

Don't try to Be the Fastest

When practitioners begin to develop their understanding of the teaching of the dharma and their appreciation of the dharma, they sometimes fall into a sort of racehorse approach. Such practitioners are concerned with who can do their prostrations faster, who can sit better, who can eat better, who can do this and that better.

But if our practice is regarded purely as a race, we have a problem. The whole thing has become a game rather than an actual practice, and there is no seed of benevolence and gentleness in the practitioner. So you should not use your practice as a way to get ahead of your fellow students.

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

Don't Aim to Win

In a horse race, the aim is to be the fastest. Among dharma people there are often hopes of receiving more attention or being more highly regarded than others, and little schemes are made up to find ways to acquire possessions. Give these up. Have no concern about receiving or not receiving recognition or prestige.

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

Do Not Direct Yourself to the Summit of the Ascent

This next verse is difficult to understand as the words are not clear, and various possible spellings for the text change the meaning radically. However we translate the text, the commentary remains straightforward. When you are working with other people, sharing in any kind of project, don't stand up to claim credit for the work. In other words, don't seek out the limelight. This needs no further elaboration.

Some of these precepts are bound to be more useful than others, but it is worthwhile giving each of them a chance. Examine whether we tend to seek out the limelight, to pass the buck, to be sarcastic, and so forth. Such tendencies as we have, we can counteract, and this will be to our own benefit. The purpose of the training is not to set down laws and regulations, but simply to derive benefit.

Excerpted from: The Seven-Point Mind Training

Do Not Compete by a Last-minute Sprint.

We should not be like a person who for most of the time works with someone else to accomplish a task but near the finish shows exaggerated zeal in order to receive alone full credit for the work. This would be like two soldiers having jointly defeated the enemy, but one pretending to be the sole hero of the battle in order to collect the medals and promotion for himself alone. *Excerpted from Advice from a Spiritual Friend,*