

Trungram Gyalwa Rinpoche  
*The Power of the Third Moment Method*  
Week Three: “Understanding the Three Moments”  
January 15, 2018



Hello everyone. Last week we talked about how karma creates emotion and how emotion creates more karma. We also learned that, like a key ring, there is a gap in the karmic cycle, and if we know about the gap we can get out of the cycle. [Unless we get out,] our negative emotions will create more negative karma.

In this session we will be focusing on the three moments. The first moment is sensing. Our eyes, ears, and nose perceive objects by receiving external inputs. For example, sound reaches your ear and you perceive it. This is almost instantaneous. We don't really have a choice. If there's sound, we'll hear it.

For vision we need eyes, but there are also many other conditions for seeing. Your eyes have to be healthy. There has to be consciousness. You need objects to see. The object must be the right distance from you, because you can't see it if it's too close or too far. There shouldn't be obstructions between your objects and your eyes. If there is a wall in between you and the flower, you can't see the flower. You also need light. It can't be too bright or dark. These are necessary conditions for one single experience of seeing.

When the conditions are met, sensing is automatic. For example, if someone says “lemon” you automatically hear it. The first moment is the moment you hear it, before you know what it means. It lasts a split second.

The second moment happens when we start classifying the word “lemon.” Our mind connects the word with many things in such a short time. We think, *What is it? Is it good or bad? What is the color, the shape? What experiences have I had with it?* This happens so quickly that we normally think the first and second moments are one moment. But you only know what the word means once you've reached the second moment. Since the word is lemon you probably see a color in your mind. If you have eaten a lemon before, you will probably taste it as well. You might salivate.

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[Whether the word makes] you feel good or bad depends on your experiences. If someone is trying to describe slicing a juicy lemon, this description will connect to your memories. The word invokes a shape, a color, a scent, a taste, and your memory causes an emotional reaction. If you love lemon you salivate; if you find lemon sour you cringe.

The third moment is reacting. Memory invites a reaction based on your experiences. As your emotions toward the lemon solidify, your reaction could be mental, verbal, or physical. But you also have the choice not to react.

If you try to reject the lemon, then you are clinging to the idea that lemons are not good. You're creating an idea in order to reject the lemon. You're insisting on this idea. You're holding on to it.

You experience a conflict when you resist something that you want. When this happens your logical mind and emotional mind are in contradiction. Maybe you want to be healthy, but at the same time something unhealthy looks really delicious. More often than not our emotional mind wins.

In the third moment you have unsolidified emotion. Time is crucial here. Maybe all of a sudden you understand that the "lemon" you heard is actually in an irregular context. Maybe your mechanic said your brand new car is a lemon. What would your feeling be? You may feel foolish and angry at that person who sold you the car. There are many ways to understand the same word.

The Third Moment Method provides you with the space to determine your response. [It gives you] a choice regarding the kind of life you lead. If you let your environment dictate your experiences you won't be happy unless you solve every problem. [The other option is to] do something within yourself that prevents your environment from dictating your life. Shantideva said, "It is easier to wear a shoe and walk instead of covering the whole Earth with leather." The

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same thing is happening when you practice. We take care of our own attitude and we don't let the environment dictate our experience.

In the coming talk we will learn how to practice the Third Moment Method rather than just blindly reacting to the environment. We'll also talk about how we can access the truth. Thank you.