

Whatever You Meet Unexpectedly, Join With Meditation

The idea is that whatever comes up is not a sudden threat or an encouragement or any of that bullshit. Instead it simply goes along with one's discipline, one's awareness of compassion. If somebody hits you in the face, that's fine...

Generally speaking, Western audiences have a problem with that kind of thing. It sounds love-and-lighty, like the hippie ethic in which "Everything is going to be okay. Everybody is everybody's property, everything is everybody's property. You can share everything with everybody. Don't lay ego trips on things." But this is something more than that... It is simply to be open and precise, and to know your territory at the same time. You are going to relate with your own neurosis rather than expanding that neurosis to others.

In a sense, when you begin to settle down to that kind of practice, to that level of being decent and good, you begin to feel very comfortable and relaxed in your world. It actually takes away your anxiety altogether, because you don't have to pretend at all... There is so much accommodation taking place in you. And out of that comes a kind of power: what you say makes sense to others. The whole thing works so wonderfully. It does not have to become martyrdom. It works very beautifully.

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

Whatever You Meet Unexpectedly, Join With Meditation

This is the slogan about surprises as gifts. These surprises can be pleasant or unpleasant; the main point is that they can stop your minds. You're walking along and a snowball hits you on the side of the head. It stops your mind.

I was being driven in a car one day, when a horn honked loudly from behind. A car comes up by my window and the driver's face is purple and he's shaking his fist at me - my window is rolled down and so is his - and he yells "Get a job!" That one still stops my mind.

The instruction is that when something stops your mind, catch the moment of that gap, that moment of big space, that moment of bewilderment, that moment of total astonishment, and let yourself rest in it a little longer than you ordinarily might.

Interestingly enough, this is also the instruction on how to die. The moment of death is apparently a major surprise.

After the gap, when you've begun to talk to yourself again - "That horrible person" or "Wasn't it wonderful that he allowed me to rest my mind in the nature of [alaya](#)?" - you could catch yourself and start to do [tonglen](#) practice. Let the story line go and get in touch.

Usually we're so caught up in ourselves, we're hanging on to ourselves so tightly, that it takes a Mack truck knocking us down to wake us up and stop our minds. But really, as you begin to practice, it could just take the wind blowing the curtain.

I had an interesting experience of something surprising me like this on retreat. I had been practicing all day, after which you might think I would be in a calm, saintly frame of mind. But as I saw that someone had left dirty dishes, I started to get really angry.

Now, on this retreat we put our name on our dishes... there was only one woman of our group of eight who would leave such a mess. Who did she think was going to wash these dishes, her mother? Did she think we were all her slaves? I was really getting into this, I was thinking, "I've know her for a long time, but actually she might as well have never meditated for the way she's so inconsiderate of everybody else on this planet."

When I got to the sink, I looked at the plate, and the name on it was "Pema" and the name on the cup was "Pema" and the name on the knife was "Pema". It was all mine! Needless to say, that cut my trip considerably. It also stopped my mind.

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

In Order to Take Unexpected Conditions as the Path, Immediately Join Whatever You Meet With Meditation

When illness, demons, interruptions, or disturbing emotions come unexpectedly, or if you see someone else troubled by some unpleasant situation, think, "I shall just practice taking and sending." In all your virtuous thoughts and actions think:

*May all sentient beings come to. engage naturally in much greater [*dharm*](#) activity than this.*

Do the same when you are happy and comfortable. If you have some evil thought or are forced to engage in some form of evil activity, think:

May every evil thought and action of every sentient being be gathered in this one.

In summary, maintain the motivation to help others whatever you are doing: eating, sleeping, walking, or sitting. As soon as you encounter a situation, good or bad, work at this practice of mind training.

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

Whatever You Encounter, Immediately Apply it to Meditation

Sechibuwa comments that the preceding verses are the actual teachings of the third point on transforming unfavorable circumstances into the path. This final verse of the third point

is a contemplative practice to be implemented between formal sessions, as we are out and about in daily life.

Whatever misfortune, calamity, or suffering arises, whether you are mugged or robbed or thrown in jail, immediately apply it to the Mind Training. Recall that there are countless sentient beings who are experiencing similar misfortune, and practice taking the misfortune of others upon yourself and into your own self-centeredness. Likewise, when you see others in misfortune, imagine in your mind's eye taking this upon yourself. Whenever a strong mental affliction such as attachment or anger arises, practice in the same way: think of the innumerable sentient beings who are subject to the same affliction and take it upon yourself.

We can see that the transformation of unfavorable circumstances is intimately tied to attenuating and finally ending these mental afflictions. Until we stop these perpetual hopes and anxieties over momentary shifts in fortune, we cannot possibly transform unfavorable circumstances into the path. On the other hand, once we really do transcend these temporal polarities of fear and hope, we will have made a crooked stick into a straight one.

*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](#).*

Utilize Every Immediate Circumstance for Meditation.

Wherever we are - alone in the mountains or in a crowded and bustling city, under whatever circumstances, favorable or not - and whether others harm us or whether we enjoy perfect health and peace of mind, we should utilize all situations to speed us along the path to liberation. If we know how to meditate on emptiness, the ultimate awakening mind, we should practice it wherever we are; if we are stricken with a serious illness, we should consider how this is a way of expending the energy of past unskillful deeds. In this way we should be joyful and very satisfied. Even while we are eating or walking, if we continue to meditate, we shall always be upholding the practice of a [bodhisattva](#).

A person following this advice will always be satisfied and full of energy; no matter how this person may appear in the eyes of others, his or her practice progresses constantly. Frequently, [Milarepa](#) would say:

In any circumstance, whether I am sleeping, walking, or eating, I pursue my meditations uninterruptedly.

If we retain this practice of changing all circumstances into the path, we shall automatically be purifying ourselves of all obstacles and the seeds of past wrongs and shall simultaneously be accumulating merit. Whether the situation seems conducive to Dharma practice or not, it will be used solely for developing the mind. Just as pouring kerosene on a wood fire causes the flames to increase, likewise, once we have lit the flame of the awakening mind, all situations will serve to strengthen it. In fact, within the environment of this age many more targets will be found at which to aim our practice, but we must be fully prepared through having trained the mind well. Otherwise, if we become completely depressed and discouraged, the study of this practice will have been a total waste of time.

Copyright Brian Beresford, 1977, 1996. Excerpted from [Advice from a Spiritual Friend](#),

To Bring the Unexpected to the Path, Begin to Train Immediately

There is no certainty that we will not fall victim to disease, evil forces and so on. If we are afflicted by serious illness, we should think, 'There are countless beings in this world suffering in the same way as I.' In this way we should generate strong feelings of compassion. If, for example, we are struck by heart disease, we should think, 'Wherever space pervades, there are beings suffering like this,' and imagine that all their illnesses are concentrated in our own hearts.

If we are struck by evil forces, we should think, 'By making me suffer, these evil beings are helping me to practice Bodhicitta; they are of great importance for my progress on the path, and rather than being expelled, they should be thanked.' We should be as grateful to them as we are towards our teachers.

Again, if we see others in trouble, although we cannot immediately take their suffering upon ourselves, we should make the wish to be able to relieve them from their misfortunes. Prayers like this will bear fruit eventually. Again, if others have very strong afflictive emotions, we should think, 'May all their emotions be concentrated in me.' With fervent conviction, we should persist in thinking like this until we have some sign or feeling that we have been able to take upon ourselves the suffering and emotions of others. This might take the form of an increase in our own emotions or the actual experience of the suffering and pain of others.

This is how to bring hardships onto the path in order to free ourselves from hopes and fears - hopes, for instance, that we will not get ill, or fears that we might do so. They will thus be pacified in the equal taste of happiness and suffering. Eventually, through the power of Bodhicitta, we will reach the point where we are free even from the hope of accomplishing Bodhicitta and the fear of not doing so.

If you bind a crooked tree to a large wooden stake, it will eventually grow straight. Up to now, our minds have always been crooked, thinking how we might trick and mislead people, but this practice, as Geshe Langri Tangpa said, will make our minds straight and true. <s

From Enlightened Courage, by Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche. </s