



Bodhicharya

AWAKEN THE HEART BY OPENING THE MIND

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How to Accumulate More Positive Deeds. Part 1
5th Chapter, Stanzas 71-75



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So now we have come to the 5th Chapter of the Bodhicharyavatara, *Vigilant Introspection*. We were talking about 3 shilas, or 3 disciplines. First is to refrain from doing negative things. We talked about that. The second is how to accumulate more positive deeds, and there, we are going through that. So we have gone through the different things that would help us, that would lead us to practice that. How to see things. How important is our mind. It depends on how we guard our mind and how we use our intentions and our thoughts that make our actions more positive or negative.

Now we are coming to how to actually, skilfully, accumulate more positive deeds. This is from stanza number 71 of the 5th chapter:

Be the master of yourself
And have an ever-smiling countenance.
Rid yourself of scowling, wrathful frowns,
And be a true and honest friend to all. [5:71]

So the first thing is be a master of yourself. We try to promise, we try to make a stand that I will not be the slave of my emotions. Nor will I be a slave of what others are saying and doing, and just reacting to that. I will be a master of myself. I will feel, I will react, I will think, I will act as I think would be most beneficial for me and others. Not just be a slave to the situations and to the emotions that arise. I will just not only react, but be my own master. I have control of my mind where I would like to focus. And when I can do that, then I start to behave the way I want.

I need to have an ever-smiling countenance. Because if I am free to do what I want, react the way I want, and then I would like to be joyful – so, ever-smiling countenance. There is no need, no use, to put on a scowling face, wrathful face; no need to be upset all the time; no need to be hurt all the time; no need to be angry all the time. Get rid of those scowling and wrathful faces. I look in my mirror again and again, and see how I am acting, how I am feeling, because what state of mind I am in is actually expressed on my face. So I try not to forget to smile, and put on an ever-smiling countenance, and *be a true and honest friend to all.*

And also, I try to be – I *should* be, not "try" – I need to be a true and honest friend to all. There is no need for me to be unfriendly, no need to wish bad things on anybody else, because that wouldn't help me nor help others. So I should be "wishing well" to everybody. I should try to do anything that could be of some help to anybody. When I am doing like that, if I wish well and try my best to do whatever I can to be of help, then I am a true friend. I am an honest friend. And when I want that, I could also show that with my face, with my body language, with my speech. Because sometimes people think "*Oh, I have no friend! You know, I have no friend! Nobody is my friend!*" That is wrong way of seeing. You need to become a friend. And then everybody will become your friend. If I am not a friend, nobody can be my friend. Because friendship is mutual. Friendship cannot be one-sided. Friendship is mutual. First, if you become a friend, then it is most likely that you will have friendships with others also. So therefore, the starting point is yourself.

But then, also, it is not that you could expect too much from people. Because, as you know, they have their own problems, and they have their own weaknesses. So it is not that if I am a friend with somebody that they will do everything that I want. That is a wrong expectation.

Do not, acting inconsiderately,

Move chairs and furniture so noisily around.

Likewise do not open doors with violence.

Take pleasure in the practice of humility. [5:72]

How to become a true friend? How to be a useful person? One of the most important things is to not act inconsiderately. You have to be considerate. You have to be mindful, and see what actions you take with your body, with your speech, and also with your mind, your expressions. If you act in your mind in a negative way, that will somehow come out. Others can easily see it, so therefore, [be aware of your] body, speech and mind. You have to be very considerate, because that is the key. If you are not considerate, then you can't be helping people. You can't be a good friend. You cannot be doing something positive. So be considerate.

This includes even very minor actions, like you are too noisy, you are moving things, making lots of noise; doing things like moving chairs, furnitures, and things like that. If somebody needs to be in silence, like meditating, then even opening doors, slamming doors, [such] small things [can be inconsiderate]. These are just examples, but even small matters like that. You have to respect the customs, the cultures, the traditions of other people, their views, what they consider important, how people do things. You cannot say that is not my culture so I don't have to do that. Sometimes people are very much offended, or very much insulted because you do something totally insignificant, but for them, it could be a big thing.

Take pleasure in the practice of humility. We need to have humility. Humility means I am ready to learn. I have to always be ready to learn. If we go to a new place, a new environment, a new job, you may think that I know much better than everybody else. And maybe you know better in many things, better than everybody else. But still, you have to be ready to learn. Otherwise, you will not be accepted. Otherwise, they will not like you. Otherwise, you don't understand them. And so you will not be successful; and you will not be able to do what you want to do. So therefore humility is

a very important thing. Humility doesn't mean that I have no confidence in myself, I don't value myself. Or I don't have much respect for myself. That is not what it is. Humility means ready to learn, have respect for others. That is humility.

Hérons, cats, and burglars

Achieve what they intend

By going silently and unobserved.

Such is the constant practice of a sage. [5:73]

Hérons, cats and burglars. Herons catch fish, cats catch mice and burglars are able to steal what they want to steal by being very silent; by being very inconspicuous. They are silent and inconspicuous. They are unobserved by others. Then they get things done. So a good practitioner [likewise] has to practice by himself or herself, not making a big ha-ha-who-who about it. You don't need to make a big advertisement that you are doing some practice, meditation, or something. You just do that. The more silently and secretly you do the practice, the less obstacles there is. That is the general understanding. It is sometimes true, especially among Western practitioners who have members of the family or friends who are not very open to meditation or some of the Eastern kind of practices because they don't understand. They don't know whether it is good for you or not. So if you talk too much about those things, then it will unnecessarily create problems and disturbances. So if you are silent and just practice within yourself, then you will get the result without disturbing other people.

When useful admonitions come unsought

From those with skill in counseling their fellows,

Welcome them with humble gratitude,

And always strive to learn from everyone. [5:74]

When useful kinds of advice, and admonitions also, come – admonition is like being told you should do this, you should not do this, a little bit given in a rough way. Even if they come without your asking for them, especially those coming from people who know what is right and wrong, and even those coming from those who do not know what is right and wrong, welcome them. Why not? If somebody gives you an advice, accept it. Then you think whether it is a good thing you can

use, and you would like to follow it, or maybe not necessary to follow it. So if you think very clearly that it is not necessary to follow, then don't follow it. But if somebody gives you advice, you don't have to be hurt. You don't have to be unhappy. You don't have to be upset because somebody tries to advise you, to give their counsel to you. So you have to accept that, to take that humbly, and with gratitude. Because nobody will try to advise you something unless they have a feeling for you. If your parents try to advise you, if your teachers try to advise you, that is because they have concerns about you. So you have to accept that with gratitude. Always strive to learn from them. So always we have to try to learn from everybody. Because if there is a good example, we can learn from them and follow them. If it is a bad example, we can also learn from them, and try not to do in the same way. If they give good advice, we can learn from them; not a good advice also we can learn from them. Why not? So try to learn from everything and everyone. That is very important.

Praise all whose speech is worthy.

Say, "Your words are excellent!"

And when you notice others acting well,

Encourage them in terms of warm approval. [5:75]

Especially if somebody gives you good advice, or say something that is really useful, that is really good, worthwhile, wonderful, then you must appreciate it, you must say it. Say *"Your words are excellent. That is very good. I appreciate it."* You have to acknowledge it. You have to appreciate very clearly. Not that you don't say anything.

Sometimes, the jealousy comes out. Sometimes, due to certain reasons, you are competitive. So even if somebody says something good or does something good, you don't appreciate it well. That is very bad. We have to heart-fully, clearly, and directly appreciate, because that will also help ourselves to really be able to appreciate others' good advice and positive things. But also it will encourage others to do good and to do whatever is positive in what they are doing. And if we appreciate them, they will be more encouraged to do more.

So when you notice others acting very well, then you have to encourage them *in terms of warm approval*. And we have to watch this clearly, because there is a chance, a possibility that some

kind of competitiveness, some kind of jealousy or envy, can come in. If you see this kind of thing happening in your mind, immediately, you work on it. And then you really act very clearly, with approval, with rejoicing, and with praise. This is very important practice.

These are all practices. Practice is not only meditation. Practice is not only doing something, taking time away from your work. These are daily actions. If you take care of your daily actions, [watch] how your mind works, how you behave, then that is the practice.

This is stanza number 75. So I'll stop here. And then we go forward on the same topic in the next video.

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This is a transcript of a video talk given for the Bodhicharya Online Shedra by Ringu Tulku Rinpoche. The transcript has only been lightly edited and is meant to be used within the Online Shedra study context.