

Don't Wallow in Self-pity

Don't feel sorry for yourself. If somebody else achieves success or inherits a million dollars, don't waste time feeling bad because it wasn't you.

From Training the Mind & Cultivating Loving-Kindness by Chogyam Trungpa

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That's a good one to remember if you find that the tonglen practice has you crying a lot. This whole approach could evolve into self-pity very easily, and self-pity takes a lot of maintenance. You have to talk to yourself quite a bit to keep it up. the slogan is saying to get to know what self-pity feels like underneath the story line. That's how the training develops a genuine, openhearted, intelligent relationship with the whole variety of human experience.

We're so funny: the people who are crying a lot think that they shouldn't be, and the people who aren't crying think they should be. One man said to me that since he's not feeling anything when he does tonglen practice, maybe he should leave; he felt that he wasn't getting the point. He wasn't feeling mushy or warm; he was just kind of numb. I had to encourage him that a genuine experience of numbness is a genuine experience of what it is to be human.

It's all raw material for waking up. you can use numbness, mushiness, and self-pity even - it doesn't matter what it is - as long as you can go deeper, underneath the story line. That's where you connect with what it is to be human, and that's where the joy and the well-being come from - from the sense of being real and seeing realness in others.

From Start Where You Are : A Guide to Compassionate Living by Pema Chodron,

Don't Make a Fuss

Don't make a big fuss even when you are kind to another person, because you are, in fact, just working at regarding others as more important than yourself. Since all the time and hardship you put into being well educated, moral, and practicing the dharma benefit you, there is no point in making a fuss about it to others. Don't trade boasts with others. In the counsels of Ra-treng, it says: 'Don't expect much of people; pray to your yidam.'

From The Great Path of Awakening : An Easily Accessible Introduction for Ordinary People by Jamgon Kongtrul, translated by Ken McLeod.

Do Not Be Boastful

The examples that illustrate this seventeenth practice focus on drawing attention to our practice. We may point out some great kindness we have shown to others, of which they may have been unaware. Or we describe how our practice is going so well, the amazing insights we have reached during a retreat, how austere we have been, sleeping just three hours a night.... Even if we are accurate, this exaltation of our own greatness is not a sign of mental maturity, but instead pollutes our spiritual practice. Rather than serving as an antidote to mental distortions, this actually feeds our egotism and our sense of superior self-importance.

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

Don't Take What You do too Seriously

If we help others by providing them with food and clothing, by freeing them from prison, or by promoting them to some position of importance, it should not be with the expectation of some kind of recognition. If we practice intensely and for a long time, or if we are knowledgeable and disciplined, we should not expect to be respected for it.

If, on the other hand, we find that others know a great deal, we should pray for them to become really learned; if they are very disciplined, we should pray for them to be like the disciples at the time of Buddha; if we see people practicing, we should pray that their minds be blended with the practice, that their practice be without obstacle and that their paths might lead to the final goal. That is how we should meditate, caring more for others than for ourselves.

But if we manage to do so, we should not congratulate ourselves on having done something great or extraordinary. 'Do not rely on other human beings; just pray to the yidam.' Such was the advice of Radreng. Therefore, do not count on others to help with food, clothing, etc. Rather have a confident faith in the Three Jewels. As it is said, 'Trusting in the Teacher is the ultimate refuge, working for the benefit of others is the ultimate Bodhicitta, therefore do not brag about your accomplishments.' We should always have this attitude, because if we depend on others, the results may not be as we wish.

From Enlightened Courage, by Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche.