

## Don't Wait in Ambush

The Tibetan version of this slogan literally says "Don't ambush", that is, wait for somebody to fall down so you can attack. You are waiting for that person to fall into the trap or problem you want or expect. You want them to have that misfortune, and you hope that misfortune will take place in a way which will allow you to attack.

If you are having a disagreement with somebody, you don't usually attack him or her right away because you don't want to be in a powerless position. Instead, you wait for him to fall apart, and then you attack him. Sometimes you pretend to be his adviser, and you attack him in that disguise, pointing out to him how wretched he is. You say "I have been waiting to tell you this. Now you are falling apart completely, I am going to take the opportunity to tell you that you are not so good. I am in much better shape than you are." That is a sort of opportunism, a bandit's approach. That bandit's approach is the meaning of waiting in ambush, which happens quite frequently.

From [\*Training the Mind & Cultivating Loving-Kindness\*](#) by [\*Chogyam Trungpa\*](#),

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The next one is "Don't wait in ambush," yet another "naked truth" slogan. You have been taught that you should be a nice person; on the other hand, you don't feel so nice. Maybe you know something about your husband that he doesn't know you know. You keep it up your sleeve, waiting for just the right moment to spring it on him. One day you're in the middle of a big argument, very heated. He has just insulted you royally. At that moment you bring the ace down from your sleeve and really let him have it. That's called waiting in ambush. You are willing to be very patient until just the right moment comes along, and then you let someone have it. This isn't the path of the warrior, it's the path of the coward. Not only do you want to "win"; you aren't even willing to communicate. The aspiration to communicate with another person-to be able to listen and to speak from the heart-is what changes our old stuck patterns.

From [\*Start Where You Are : A Guide to Compassionate Living\*](#) by [\*Pema Chodron\*](#),

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When someone has caused you trouble, the tendency is to fix it in mind and never forget it though many years go by. When there is an opportunity to ambush the person and to return the injury, revenge is taken. Give up this approach and be as helpful as you can in your response to troublesome situations. For the kind of trouble caused by demons, don't cling to the problem, but work only on love and compassion.

From [\*The Great Path of Awakening : An Easily Accessible Introduction for Ordinary People\*](#) by [\*Jamgon Kongtrul\*](#), translated by [\*Ken McLeod\*](#)

## Do Not Wait at the Narrow Passageway

Picture a scene from a western, or from the highlands of Tibet: bandits waiting in ambush at a narrow pass, where the victim has no chance of escape. To really damage someone, one waits till one's intended victim is most vulnerable. What we are told to avoid here is biding our time to be especially hurtful, lashing back at someone maybe weeks or months after they have injured us, whether physically or verbally.

On first hearing verses such as this we may assume they do not apply to us. Obviously, this is meant for malicious people, and we are not among the bad guys. Perhaps this initial response is honest; some of us may hold no grudges. If so, we need not be concerned with this right now; we have certainly practiced well in the past, either in this or previous lifetimes. Let us focus instead on problems that are relevant.

But our initial response may not be very insightful. In meditating on this pledge as well as the others, the point is to examine our past experience and try to recall: Have I done this kind of thing before? What was the context? What prodded me to do it? What were the results? Do I still have this tendency? And in the present, any resentment still active should be brought to light. Am I anticipating revenge? There are ways of getting back at others more subtle than standing at the ready with a shotgun. We need to check for ourselves whether each pledge is pertinent for our present situation, but they are all worthy of clear-minded, honest introspection that does not rely on the initial response, "Who, me?" Maybe, after more reflection, we may say, "Well, yes, at times." This does not mean that we are evil and vulgar, but simply that we have some work to do.

*Excerpted from: [The Seven-Point Mind Training](#) (first published as *A Passage from Solitude : Training the Mind in a Life Embracing the World*), by [B. Alan Wallace](#).*

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'Ambush,' in this case, means remembering the harm done to us by others and biding our time for a moment of weakness when we might strike back, seeking the help of the powerful or even resorting to witchcraft, and so on. We should relinquish any thoughts of this kind. <scr

*From [Enlightened Courage](#), by Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche. Copyright 1993 by Editions Padmakara </scr*