

Be Grateful to Everyone

Work on taking and sending with these considerations in mind:

In general, all methods for attaining buddhahood rely on sentient beings. Therefore, to the individual who wishes to awaken, sentient beings are as worthy of gratitude as buddhas. Specifically, all sentient beings are worthy of gratitude since there is not one who has not been my parent. In particular, all those who hurt me are worthy of gratitude since they are my companions and helpers for gathering the accumulations of merit and pristine wisdom and for clearing away the obscurations of disturbing emotions and conceptual knowledge.

Do not be angry, not even at a dog or an insect. Strive to give whatever actual help you can. If you cannot help, then think and say:

May this sentient being (or troublemaker) quickly be rid of pain and enjoy happiness. May he come to attain buddhahood.

Arouse [bodhicitta](#):

From now on, all the virtuous acts I do shall be for his welfare.

When a god or a demon troubles you, think:

This trouble now occurs because I, from time without beginning, have made trouble for him. Now I shall give him my flesh and blood in recompense.

Imagine the one who troubles you to be present in front of you and mentally give him your body as you say:

Here, revel in my flesh and blood and whatever else you want.

Meditate with complete conviction that this troublemaker enjoys your flesh and blood, and is filled with pure happiness, and arouse the two kinds of [bodhicitta](#) in your mind. Or:

Because I had let mindfulness and other remedies lapse, disturbing emotions arose without my noticing them. Since this troublemaker has now warned me of this, he is certainly an expression of my guru or a buddha. I'm very grateful to him because he has stimulated me to train in [bodhicitta](#).

Or, when illness or suffering comes, think with complete sincerity:

If this hadn't happened, I would have been distracted by materialistic involvements and would not have maintained mindfulness of [dharma](#). Since this has brought [dharma](#) to my attention again, it is the guru's or the jewels' activity, and I am very grateful.

To sum up, whoever thinks and acts out of a concern to achieve his or her own well-being is a worldly person; whoever thinks and acts out of a concern to achieve the well-being of others is a [dharma](#) person. Langri-tangpa has said:

I open to you as deep a teaching as there is. Pay attention! All faults are our own. All good qualities are the lords', sentient beings. The point here is: give gain and victory to others, take loss and defeat for ourselves. Other than this, there is nothing to understand.

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

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So in a sense all the things taking place around us, all the irritations and all the problems, are crucial. Without others we cannot attain enlightenment - in fact, we cannot even tread on the path. In other words, we could say that if there is no noise outside during our sitting meditation, we cannot develop mindfulness... If everything were lovey-dovey and jellyfishlike, there would be nothing to work with.

We can write our own case history and employ our own lawyers to prove that we are right and somebody else is wrong - but that is also trouble we have to go through. And trying to prove our case history somehow doesn't work. In any case, hiring a lawyer to attain enlightenment is not done. It is not possible. Buddha did not have a lawyer himself.

Without others, we would have no chance at all to develop beyond ego. So the idea here is to feel grateful that others are presenting us with tremendous obstacles -even threats and challenges. The point is to appreciate that. Without them, we could not follow the path at all.

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

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The slogan 'Be grateful to everyone' is about making peace with the aspects of ourselves that we have rejected. Through doing that, we also make peace with the people we dislike. More to the point, being around people we dislike is often a catalyst for making friends with ourselves. Thus, "Be grateful to everyone."

If we were to make a list of people we don't like - people we find obnoxious, threatening, or worthy of contempt - we would find out a lot about those aspects of ourselves that we can't face. If we were to come up with one word about each of the troublemakers in our lives, we would find ourselves with a list of descriptions of our own rejected qualities, which we project onto the outside world. The people who repel us unwittingly show the aspects of ourselves that we find unacceptable, which otherwise we can't see. In traditional teachings on [lojong](#) it is put another way: other people trigger the [karma](#) that we haven't worked out. They mirror us and give us the chance to befriend all of that ancient stuff that we carry around like a backpack full of boulders.

