



### 'Choosing One's Practice'

An Excerpt From *Healing With Form, Energy and Light*, by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche

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Whether or not meditation and spiritual practices are powerful depends on the practitioner more than the form of the practice. There is little benefit if they are done without a correct understanding of how to practice and what the practice is supposed to accomplish. The practitioner can engage in a fantasy of spiritual progress but genuine spiritual development may be lacking. For example, when we are weak, energetically disturbed, depressed, or holding tightly to a fragile identity, we are easier prey to negative external influences and to internal confusions. At such a time, believing ourselves to be practicing a very high practice like Dzogchen may not be very helpful. If we claim to be practicing a high practice but there is no positive effect, we are only deceiving ourselves. The highest practice for an individual is the practice that is most effective, whatever it is called.

No one can really tell you which practice you should do at a particular time. You must come to understand the practices, how they are meant to work and within what situations, and then be relentlessly honest with yourself about your own present capacity. Be clear with yourself. Don't idealize. Find the right teacher. Study. And then make a decision. It's not a question of which practice is better in an abstract sense, it's a question of which practice you need. If you are dishonest with yourself or do not investigate the practices that you do, you may lose many

years, even a lifetime, doing practices with little or no result.

In the West everyone wants the “highest” practice, a wish that indicates a misunderstanding of the path. Everyone wants to hurry through the foundational practices (*ngondro*). But great masters do these practices all their lives. They continue to contemplate impermanence, cultivate compassion, do purification practices, make offerings, and do Guru Yoga. It is not a stage to get over. The most accomplished masters and teachers do these practices and cultivate these qualities all the way to the highest stages of realization, because there is still benefit in doing them.

—From *Healing With Form, Energy and Light: The Five Elements in Tibetan Shamanism, Tantra, and Dzogchen*, by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche. Available from [Ligmincha Institute's Bookstore & Tibet Shop](#) &gt;