



“A Good Sign That Practice Is Working”

An Edited Excerpt From Oral Teachings Given by Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, Summer 2006

A good sign that meditation practice is working for you is when you start feeling happy for no obvious reason. You are not necessarily feeling happy because someone has said something nice to you or has given you a special gift — you are just feeling happy. Or, in a spontaneous, uninvited, unplanned, effortless way, you may find that you have thoughts of helping others or of being kind to them.

When you start becoming more and more conscious of changes like these, clearly this is a very good sign. Why? Because it is a sign of having a lot of space and light in oneself: of having the open awareness that is the fruit of meditation practice. As one gains more open awareness, space and light become spontaneously activated in everyday situations. Positive thoughts arise from that place, and these in turn lead to positive emotions. Positive emotions can then lead to positive actions, and most of the time positive actions have positive results. When you help somebody, you are more likely to get help back from people. When you give the right energy, you definitely receive the right kind of energy back.

Think of the opposite situation: Imagine you wake up one morning and find that everybody you encounter seems to be plotting against you. You feel like they all have been exchanging emails and phone calls to give you a hard time. The guy at the coffee shop is already waiting for you: “What do you want? Go to the back of the line!” Then you go to the Chevron station and they won’t accept your credit card. But it’s not that the guy at the coffee shop called the guy at the gas station. It is because you are presenting yourself in a certain way due to your own negative state of mind, and your negative experiences are a reflection of this.

Being a practitioner means working with yourself all the time. That is why we call it practice. On a morning when you feel like the world is against you, you can think to yourself: “I’m going to break this chain of negative responses now.” You can notice your state of mind and immediately take steps to break that pattern by cultivating open awareness. Then, instead of meeting resistance everywhere you go, you are more likely to experience opportunities. You are more likely to encounter the right person at the right time. When a business opportunity comes you are more likely to take it. It is all a question of connecting with and maintaining a sense of open awareness.