



Treasures from Summer Retreat 2017

Edited Excerpts from Oral Teachings Given by Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche



Opening to Infinite Possibilities

How many things in your life do you feel, when looking back on them, that you really did something, you did something good, and that you were capable of doing it, and doing it well? Looking at your life: how many things?

Why did you accomplish those things? Because you saw the possibility of doing them, that's all, that's the only difference. The only difference is that you saw that you could do it, and you did it.

Looking at what so many people are able to do, so many things that you admire that are done by artists, musicians, poets, whoever. Why do they do them? Because they just believe in themselves that they can do it, and they do it. In that regard, there are no differences between them. But you have some sense that a fresh kind of seeing is necessary; discovery seems like it's necessary. Of course, there are causes and conditions, limitations. They are there, and if there are limitations, then they will just be there, and it's okay—as is the case in our lives. However, for most of us, we've not even come close yet to what we can possibly manifest. Nowhere close at all.

We talk about the meeting, encountering the teacher, like meeting Tapihritsa, or meeting the dakini, the dream goddess. Have you ever thought of giving even just a slight invitation to the dream goddess, "Show up in my dream, I want to meet you tonight." Have you said that? Those of you who have said that have a good chance of having her appear. But those of you who have not said that have less of a chance of her appearing. Or, it could be for anybody's appearing in your dream, beyond all time and space – not only teachers of the past but invite and meet the future teacher. Meet the enlightened buddha of the future. They're already there. They're not on duty yet. They're just waiting for the call: 911, and they just instantly show up.

What I'm saying here is that the mind is key. How often do we ever think of these greater possibilities? Infinite possibility, infinite creativity. New things, different things, deeper things, subtler things than most of the thoughts that we typically engage with every day amidst a routine of just get up in the morning, go to the bathroom, brush your teeth, go to work, see the same boss, do the same things, get exhausted, go to sleep, have a dream or not dream, have a nightmare, get up, go to work tomorrow morning. Is that all that life is about, repeating that same thing again and again, deja vu? Yes, you can say it is difficult to see freshly new things and subtler things. However, in dream, when you have a lucid dream, there is this wonderful possibility, right? Do you hear me? Infinite possibility.

Boundless Mind is Immeasurable

The essence, the nature, the mind, can never be measured.

I can say [holding up pair of eyeglasses and other objects], "These are glasses. This is a bell. This is a cup." So you can look at these things, and you can name them. You are labeling them. You are measuring them. That's okay. But measuring Self is not okay. That's different. Object –

it's okay to measure, maybe there's a need to measure it. But subject, the mind, cannot be measured. If you are trying to measure it, that becomes a problem. That's why some say, "Don't conceptualize."

The idea of not conceptualizing, we understand that, right? But usually we say, if you don't conceptualize, nothing's going to happen. Take for example the new structure being built here at Serenity Ridge. Externally, we can conceptualize. I think that's okay, as long as it's done more with a sense of playfulness and flexibility – not just because of the added fun of being playful, but because it's that very playfulness that gives more opportunity, more possibility, more freedom, more flow, more space to breathe, more places to connect with each other, more space to have compassion for someone. That's what playfulness gives, right? And in a way it serves a function also.

But conceptualizing of self, of subject, is a problem. Let's say I'm saying a mantra [Rinpoche sings *Aaahhh*]. The energy of the sound, the power of the mantra, it all is helping me to enter into that beautiful, sacred space. That space is there, that base, path, fruition is there. There's so much that is beautiful there in that moment. But suddenly if I think, "This is it. This is the nature of mind! That looks like awareness. That looks like the light. That looks like, what was it – oh yeah – fruition" – the moment you conceptualize the essence itself, it's guaranteed you don't know it. The moment you think you know, you don't know. You just lost it, the very moment that you conceptualized.

That is the most important definition of immeasurable. You don't try to measure it. It's already measured: its measurement is boundlessness. That's called view. So when you are trying to measure it, boundless immediately becomes bounded. When it becomes bounded, your experiences become limited. When your experiences are limited, you don't have understanding of the base. If you don't have an understanding of the base, you don't have understanding of the path. And if you don't have the path, you cannot possibly expect to see the result. Just forget about everything.

Developing One's View Liberates

If you look at any situation in your life, any experiences that you are having in your life, any challenges you are facing in your life, even difficult challenges you're facing in your life, you can see that there is nothing inherently wrong with any of those situations in themselves.

Of course, hearing that you will say, "No no, it's a little bit too much to say or think in that way." So you may say, "What about half of them? Half of them I can work with. And yes, for sure, I can see that for another 30 percent of them, there's not really a problem out there – it's in me! But the other 10 to 20 percent are absolutely not my doing. It's that other person that really is the problem, or it's that particular situation that really is the problem."

You truly believe that there are things, situations, events that have nothing to do with you. That means you won't have the opportunity to self-realize through them, because they seemingly have nothing to do with you. You think that each of those challenges or situations exists outside of you, separate from you; that each is a problem inherently existing with someone out there, and that it has nothing to do with you.

That's how you see it, and the moment you see it in that way, then it actually is a problem. That way of seeing it, as completely separate from you, is more of a problem, because you have less of a chance of self-realizing through it. You might already be witnessing that effect, living with some problem, say for the last 20 years, for exactly that reason. And because you have been seeing it in that way, that is why you are stuck with that problem. There are many other problems that you have managed to transcend – you have managed to be free from them. Then there are a few which you have not, because of that exact reason: you think it has nothing to do with you; they are a problem – my sister is the problem, my brother is the problem, my boss is the problem.

In this teaching, it's saying that everything is okay when you realize. Realization liberates. Realization does not transform. No transformation is necessary. Things are good as they are.

I know in my own experience there are many, many instances when, for example, I would have some experiences in the morning, some challenges, and in the afternoon, I would feel a little bit not good about it, "Why do I have to have a problem with that, since everything is Samantabhadra – All Good." So, of course, I'm not happy, because I did not experience it like that. But I know I can experience like that, so I give myself space to process and reflect better and with a deep sense of trust – it is Samantabhadra. Then I look and ask, "What's the good in that bad thing?" Then I realize that there are more good things in that bad thing than were there this morning. That ability to see things better can continue until it becomes perfect. That's called "great perfection." It was perfect as it was.

Resting in the Sacred Space That Hosts Everything

When the dzogchen teachings talk about this sense of being, this sense of resting, sometimes we may think or feel that this sense of being or resting is a way of avoiding disturbances, or negative emotions, or conceptual thoughts, or experiences or appearances. One might at times see this sense of being in that way, or feel it in that way or maybe even practice it in that way.

It's not really exactly saying that. It's not really saying that if you are depressed, or if you are sad, to try to get away from that. It's not saying that being sad is wrong, as if you're really being interfered with by the sadness itself, or for that matter any attributes, concepts, thoughts or emotions like fear and depression. The teachings are not saying that any of these are bad in themselves. It all has to do with your relation to each of them as they arise. Is it actually interfering, or is it okay? Are you managing to be with it? Can you utilize it? Can it become a door? A path on your journey? A door to your destination? A key to that wisdom? That's the question, right – what it is for you.

In wishing or trying to be a dzogchen practitioner, it's important to have the understanding that negative emotions are not bad. Understand that seeing them as mistaken is itself an error. Or another way to say it: seeing any one of them as an error, itself, is mistaken. So sometimes you might think, as a great realization, "Oh, anger is really bad, I have realized that the emotion anger is really bad." That is actually not a realization; it's just another layer of duality. Rather, the realization is in the ability to be with the anger – it's almost like being one with the anger, or like the anger being one with that sacred space, allowing it to be in that sacred space, accomodating, hosting. As a dzogchen practioner, it's about developing ways to work with that. Is that clear?