

Phakchok Rinpoche
Week 4, *Mental Strength in the 21st Century*
December 22, 2014
“Befriend the Mind”
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In this last session, I'd like to talk about the kind of important friends we need to have. I don't mean friend in a literal sense. I'm talking about mentally. The main thing to remember is the kind of friends we have in our minds.

So, first and foremost, one thing that you need to remind yourself is how important the mind is. I'm going back to that because for me, when somebody tells me, “I don't do that. Go to hell,” I say, “Fine, I'll go to hell.” So what? That is me. You see, I don't care. People tell me, “Oh, go straight to hell.” “Yeah, really? Okay, I'll see you there when you come.” Honestly speaking, I really don't care. I'm kind of hardheaded in that way, but the Buddha dharma makes me completely humble. Buddha said, “Your mind. Look at your mind. See your mind.” That is how I learned dharma from my teacher. My teacher once said, “Rinpoche, look at your mind. Are you happy?” I said, “No, I'm not happy.” “Do you have anger?” “Yes, I do.” He said, “What should you do with that?” I said, “I don't know.” That was it. That was the answer to me. That's why the first thing you need to remember is how important the mind is.

Now, there's something I did not say in the first, second and third week of this retreat, so I want to share it with you guys now. Buddha said one thing that is very interesting. The Buddha said that all the beings—all the sentient beings—whatever class they are in, the nature of the mind is completely enlightened, completely pure, and completely full of good and excellent qualities. We call this Buddha nature. For me, to think that my nature is pure, at a conceptual level, was such a big change because it gave me dignity. That gives me the confidence to know I can practice and to know that I can change because my nature is clean, pure and enlightened. If my nature is rubbish, why do I need to practice? If that's the case, there's no reason to practice. I know that practice hasn't changed anyone completely. So what, you know? However, when I learned that the Buddha said that every being has a perfect and complete nature, which really changed how I saw things. That's why I'd like to remind you that there is meditation. Patricia, you're doing it. Some are doing it. Some of you have not heard before. There is a meditation called Mahamudra meditation. They call it Maha meditation or Dzogchen meditation. These meditations literally help you to gradually rest. I'm doing this meditation. You can maintain a very natural state. The moment you rest in your natural state, or maintain your nature state, that very moment the ego,

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judgment, and negative thoughts are cut, disappear, or are liberated. They do not exist in that moment. We don't imagine. In that meditation there's no imagining, no trying, no pushing, doing, holding or believing. It's nature, my dear. It's the nature of our mind. So that's why I like to say that the one fundamental thing to keep in mind is the reminder that is our nature is pure. Try to find a good teacher who is teaching these things and try to go and receive those teachings, specifically the Dzogchen and Mahamudra meditations. You will be able to do it where it's taught well.

Of course, thirdly, I would like to remind all of you about motivation. Motivation plays such a crucial and important role in our lives and makes our lives especially meaningful. It also makes our lives useful and beneficial for others. Right now, I'm breathing the same breath, the same air, as others. I'm going through the same hour that everybody goes through, but I can make it different by providing more benefit than others are providing. I can choose that. So, what you need to do is remind yourself that the third most important thing is motivation. The first one is the notion that the mind is important. Secondly, I mentioned that it's very important to have Buddha nature. The nature of our mind is pure and perfect. The third factor is motivation, as I like to say.

Now number four, I'd like to tell all of you, is meditation practice, or dharma practice. This is very important. I'm telling you, without dharma, our lives are going to be much worse. What does that mean? Can't I just go one year, or just one time or one week with it? No, that's not enough. You need to be doing some kind of practice every day. You can be very busy, but it's best to do one session per day, minimum. Maybe morning is the best time. Doing this practice every day is something that you should remember, something that you need to remind yourself about. Yes, I'm also lazy and busy, but try to practice. That will make a really big difference. So, number four is to stick with your meditation and dharma practice every day.

Now, number five. This is the last one. As a practitioner, it's very important to see your physical behaviors, verbal behaviors and mental behaviors. Sometimes they like to use the word discipline. These are the ten virtues and ten non-virtues. Some have a problem with this, actually. You know what the problem is? I'd like to share it with you guys. What are the ten non-virtues? Not killing, not stealing,

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no sexual misconduct. So one main part goes away. I'm walking away, walking. I look at the person, "Hey, sir, how are you? Thank you." You think I'm being nice. So which ten non-virtues are there? Mentally I did it, but I'm not really angry. I'm not really angry, right? So I don't mind. I didn't scold him, right? I didn't kill him, but maybe I made him a little mad. So, that behavior does not really count. Of course, you can say it's a part of that. While it does not come under the ten non-virtues, you can make other people upset. So what I want to say is please check your behaviors and see how you are actually doing.

As a practitioner, and as a meditator, even though you can sit very quietly for one, two or three hours, your behavior could be worse than some people's. You can be angry, have a short temper and all those kind of things and, even still, your practice is not going to benefit anybody. So therefore, I would like to say, the first thing to recognize is how important our mind is. Remind yourself. Number two is about compassion and our Buddha nature. The nature of the mind is enlightened. The nature of the minds is perfect. The nature of the minds is completely enlightened. That is number two. Number three is motivation, I think. Compassion and loving-kindness first. Then I said the most important part is number four, which is daily meditation. Practice every day. Take a session every day. Thank you very much. It's very important to do this in the morning. The last one, which is also very important, is to notice your behaviors. It's very important to check your behaviors. Try to see the list of ten virtues and non-virtues as the base. When you do this the old ones, like I just showed you, look a little bit bad. You might say bad things, showing your different mood. All these kind of things really need to be changed.

So, what you need to remember is to check your behaviors and change. Try to meditate every day. Keep your motivation clean and grounded in loving-kindness. You also need to remember and remind yourself, every day, that the nature of our minds is perfect and enlightened. Every day, in the morning, you should try understand how important and powerful the mind is. When you try to have this practice and remind yourself of these five things, I think what happens is that dharma becomes irrelevant. Dharma becomes an actual path, or an actual practice, and your life becomes much easier to practice. You also become much more experienced at dharma and you could change your behaviors nicely. When you talk to your friends and family members, you're not really doing the hanky-panky stuff. You're doing real stuff. You're changing. You're really saying and you're

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really experiencing. You're doing the practice and you're practicing real expression with your friends and your families, and they know you are doing something right. I'd like to say to all of you, my dharma brothers and all my friends, my beloved friends, please remember all of these five things put them onto a white sheet. Place the sheet on your refrigerator. Just stick it on the refrigerator.

Okay, thank you very much, all of you. I'd like to say thank you very much to all the people who are working at Tricycle. I wish you all happiness. I also wish the same to our cameraman and the lady here. I'm pretty sure you heard both of their voices. They are working very hard. Thank you very much both of them, and thank you very much to our Tricycle friends. To all of you, thank you very much for watching this and please share your thoughts to your friends, families and your children. It's very important. Thank you very much.
