

Always Maintain Only a Joyful Mind

It is like taking a holiday trip: you are very inspired to wake up in the morning because you are expecting to have a tremendous experience. Exertion is like the minute before you wake up on a holiday trip: you have some sense of trusting that you are going to have a good time, but at the same time you have to put your effort into it.

The point of this slogan is continuously to maintain joyful satisfaction. That means that every mishap is good, because it is encouragement for you to practice [dharma](#). Other people's mishaps are good also: you should share them and bring them into yourself as the continuity of their practice or discipline. So you should include that also. It is very nice to feel that way, actually.

To start with, you maintain a sense of cheerfulness because you are on the path; you are actually doing something about yourself.

...

In some sense the whole thing is ridiculously trippy. But if somebody doesn't begin to provide some kind of harmony, we will not be able to develop sanity in this world at all. Somebody has to plant the seed so that sanity can happen on this earth.

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

Always Maintain Only a Joyful Mind

You hear a slogan like 'Always maintain only a joyful mind' and for the whole next two weeks you're just hitting yourself over the head for never being joyful. That kind of witness is a bit heavy. So lighten up. Don't make such a big deal. The key to feeling at home with your body, mind and emotions, to feeling worthy to live on this planet, comes from being able to lighten up.

When your aspiration is to lighten up, you begin to have a sense of humor. Things just keep popping your serious state of mind. In addition to a sense of humor, a basic support for a joyful mind is curiosity, paying attention, taking an interest in the world around you. You don't actually have to be happy. But being curious without a heavy judgmental attitude helps. If you ARE judgmental, you can even be curious about that.

Notice everything. Appreciate everything, including the ordinary. That's how to click in with joyfulness or cheerfulness. Curiosity encourages cheering up. So does simply remembering to do something different. We are so locked into this sense of burden - Big Deal Joy and Big Deal Unhappiness - that it's sometimes helpful just to change the pattern. Anything out of the ordinary will help, and [tonglen](#) is definitely something different. This practice is about repatterning ourselves, changing the basic pattern and unpatterning ourselves altogether. You can also just go to the window and look out at the sky. You can splash cold water on your face, you can sing in the shower, you can go jogging - anything that's against your usual pattern. That's how things start to lighten up.

Sooner or later you will find yourself in a situation where you can't change the outer circumstances at all, and you realize it all comes down to how you relate to things - whether

you continue to struggle against everything that's coming at you or you begin to work with things.

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

Always Have the Support of a Joyful Mind

When there is never any fear or despair no matter what adversity or suffering is encountered, when difficulty is taken as an aid to mind training and you always have the help of a joyful mind, then you have acquired proficiency in mind training. When adverse conditions come, meditate joyfully and, in addition, learn to take joyfully all the adversity others experience.

From [*The Great Path of Awakening :*](#)

Rely Continually on Mental Happiness Alone

We can judge whether our practice is fruitful and the Mind Training is succeeding if, regardless of whatever unfavorable circumstances occur, we respond with the antidote of cultivating the two bodhicittas, and satisfied with that, we do not become discouraged or depressed, nor respond with unwholesome action. In other words, we are encouraged to measure how constantly we reside in a state of cheerful equanimity.

Other paths that are aimed at "sudden awakening" lead one on an unmapped journey that may offer no clear indications of progress. In contrast, in this practice we have definite signposts along the way. Look at your mental distortions and see how they are doing. After practicing for a month, a year, six years, are the mental distortions somewhat diminished? Do wholesome qualities arise more readily, more frequently, more deeply? At the very root of the mental distortions, is the self-grasping attenuated? Is there less self-centeredness and greater humility? Is there more loving concern for the welfare of others? All of these are causes that lead either to well-being or to misery.

Another sure sign comes from ourselves, our chief witness. How do we feel? Are we more contented people now than before we began the practice? This is especially useful if we can look back over a couple of years or so. Is our mind more cheerful, more serene? If we can answer yes, then the practice is working. Its purpose is to give us greater happiness and to lead us to awakening so that we can be of greater service to others. Indeed, the fruit of the practice is happiness and good cheer, not in some longed-for day in the future, but right during the practice itself. Although at times it is difficult, because the circumstances are difficult, the practice itself should not generally be arduous. The sign of a fruitful spiritual practice is the attenuation of mental distress.

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](#).

One is Always Accompanied by Only Joyful Thoughts.

If we experience a joyous feeling, even under very adverse situations, this is a sign of attainment in our practice. For example, when we meet another person who unjustly criticizes us, or when we are deeply suffering from an illness or great remorse and, instead of becoming hurt and feeling upset, we spontaneously feel great joy, this is a clear indication that we are becoming well acquainted with the principles of thought transformation. When we are not in contact with such adverse circumstances, then of course we feel happy, calm, and peaceful. Yet if we suffer and become upset just like anyone else when meeting with such difficulties, this clearly shows our practice is deficient and that we should apply still more effort. We do not require an external teacher to determine the effectiveness of our practice since we can each make our own test by assessing our reactions to the specific circumstances we encounter.

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Always Be Sustained by Cheerfulness

On account of the strength of their Mind Training, the Kadampa masters were always able to look on the bright side of things no matter what happened to them. Even if they contracted leprosy they would continue to be cheerful, happy in the knowledge that leprosy brings a painless death. Of course, leprosy is one of the worst of all diseases, but we should be resolved that, even if we were to catch it, we would continue to practice the exchange of happiness for sorrow, taking upon ourselves the suffering of all who have fallen victim to that affliction.

We should decide that, by virtue of the Mind Training, we will be able to take onto the path whatever difficult situations arise. If we are able to do this with confidence, it is a sign that we are experienced in the practice; and we will be happy come what may. In addition, we must take upon ourselves, and experience, the sufferings of others. When others are having to endure physical and mental illness, or are confronted with all sorts of adversity, we should want to take it all upon ourselves. And we should do so without any hope or fear. 'But if the sufferings of others really do come upon me, what shall I do?' - second thoughts like this should be completely banished from our minds.

From [Enlightened Courage](#), by Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche