

Phakchok Rinpoche
Week 3, *Mental Strength in the 21st Century*
December 15, 2014
“Energize Your Mind”
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So I'm back again. I don't know if you're all happy to see me or not, but I'm very happy to be back. I'd like to send many good wishes to you. I'm pretty sure you have had a good time this week or whichever week that you are in.

In the first session, I talked about how important our mind is. In the second session, I talked about refuge and provided a simple refuge practice that includes prostrations. Today, in this third session, I'd like to talk about motivation.

I'd like to say that in all honesty, for me, motivation is very important. I can really see how important motivation is. I'm talking about motivation in terms of bodhicitta, or compassion—loving-kindness. Loving-kindness and compassion are very important. I especially practice loving-kindness and compassion as a kind of motivation. I had done this kind of practice before, and somehow, it takes time to seep in. If you only do it for a few days, it doesn't work. You need to keep doing it, bit by bit. Every day you do it a little bit at a time. Go slowly so you generate, and then you will develop on the right path. That is your development of your understanding and experiences. I've been practicing loving-kindness and compassion for many years. Every day I practice a little bit here, a little bit there. Honestly speaking, compassion—or loving-kindness—takes time for me. When I see it coming, though, it's very amazing.

I'll give you an example. When I was younger, I was a short-tempered person. I had quite a short temper. It was easy for me to get angry. I was that kind of person. I had an angry type of mood. I'm a very challenging person, so I like to challenge people. I like to bully and tease people. You know what I'm saying; I had that kind of nature, or those kinds of habits. When I start practicing compassion, my anger goes down—my moods all go down—and my suffering is no longer important for me. This is because I wish for all beings to be free from suffering and the causes of suffering. There are so many people going through different unpleasant experiences. So, I say, “Oh, why am I complaining about it? I'm complaining about my small bad mood today.” The truth is, my bad mood is nothing compared to the difficulties other people are going through. This explains why I'm stuck in my head. See, compassion makes my mind and heart so broad. With this I can see all beings. Then, what happens is my anger, my jealousy, my pride, my complaining and my disappointment all go down.

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Sometimes, I go and buy a Starbucks coffee. Now, my doctor says I should not drink coffee, so I'm not sure. Usually, though, I like to drink a small Starbucks coffee. I don't take the big one. I like the small hazelnut coffee with half of a sugar. Starbucks is usually what I like to drink. So, one day, I went to buy coffee. I said to the woman, “Hazelnut.” She said, “Sorry?” I said, “Hazelnut.” “Sorry?” she asked. “I tried to speak English, but you don't understand,” I said. “But your English is very funny,” she said. “What?” “Hazelnut.” “Oh, yeah.” Then she said something, hazelnut and something else. I said, “I said that.” So, the hazelnut coffee they gave me tasted bad. It didn't taste like the same thing I usually have. The coffee is the same and I believe that she didn't add bad things. I know that. She didn't do anything bad. She did everything right. Because of my mind, however, it was a disappointment. My mind was angry. You see, one small disappointment made my mood off. I held the coffee like this, you know. I said, “You know me, I'm so foolish. There are so many people going difficulties right now. I'm so foolish.” I said, “Oh, I wish all beings have a nice coffee like I'm having now. I wish all the beings can have a Starbucks hazelnut small coffee.” I thought about it like that. Then I said, “I wish for all beings to be free from suffering and the causes of suffering.” I tried to bring that up, again and again. I wish for all beings free from suffering and the causes of suffering. I wish for all beings to be free from suffering and the causes of suffering. Like that. Then, my off mood was gone. Finished. Then, when I drank the coffee, it was so delicious. I went back and said to the woman, “Oh, thank you my dear.” I said, “Thank you.” I went back, whether she liked it or not. I don't mind. I hope she liked it.

Compassion and loving kindness may seem weak, but they're not weak. To understand the word compassion, you need to learn ten different and important qualities that support compassion. Did you know that? I can't talk about all ten in a short session, but I will say that compassion needs detachment. Compassion with too strong of an attachment is very plentiful. Compassion must have less attachment. Develop compassion with a very steady mind. Develop compassion with mindfulness. Be very mindful with compassion. You are very mindful with things, so use compassion with patience. Compassion needs many small different qualities to support it. That's why, when you start practicing compassion, what you should say is this: “May all beings be free from suffering and the causes of suffering.” First, try to think like that. Then, what you can do is a little pinch. You need to feel the pain. You need to feel a little bit of the other people's suffering. You need to experience it. When you go through people's suffering yourself,

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you’re going to change a little bit for the better. You become a little better. When you start changing yourself—when you really start feeling natural—you will reduce your bad actions. You will reduce your ego. Your self-centeredness decreases. Your disappointment becomes less powerful and your anger goes down. You become more flexible. Now, that’s why I’m saying that your motivation, or what you should have, is compassion and loving-kindness. Compassion is saying, “I wish for all beings to be free from suffering and the causes of suffering. Loving-kindness is saying, “I wish for all beings to be happy and find the causes of happiness.”

One day, I went to eat at an Italian restaurant. There were people in the corner laughing very loudly. Before I used to say, “Excuse me, is this your home? Is this your home?” I would have said it like that before. Now, I say, “They’re enjoying. Let them enjoy. Let them laugh. I wish them happiness.” That’s it. That is small and tiny, but it takes my mood off. All of it goes away because I practice compassion and loving-kindness. What does that mean? My mind becomes steady. It very clearly shows that my mind is now steady. It’s gentler, calmer and steadier. When it’s steady, the people who bully other people—all these types of things—are not going to affect you.

People tell me they don’t like New York City because it’s so noisy and smelly. It’s very big city. Very many people—a lot of people—are like this. I love New York City. When I visit, I find that New York City is one of the best cities of the world for me. Why do I like city? Many think that a Buddhist, meditator should like the jungle, the forest or a cave. Places like those. No, I like New York City because I think New York City does not affect me so much. The reason is because I practice meditation and compassion every day. In New York City, I see some people happy, some people suffering, some people going through different things. Some people are jealous; others are just getting over a relationship. Some people are going through a divorce. I saw one woman talking on the phone, shouting and crying on the road. “You are stupid!” I thought. “Poor guy.” I look at other side of the street where there are two guys holding hands and kissing. Not kissing, really, but just holding hands in a very lovely way and enjoying. I thought, “Look at this. That is a real thing. I wish you happiness and I wish you to be free from suffering.” Literally, in New York City, I practice compassion and loving-kindness.

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In the morning, when I wake up, the first thing I do is create a space. After I create a space, I do prostrations. Sometimes, I create a space in the bed. Then, I wake up, brush my teeth and then do the offering. Sometimes I prepare with my helper. They get us prepared. Then I put water in a water bottle. I put in some saffron and then offer it to the Buddha. I may put some gold leaf on the offerings. I once saw my teacher do that and say, “I offer this to you.” Then I meditate and practice loving-kindness while saying, “I wish for all beings to be free from suffering. Today, the whole day, I wish for all to be free from suffering and the causes of suffering. I wish for all beings to be free from suffering and the causes of suffering. I wish for all beings to be happy and free from the causes of unhappiness. I wish for all beings to be free from suffering.” Say it like this. When you start practicing like that, your mind becomes much more gentle, humble, balanced, and less noisy. It will be less affected by small things. You won’t become too moody. You’re not going to be so self-centered either. It will all be much, much easier. When people are judging you, you will say, “Oh, poor guy. He’s not happy, so he’s judging me.” It’s not that self-centered. It’s not, “Oh, poor guy. He’s not happy but he’s judging me.” You can now see the other way.

So, please practice compassion and loving-kindness as a main motivational practice. It can be really beneficial. Do it now. Don’t be too late.

Thank you very much. Enjoy your life. Make yourself happy. Make other people happy. Don’t have any expectations on happiness. Don’t have too many expectations on your companion. Expectations are not really helpful. Be free. Be open. Be compassionate. Be nice to other people. Thank you very much. I send much love and compassion to all of you. Thank you.
