, a state devoid of obscurations, devoid of any kind of veils or distortion.

We stabilize that view in our moment-to-moment experience with meditation. On a moment-by-moment basis, we are able to rest in that understanding, in that perspective, in that realization of that natural state. Action refers to how we are able to integrate that understanding in every aspect of our lives, whether we are walking, standing, eating, talking, sleeping, resting, traveling, etc. Every moment of our life becomes an expression of our realization of this true nature of reality. So that is what you are learning, that is what you are cultivating.

In this final segment, we're going to talk about how to progress in that understanding, and how to view the whole approach of the dharma as a system that supports you in progressively deepening your ability for view, meditation, and action.

The teachings on view, meditation, and action are for anyone who wishes to progress on the spiritual path. View, meditation, and action is the system that develops and that leads to results. The entire dharma is a system of practices that are meant to ripen and mature you and your understanding of who you are, where you are, and where you're going and how you're going to get there. So this is the wonderful thing about this system of teachings. We're cultivating an understanding of view, meditation, and action to progress along a path. The path has the aim of bringing about a result, the result of awakening. The result of awakening happens because we're following a system—a system that many people before us have followed, and that many people after us will follow—one that brings about predictable outcomes in the shape of awakening, of allowing you to become a fully awakened human being. This process is achieved through the practice of listening, reflecting, and meditation.

So you begin by listening to a dharma talk like this one, or one of the other great dharma talks that are part of this series—this offering—of dharma talks, and then reflecting on the meaning.

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Really sit down and think about what was said and reflect on the meaning and then meditate to come to your understanding of the observation, the same kind of discernment and clarity that was the basis for giving rise to these kinds of teachings.

So that process of listening, reflecting, and meditating, is how you come to understanding and appreciating the truth of what is being taught. As you come into your own understanding, then that gives rise to a sense of ethics and responsibility, in terms of your behavior. It gives rise to a basic foundation of concentration, and that gives rise to an increasing accumulation of wisdom, discernment, and clarity. So it's important to see dharma as a system where you progressively develop through the cultivation of view, meditation, and action. You do that through a process called listening, reflecting, and meditating. When you meditate, to come to your clear observation, to your clear and naked understanding and insight into what it was that was being talked about, because all of the teaching originated with a direct observation. All the teaching comes from a perception, a realization of the meaning of what is being talked about. As you come to your own conclusion about the meaning of the dharma, then these veils of knowledge and emotions are dissolved and confusion is dissipated. Negative emotions are dissipated, and you develop a life of dharma, service, and contribution.

Thus, you are making the most meaning of your human life. With the help of the three principles of awakening—view, meditation, and action—then from the ground of a person with a limited understanding, you are follow a path that has been followed by many people before you, ripening, maturing, developing your understanding, and finally that journey results in you reaching an awakened understanding, an awakened experience, an awakened realization of the true nature of reality. That nature is what we call emptiness or selflessness, a nature that is completely free of the veils of knowledge and the veils of emotion, and thereby is wide open, peaceful, and free. So thank you so much for joining me on this series on the three principles of awakening.