

## **Begin the Sequence of Sending and Taking With Yourself**

So whenever anything happens, the first thing is to take on the pain yourself. Afterward, you give away anything which is left beyond that, anything pleasurable... so you do not hold on to any possible way of entertaining yourself or giving yourself good treatment.

...

So the whole approach here is to open your territory completely, to let go of everything. If you suddenly discover that a hundred hippies want to camp in your living room, let them do so! But then those hippies also have to practice.

The basic idea of the practice is actually very joyful. It is wonderful that human beings can do such a fantastic exchange and that they are willing to invite such undesirable situations into their world. It is wonderful that they are willing to let go of even their smallest corners of secrecy and privacy, so that their holding on to anything is gone completely. That is very brave. We could certainly say that this is the world of the warrior, from the Bodhisattva's point of view.

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

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What you do for yourself - any gesture of kindness, any gesture of gentleness, any gesture of honesty and clear seeing toward yourself - will affect how you experience your world. In fact, it will transform how you experience the world. What you do for yourself, you're doing for others, and what you do for others, you're doing for yourself. When you exchange self for others in the practice of tonglen, it becomes increasingly uncertain what is out there and what is in here.

Start where you are. This is very important. Tonglen practice (and all meditation practice) is not about later, when you get it all together and you're this person you really respect. You may be the most violent person in the world - that's a fine place to start. That's a very rich place to start - juicy, smelly. You might be the most depressed person in the world, the most addicted person in the world, the most jealous person in the world. You might think that there are no others on the planet who hate themselves as much as you do. All of that is a good place to start. Just where you are - that's the place to start.

Milarepa is one of the lineage holders of the Kagyü lineage of Tibetan Buddhism. One evening Milarepa returned to his cave after gathering firewood, only to find it filled with demons. They were cooking his food, reading his books, sleeping in his bed. They had taken over the joint. He knew all about nonduality of self and other, but he didn't know quite how to get these guys out of his cave. Even though he had the sense that they were just a projection of his own mind - all the unwanted parts of himself - he didn't know how to get rid of them.

So he sat on a seat that was higher than they were ... and taught them the dharma. Nothing happened. Then he lost his patience and got angry and ran at them. They just laughed at him. Finally he gave up and just sat down on the floor saying, "I'm not going away and I guess you're not either, so let's just live together."

At that point, all of them left except one. Milarepa said, "Oh, this one is particularly vicious." (We all know that one. Sometimes we have lots of them like that. Sometimes we feel that's all we've got.) He didn't know what to do, so he surrendered himself even further. He

walked over and put himself right into the mouth of the demon and said, "Just eat me up of you want to." Then that demon left too. The moral of the story is, when the resistance is gone, so are the demons.

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

## **Commence Taking Progressively From Your own Side.**

Until now, our sole consideration has been for our own benefit and happiness, and this has prevented our feeling genuine concern for others. Therefore, at first we may experience some difficulty in imagining or thinking about taking on the suffering of all other beings. We should begin the meditation by accepting all the difficulties that may happen to us today, tomorrow, and on into the next life. Although the prime object of giving and taking is to accept the misery of others, we train our mind by imagining our own immediate suffering. Only after our mind has become accustomed to this do we begin to take suffering from others. Just as a person who wishes to scale Mount Everest will first train on the lesser peaks, so should we practice on our own selves first.

Although in the beginning this meditation may seem difficult, eventually the pure wish to accept the suffering of others and give them only joy and happiness will arise spontaneously from the depths of our heart. In the army, soldiers practice in mock battles, and it is only after repeated training among themselves that they develop the desire and ability to defeat their real enemy.

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We should think like this: 'May all the torments destined for me in the future, the heat and cold of the hells and the hunger and thirst of the famished spirits, come to me now. And may all the karma, obscuration and defilement causing beings to fall into an infernal destiny sink into my heart so that I myself might go to hell instead of them. May the suffering of others, the fruit, as the teachings say, of their desire and ignorance, come to me.' We should train ourselves like this again and again until we have such signs as that of Maitriyogin, who was wounded in the place where the stone had hit the dog.

Bodhicitta, the mind of enlightenment, is the heart of all the practices of the Sutra and Mantrayana, and it is easy to implement. If one has it, everything is complete, and nothing is complete without it.

*From Enlightened Courage, by Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche.*