"Be grateful to everyone" is getting at a complete change of attitude. This slogan is not wishy-washy and naive. It does not mean that if you're mugged on the street you should

smile knowingly and say "Oh, I should be grateful for this" before losing consciousness. This slogan actually gets at the guts of how we perfect ignorance through avoidance, not knowing we're eating poison, not knowing that we're putting another layer of protection over our heart, not seeing the whole thing.

"Be grateful to everyone" means that all situations teach you, and often it's the tough ones that teach you the best. There may be a Juan or Juanita in your life, and Juan or Juanita is the one who gets you going. They're the ones who don't go away: your mother, your husband, your wife, your lover, your child, the person that you have to work with every single day, part of the situation you can't escape. There's no way that someone else can tell you exactly what to do, because you're the only one who knows where it's torturing you, where your relationship with Juan or Juanita is getting into your guts.

When the great Buddhist teacher [Atisha](#) went to Tibet... he was told the people of Tibet were very good-natured, earthy, flexible, and open; he decided they wouldn't be irritating enough to push his buttons. So he brought along with him a mean-tempered, ornery Bengali tea boy. He felt that was the only way he could stay awake. The Tibetans like to tell the story that, when he got to Tibet, he realized that he need not have brought his tea boy: the people there were not as pleasant as he had been told.

In our own lives, the Bengali tea boys are the people who, when you let them through the front door of your house, go right down to the basement where you store the things you'd rather not deal with, pick out one of them, bring it to you, and say "Is this yours?"

From [Start Where You Are : A Guide to Compassionate Living](#) by [Pema Chodron](#), Copyright 1994, Shambhala Publications.

Meditate on Great Kindness Toward Everyone

Having engaged in this Mind Training, we can recognize that a person who has harmed us thereby kicks us out of our complacency and pushes us into practice. If we are surrounded by friends, our mental distortions may rarely be triggered and we can easily exaggerate our sense of the progress we have made in our practice. But when hostility triggers animosity, it is like a bucket full of cold water in the face, making it very clear that we have something here to work on.

When someone harms us or otherwise repels us, we can simply say, "This will pass," and distract ourselves with happier thoughts, turning our minds away. But this leaves us no less vulnerable the next time around. Suppose, for example, that Joe is a particularly arrogant person who rubs us the wrong way. We avoid having anything to do with him. After a while he changes jobs, or moves away, and we have no more contact with him. Joe gradually fades from our mind and no longer triggers our hostility. Now Jack appears and he is just as arrogant. Exactly the same thing happens, because nothing has been learned.

What Joe and Jack are doing is offering us an opportunity for self-knowledge, and at the same time providing an impetus for putting this training into practice. We can meditate authentically on the kindness of the very person who harms us and cultivate our awareness of this.

The kindness of a service rendered, or a gift, large or small, is a limited kindness. It may ease our suffering temporarily, but it does not render our minds less vulnerable to suffering. The greatest kindness another person can show us is to help transform our minds so that contentment arises more readily from the nature of the mind itself, without pleasant stimuli. A [dharma](#) teacher or a spiritual friend can do that. Our enemies can as well. They show us the truest, innermost kindness, and without them the teachings of books and spiritual friends are insufficient for our spiritual growth. We need these people. They serve an indispensable role in our lives. And what do they get out of it? Nothing, at best. They receive no benefit from the act of giving us harm, and if they are doing something really unwholesome, they get nothing but misfortune. There is ground here for both gratitude and compassion.

Sechibuwa then makes an even more emphatic statement. Inasmuch as the inflictors of harm are truly aiding our practice, they are great friends and helpers in our spiritual growth, and in this sense, we can regard them gladly and from our hearts as emanations of our spiritual mentor or of the Buddha.

Excerpted from: [The Seven-Point Mind Training](#)

Meditate on the Great Kindness of All.

If we train our minds to recognize the great kindness of all sentient beings, then despite any physical discomforts we shall always be joyful and happy, both mentally and spiritually. Take, for example, the case of two people, one whose thoughts are transformed in this way and another whose outlook is very worldly. If both are in hospital suffering from similar severe illnesses, the one with the well-trained mind can be mentally joyful and may even find the strength of mind to overcome his physical suffering, while the other, who has not changed his self-oriented outlook, suffers both physically and mentally. This, in turn, makes the physical pain greater so that there is no peace of mind at all.

Therefore, if we transform our thoughts by understanding the underlying cause of suffering as well as the kindness of all others, it will benefit us greatly because the continual difficulties and problems we face in daily life will never be a cause of suffering. Just as a traveler sets out on a long journey with sufficient food and supplies to avoid unforeseen hindrances, so should we be prepared for whatever life brings by changing our attitude; thus we shall be able to cope with any problem that may arise, and any suffering we may experience will neither hurt us nor greatly upset us.

Thus, there are two important aspects involved in transforming our thoughts into the awakening mind: we should recognize first that self-cherishing is the enemy to be annihilated, and second that all sentient beings are true friends whom we should love and benefit as much as possible. Although at present we do not have the ability to reach and benefit all beings, it is our responsibility to develop our minds so that we completely change the self-cherishing attitude into one of helping and cherishing others. In order to do this, we must be aware that *all* mother sentient beings have been most kind to us and are in true need of help. We must therefore look closely at all others and understand what they wish to have and what they wish to avoid. This is simple: all beings desire happiness and wish to avoid suffering. To be able to take from them what they do not want and give them what they need, we should prepare in the following manner.

Webmaster's note: there follow the instructions on tonglen (sending and taking)

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Reflect Upon the Kindness of All Beings

Let us regard ego-clinging as our enemy. When it exists no longer, it will be impossible for us not to care for others more than we do for ourselves. As this feeling arises, let us reflect upon the kindness of all beings, for they have been our parents and have shown us much goodness countless times in the past.

We should be thankful to all beings, for enlightenment depends upon them, and have as much love and compassion towards our enemies as we have towards our friends. This is the most important thing, because love and compassion for parents, husbands, wives, brothers and sisters arises naturally by itself. It is said in the Bodhicharyavatara:

*The state of Buddhahood depends
On beings and the Buddhas equally.
By what tradition is it then that
Buddhas, but not beings, are alone revered?*

For the one who wishes to attain enlightenment, the Buddhas and sentient beings have an equal kindness. With regard to those to whom we owe so much, we should meditate very strongly: generating an intense love, wishing them every happiness, and having great compassion, wanting them to be free from suffering.

Especially if we are the victims of harm inflicted by human or non-human beings, we should not think, 'This being is harming me, therefore I will make him and his descendants pay.' No, we must not bear grudges. Instead, we should think to ourselves: 'This evil-doer has for countless lives been my mother - my mother who, not caring for all the suffering she had to undergo for my sake, not listening to all the bad things people might say, took care of me and endured much suffering in samsara. The harm which I suffer at the hands of others is provoked by my bad karma.' Thus we should try to be very loving towards such beings, thinking, 'Until now I have only harmed others. Henceforward, I will free them from all their ills and be of help to them.' In this way, we should perform the practice of taking and giving very intensely.

We should decide that from now on, whatever virtuous actions we perform, the riches or longevity we gain, even Buddhahood itself - all these will be exclusively for the benefit of others. Whatever good might come to us, we will give it all away. What does it matter, then, if we attain enlightenment or not, if our lives are long or short, if we are rich or poor. None of this matters!

As Langri Tangpa Dorje Gyaltsen said, 'Of all the profound teachings I have read, this only have I understood: that all harm and sorrow are my own doing and all benefit and qualities are thanks to others. Therefore all my gain I give to others, all loss I take upon myself' <scr

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