

## **If You can Practice Even When Distracted, You are Well Trained**

The idea of this slogan is the realization that whenever situations of an ordinary nature or extraordinary nature come up - our pot boiled over, or our steak is turned to charcoal, or suddenly we slip and lose our grasp - a sudden memory of awareness should take place. [Jamgon Kongtrul](#)'s commentary talks about a well-trained, powerful horse who loses his balance and suddenly regains it again through losing it. It is similar, I suppose, to skiing, where you use the force that goes down and let yourself slide through the snow - suddenly you gain attention and develop balance out of that.

So whenever there is a sudden glimpse or sudden surprise of losing one's grip - that seeming fear of losing one's reality can be included properly. To do so there is a need for renunciation. It is not your chauvinistic trip, that you are a fantastically powerful and strong person and also have a sense of mindfulness taking place all the time. But when something hits you, which is the result of unmindfulness, then suddenly that unmindfulness creates a reminder automatically. So you get back on track, so to speak, able to handle your life.

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

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If you feel completely caught up and are spinning of into a misery scenario, the slogan "If you can practice even when distracted, you are well trained" can remind you to start to work with [tonglen](#) - to breathe in the mishap or the misery as a way of developing compassion for yourself and as a way of beginning to understand other people's pain as well. You can use the distraction to bring yourself back to the present moment, just as a horse rights itself after losing balance or skiers catch themselves just as they are about to fall. Being well trained means you can catch yourself and come back to the present.

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

## **You are Proficient if You can Practice Even When Distracted**

A skilled horseman does not fall from his horse, even when he is distracted. In the same way, if you are able to take adverse conditions that suddenly develop as aids to mind training even without expressly directing your attention to do so, then you are proficient in mind training. The two [bodhicittas](#) arise clearly and effortlessly along with everything that appears-enemies, friends, troublemakers, happiness, or suffering.

These four lines describe signs that your training in [bodhicitta](#) has been effective and that proficiency has developed. They are not signs that you need not train further. Until buddhahood is attained, you should train to strengthen [bodhicitta](#).

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

### **One is Trained if One is Capable, Even When Distracted.**

A person in deep meditation is less distracted by outer situations, and any emotional afflictions tend to lie latent. When we can remain unmoved by desire and aggression, even though distracting circumstances conducive to such afflictions arise, we have attained control over our mind, further indicating our acquaintance with the practice. It is similar to learning to ride a horse. Initially, we have to hold on tightly, but after our acquaintance and skill grow, we no longer have to worry about falling off. In fact, we will be able to eat, talk, and even sleep while riding.

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### **With Experience You can Practice Even When Distracted**

Experienced riders do not fall off their horses. In the same way, when unexpected harm or sudden difficulties befall us, if love and compassion, rather than annoyance, come welling up in us of their own accord - in other words, if uncomfortable situations can be used to advantage in our lives - that is a sign that we have accomplished something in the Mind Training. So it is vitally important for us to continue in our efforts.

Experiences like this indicate a familiarity with the Mind Training; they do not, however, mean that the work is finished. For even if such signs occur, we should continue in our endeavor, becoming more thoroughly adept and always joyful. A mind, moreover, which has been subdued and calmed through practice will naturally reveal itself in external activities. As with the different proverbs, 'When you see ducks, you know that water is near' and 'There is no smoke without fire', so too Bodhisattvas can be recognized by outward signs...

Signs like this will arise in us as well, but they do not mean that there is nothing more for us to do. <scri

From [Enlightened Courage](#), by Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche.</scri