

Orgyen Chowang Rinpoche
Week One, *Uncovering Our Pristine Mind: The Path to Unconditional Happiness*
June 6, 2016
“The Beauty of Pristine Mind”



Hello, my name is Orgyen Chowang, and I am speaking to you from the beautiful San Rafael, California. I want to talk today about pristine mind. This beautiful practice means that, as human beings, we all innately possess pristine mind. But we don't realize that, so we all have many positive and negative experiences. I will be talking today about how to regain access our pristine mind and how to bring happiness and fulfillment into this moment.

I want to talk about my book, *Our Pristine Mind: Practical Guidance to Unconditional Happiness*, which I worked on for almost nine years, and which focuses on two things. One: the mind is innately pristine, and two: finding the unconditional within you. Today I would like to talk about the beauty of the innately pristine mind. This is the most important thing you need to know.

But first, let's talk about pristine mind and ordinary mind. Right now we are living with ordinary mind. “Ordinary” mind means we are controlled by our thoughts, emotions, beliefs, habits, and tendencies. They control us all the time, and their control means our mind is distorted. When our minds are distorted, then we always feeling anxiety, fear, unhappiness, or we addicted to substances or the material world. All these things arise from the distortion of the mind.

A distorted mind has many complications and shortcomings. When we are suffering, discontent, or stressed, we don't know why we are this way. But the number one reason is our mind is distorted. It's like physical health: your body is naturally healthy. The normal human body is naturally healthy. But if you eat toxic food and don't exercise, your body becomes sick. You become afflicted with the pain of headaches, stomachaches, and that pain means our body has been contaminated by toxic food and water, or a toxic environment.

This is very similar to how our mind is distorted by negative thoughts and emotions—it's like drinking poisoned water. All our mental-emotional turbulence—fear, anxiety, unhappiness, discontent, meaninglessness in life—comes from the pollutions and distortions of our mind. That's the number one reason. People offer many solutions to this problem, but the number one



solution is to end that complication of the experience—to end the suffering of mental-emotional turbulence.

You need to know that your mind is innately pristine. If you know your pristine mind, there's a chance you can relieve your own toxic-state mind. When you relieve your toxic mind, you gain mental and emotional strength—there's a sense of wellbeing. You become mentally, emotionally, and spiritually healthy, and from then on, enthusiasm and freshness come into your life.

Our fundamental nature is pristine. The sky is blue, and the clouds of thoughts and emotions are temporary. Clouds may obscure the sky, but they are not the sky. They are temporary events in the sky. When the clouds of thoughts and emotions disappear, we see the blue sky above.

Similarly, our mind is innately pristine, but that pristine experience can be obscured by thoughts. Thoughts, emotions, beliefs, and tendencies obscure the pristine state of our true mind. Although the mind is fundamentally pristine, mental events take place in our minds. Thoughts, emotions, beliefs, and tendencies are just events of the mind.

The more thoughts and the more positive and negative emotions, the more the mind is polluted. Anxiety, stress, fear, and discontent are the experiences of the polluted mind. They are all signs of a mind polluted by mental events. Therefore, how do you know your mind is pristine? If we don't meditate, we do not know that the mind is innately pristine. Meditation is the only way to clear the mind. But most of us never pay attention to the goings-on of our minds. We just obsess completely over external conditions. We always follow forms, images, sounds and the impressions of the senses. Most of the time, we pay attention to external conditions. If we don't pay attention to the mind, we don't realize our mind is distorted or pristine. We don't experience our mind as pristine because we never pay attention. That's really the reason we don't know our mind is pristine.



We access the pristine mind through meditation and its two functions. One is to reduce thoughts, emotions, and beliefs. The more you meditate, the more they disappear from your mind, and the healthier your mind becomes. You gain a sense of well-being and become more comfortable with yourself. When you reduce negative thoughts and emotions through meditation, you experience a mental-emotional sense of well-being. Your experience of joy, appreciation, gratitude, enthusiasm and happiness increases.

Here's a good parallel: if you eat healthy food and exercise regularly, you feel much better. You lose weight and you feel more energy and physical well-being. Similarly, when you access pristine mind by meditating regularly, your mental and emotional well-being increases. You lose the weight of negative thoughts and emotions. The more you lose these negative thoughts and emotions, the more boundless you become. For this reason, meditation is very important.

Whenever people ask me, “How do you know the mind is pristine?” I say, “You need to meditate.” As long as there are clouds, it's difficult to see the blue sky. But when the clouds dissipate, you see the blue sky directly. Similarly, through meditation, when thoughts and emotions subside, you experience pristine mind.

Accessing pristine mind is the key to unconditional happiness, to a sense of well-being, joy, good connections with others. All positive experiences of enlightenment occur when you access a pristine mind. This teaching all comes from Padmasambhava. His teachings on pristine mind are the best.

Padmasambhava observes that all human beings suffer on many levels—from the negative emotions of anger, sadness, stress, discontent—and he teaches that all these things come from our mind's distortions and pollutions through obsessing over external conditions. When the mind is polluted, of course we suffer. We are physical bodies, and we are in pain from physical distortions. Similarly, when our mind is distorted, we are in pain mentally and emotionally.

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We call Padmasambhava the second Buddha and a master because he brought the Buddhist teachings from India into Tibet. He says that all suffering comes from the distorted mind. When you experience the fulfillment of happiness, it is because of our pristine mind. I like the word “fulfillment,” because fulfillment means to be filled. When you are fulfilled, you feel alive.

We can achieve many things in the world, but the first thing you must do for ourselves and for others is just to access pristine mind. All human beings possess that treasure trove of pristine mind—but we must access it. To find that treasure of happiness and enlightenment, we must access our pristine mind.

This is the beauty of being innately happy, fundamentally comfortable. Our mind is innately pristine. This is the beauty of pristine mind. We should all have happiness because our fundamental nature is pristine, unpolluted like the blue sky, like fresh water. Like fresh water, our mind is innately unpolluted. If you access this fundamental nature of mind, then you can find happiness within you under any circumstances.