

## Don't Vacillate

You should not vacillate in your enthusiasm for practice. If you sometimes practice and sometimes do not, that will not give birth to certainty in the dharma. Therefore, don't think too much. Just concentrate one-pointedly on mind training.

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

## Don't Vacillate

The slogan "Don't vacillate" very much goes along with not being swayed by external circumstances. Whatever arises, you can keep your heart open. Beyond that, you can see shutting down or closing off as an opportunity to wake up. Spinning off when things are painful or pleasant presents an opportunity to practice lojong. You have good instructions on what to do with pain, breathing it in, becoming more intimate and making friends with it; you have instructions on what to do with pleasure, sending it out, giving away what you are most unwilling to lose. In this way we can begin to know the pain of others and wish for others to have happiness, using the joy and pleasure of our lives not as problems but as tools for benefiting others.

*From Start Where You Are : A Guide to Compassionate Living by Pema Chodron,*

## Do Not Be Erratic

We may practice the Mind Training enthusiastically for a few weeks or months, and then find that we have not yet attained bodhicitta. Feeling that it is not working, we shift to some other kind of practice. When this fails to give us the satisfaction we are looking for, we turn to yet another technique. After doing that for a while, we are dissatisfied and once again give the Mind Training a whirl. After carrying on like this for a while we say, "Fiddlesticks, none of that stuff works; let's go to a movie and forget about the whole business." This type of erratic discontinuity of practice is ineffective. We may give it a lot of effort, but it yields little benefit. This erratic quality can be especially a problem for Western dharma practitioners: how earnest we can be, and how totally erratic as well! A Tibetan lama once commented that Western dharma practice is often like taking a shower, then going out all spic and span to roll in some mud, then recognizing how filthy we are, going back into the shower, then going out to roll in the mud again.... A lot of time and effort is expended with very little to show for it.

We may have a fantastic technique, and practice with gusto when we are in a conducive environment such as a meditation course. But if technique is all we have, our practice falls like a house of cards as soon as that supportive environment is missing. What can provide the continuous incentive for maintaining a dharma practice that is not erratic? More understanding. When dharma begins to saturate the way we view the world, our attitudes and values, it naturally provides an ongoing impetus for us to apply the techniques we have

learned. This wealth of theoretical background for practice is one of the great strong points of Tibetan Buddhism.

*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.*

## **Be Consistent in Your Practice**

When we are content and our lives are going well, we feel inclined to practice; but when, for example, we are hungry and have nothing to eat, we lose interest. This is because we lack perfect confidence in the teachings. As the saying goes, 'Well fed and warm in the sun: that's when we look like practitioners. But when things go wrong, we are very ordinary people. The Dharma and our minds never seem to mingle. Bless us with the proper attitude!' And it is said too, 'Meditators whose behavior has drifted into ordinary ways will never be free. Reciting many mantras for the sake of appearances will not help us on the path.'

*From Enlightened Courage, by Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche*