

Don't act With a Twist

Acting with a twist means that since you think you are going to get the best in any case, you might as well volunteer for the worst. That is very sneaky.

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For instance, in order to gain good results for yourself, you may temporarily take the blame for something. Or you may practice lojong very hard in order to get something out of it, or with the idea of protecting yourself from sickness. The practice of this slogan is to drop that attitude of looking for personal benefits from practice - either as an immediate or a long-term result.

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

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It means don't be devious, but it's similar to those slogans about not eating poisonous food or turning gods into demons. You're willing to drive all blames into yourself very publicly so everyone will notice, because you want people to think well of you. Your motivation is to get others to think that you're a great person, which is the "twist." Or there's a person who's doing you wrong, and you remember lojong, but there's a twist. You don't say, "Buzz off, Juanita," or anything harsh. You're this sweet person who wins everyone's admiration, but the other side of this is that they dislike Juanita more and more for mistreating you. It's as if you set Juanita up by acting like a saint. That's the idea of acting with a twist. There are all kinds of ways to get sweet revenge.

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

Don't Revert to Magic

If you accept a setback for the time being out of a desire for future benefits for yourself or if you practice mind training expecting to cure illness and mental disturbances and ward off adverse situations, your practice is mistaken, like someone contriving magical rituals. Don't act this way. Whatever happiness or sorrow comes, meditate without arrogance, hesitation, fear, or hope. Gyal-se Tokme has said:

Mind training done with that kind of attitude should be considered a method for helping demons and disturbances. If you practice that way, it's no different from evil. Dharma work must counteract discursive thought and disturbing emotions.

With this example, consider the topic of mistaken dharma practice. Mistaken outlooks are outlooks based on eternalism or nihilism; mistaken meditation is meditation that clings to some sublime state; mistaken conduct is conduct that is not consistent with the three ordinations. Mistaken dharma denotes anything that is contradictory to the ethics or outlook authoritatively taught in the holy dharma, regardless of whom it comes from, you or someone else, the very best or the very least. It will propel you into samsara and the lower realms. It's like taking the wrong medicine for an illness or applying the wrong disciplinary measures.

There are individuals who call certain composed and revealed works "mistaken dharma" without examining the words or thoughts in a single chapter to see whether they are pure

or mistaken. It would appear that they issue their pronouncements out of attachment to their own systems or from personal differences. It is said that no one but a buddha is able to evaluate the worth of an individual. So, even though you may not like a person who has arrived at a proper outlook and ethics, your dislike doesn't make the dharma mistaken. For example, a merchant may sell gold or glitter, but it doesn't make him a better or worse merchant. Buddha said over and over again:

Don't rely on individuals; rely on the dharma.

I make this digression here because it is so important to understand this point.

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

Do Not Be Devious

This is also very straightforward. The commentary gives as an example the pretense that you are accepting a loss from someone else while in fact you stand to benefit. Again, not much elaboration is needed. Being devious, cunning, or sly has no place in a life that is oriented towards dharma.

Excerpted from: The Seven-Point Mind Training

Do Not Be Treacherous.

We should never withdraw slyly at the beginning of a competition and allow the opponent to think that he will win, knowing full well that this maneuver will eventually bring the victory to us.

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Do Not Misuse the Remedy

We would be misusing the remedy if we were to take upon ourselves the misfortunes of others, but with a wish for personal happiness or that others might say of us that we are patient and loving Bodhisattvas, trying thus to build up for ourselves a good reputation. We should free ourselves of all such intentions and never assume the misfortunes of others for these reasons.

Another example of this kind of behavior would be wanting to practice Mind Training in order to be cured from a disease, or out of fear of ghosts and spirits.

We should not reduce the Mind Training to the level of mere sorcery by trying to use it as a means of repelling evil influences. Evil spirits and ghosts harm others because they are deluded. We should not practice the Mind Training against them, but to free them from their bad karma. When they create obstacles, we should practice chod with compassion; then they will not harm us. Our practice should be the antidote only for our own negative emotions.

From Enlightened Courage, by Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche.