

It's somewhat normal for people to evade feelings that are uncomfortable when they occur and to find peace in their comfort zones during difficult moments. However, this method of life does really a bit for those who wish to have a better understanding of themselves and the human condition as a whole.

If you want to get a better knowledge of your heart and mind and who aspire to be of better help in assisting others; then you may likely be interested in beginning a route of enlightenment called bodhicitta. It is an a+ lifelong journey that is filled with a lot of difficulties; however, the rewards are thoughtful and will transform how you reason and the way you live your life.

The bodhicitta teaches us to let go of reasoning in polarizing terms of us and them or good and bad. It takes us toward a life of kindness instead of judgment and guilt. In situations like these, when people are being pushed apart and separated, these teachings will enable you to grow seeds of compassion that can change the future.

## Chapter 1 - Finding enlightenment starts with a commitment to awakening both your heart and mind.

With any kind of project, as well as a personal one of self-improvement or enlightenment, it's worthwhile to have the key goal in mind. To do this, you can consider the bodhicitta, the traditional Buddhist way to completely awaken your mind and heart – both in an attempt to assist yourself and to be of more help to the people that surround you.

Buddha teaches that everybody possesses crucial simple goodness in them. This comprises a vital wish to assist others. However, fright, confusion, and hard-to-break behaviors hinder this desire. This is the reason why the first stage toward bodhicitta is having the goal and commitment to release yourself from the things that hinder you from assisting others.

It is essential to have a commitment. Enlightenment needs the hard work of searching deep within to completely understand yourself and acquire the knowledge that will provide you clear access to your simple goodness.

As a matter of fact, a commitment to bodhicitta requires bravery. It entails confronting uncomfortable feelings such as loneliness, sadness, and heartache. Instead of confronting these feelings, we usually divert ourselves with things like entertainment and work. However, the route of enlightenment needs us to teach our brains to put a stop to hindering or evading these feelings and become more accustomed to them.

Within each feeling of failure or feeling of being undesirable, there is an entrance to bodhicitta and to awaken your heart and mind. Therefore, you can take your first move immediately by remembering a past incidence that made you sad, desire, or left you with a broken heart.

Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche, who is one of the author's teachers, clarified that "the means to awaken bodhicitta is, to start with, a broken heart." He remembered when he was just a seven-year-old child in Tibet and watching how a dog was being stoned to death by a group of laughing young boys. He has remained very close to the sadness of this incident, and he acclaims it with igniting necessity in his life to be of help and assistance to others.

Pushing away or hiding your pain may seem like the right thing to do; however, this actually just works to make the situation worse eventually as the unwelcome feelings have a tendency to reveal as anger or other emotional outbursts. In order to know your real nature, and to cherish humanity in its entire marvel, you need to use time with heartbreak and happiness.

## Chapter 2 - The main thing to the Buddhist tradition is conquering polarizing feelings and accepting compassion.

It's a normal thing for humans to feel dissatisfied, regardless of what's happening in life. Due to that, we find things to blame, maybe the weather, other people or ourselves, and we assign labels like "bad" and "unworthy" to deepen our hatred of these things. Unluckily, nowadays we witness ever more of this type of labeling and us-versus-them rhetoric which takes away the whole middle ground.

Let's use rain as an illustration. If you used the day planning a picnic, rain might look like a bad thing. However, if you were just lying in bed, the sound of the rain might be a really welcome, peaceful, good thing.

Meaning, rain isn't good or bad, it only is. Words such as rain, tree, or ocean can't even start to explain what these things are, similar to how your name can't start to explain who you are. Also, other labels such as age, gender, nationality or job title are just a bit significant in talking about a person. Even thousands of thousands of words would fail all the time.

Definitely, labels can be beneficial in attempting to explain and communicate with one another; however, they can also possess a hazardous dehumanizing consequence when they are utilized to propose some human beings are in some way basically different from others. It's essential to know that even racists and climate change deniers are only as human as you are and they feel the exact confusion, loneliness, pain, and fear.

Therefore, the best thing we can do is attempt to get ourselves anytime we experience feelings of hatred to someone or something and check within to determine if we can trace the causes of this negative feeling. In these instants, try to see if you can change your feelings toward sympathy and inclusion instead of separation.

Meaning, we should try to find compassion, forgive ignorance and know that everybody is "just like me." When we stop evading those feelings of sorrow, loneliness, and fright, we're more liable to think of people in the whole world who are feeling the exact way. This enables it to become easy to empathize and know-how frequently those kinds of feelings can impact people's feelings and behaviors.

## Chapter 3 - Our egos can hinder enlightenment; therefore accept your mistakes and appreciate the ordinary.

What do you reason when you think of the word ego? The ego can signify various things to different people; however, in the Buddhist teachings, the ego is the part of us that is in a constant battle with reality.

The ego needs durability, control, and stability. This is in conflict with what life truly is, which is temporary and in a continuous state of change. Today isn't the same as yesterday, you are not the same person you were last year, last week, or an hour ago. You're constantly developing, so is everything around you, and it's all directed toward the inevitability of death.

However, the ego doesn't react so good to the notion of impermanence and the inevitability of death since it comes with a sense of susceptibility. Yet, this susceptibility is the core of our humanity and needs to be accepted, not evaded.

In an exact manner, when we make an error, fail in some way, or expose some supposed mistake within ourselves, this also can cause an uncomfortable feeling of susceptibility that can lead to shutting down these feelings. Shutting down these unwanted feelings can cause anger and aggression.

The way to bodhicitta is essentially about transforming the routine of shutting down and instead of learning to be at peace with susceptibility and unwanted feelings. Just like every other thing, they're not permanent. However, they're also chances to enlightenment and understanding about how to embrace every part of yourself and everyone else.

Begin small by using only a few instants with the rawness that accompanies your feeling of susceptibility. Identify it and become intimately used to it, and you'll see that susceptibility is where some of the best human features are founded, like bravery and kindness.

On the other hand, concentrating on what's absent or what's wrong instead of what you have makes gratitude another feeling that can be difficult. However, with some practice, you can start to be more concentrated on the fullness of the present instant. When you stop searching for issues you can begin to see the beauty in the ordinary, the sights, sounds, smells and tastes that go with every moment, from your normal breakfast to the kind smile of a stranger.

To assist, you can bear these words in mind: "This experience is whole, just as it is." And, "I am whole just as I am." These can assist you to keep your mind away from feelings about what's absent and instead concentrated on what's essential.

## Chapter 4 - Since life is regularly changing, feelings of emptiness can be chances for development

One of the life realities is that life itself can change within a moment. One evening when the author Joan Didion together with her husband were having dinner and suddenly her husband had a cardiac arrest and died instantly. She wrote a book titled, *The Year of Magical Thinking*, which talked about how her world unexpectedly fell out from underneath her and everything changed.

This can occur to anybody, any time – something occurs and all the things you've been doing up until then becomes apparently useless or worthless and it feels as if life is empty. Meaning, you unexpectedly feel groundless, with nothing firm to stand on. Perhaps it's a tragic death or you discover that you were adopted. Perhaps your husband says to you that he's in love with another person and needs a divorce. Any kind of abrupt change can cause this feeling of groundlessness.

Frequently we can experience the same groundlessness when we're feeling the creeping, chronic effects of depression, as the things we used to like don't do anything for us anymore. However, once again, we can discover that groundlessness is a chance for enlightenment.

That groundless state is known as *shunyata* in Buddhist teachings; also, it viewed as a place of freedom where you can release all your burden and the things that have been hindering your way to *bodhicitta*.

Groundlessness is closer to reality than notions of permanence and that anything will stay the same forever. In order to know that every minute is valuable and to appreciate what you have now is to be closer to your vital goodness and to *bodhicitta*.

To extremely know the feeling of groundlessness is to know what others are experiencing and to be able to comprehend, communicate with and assist those who are striving.

When you're feeling groundless, it's not simple to change your own understanding from struggle to relaxation, understanding that the emotions are not permanent and brief. The more time you use with such kinds of feelings, the more comfortable you'll be when they occur.

With practice, you can eventually see emptiness as an indication of life's endless potential for positive change. With each moment, the cycle of birth and death occurs as an event, comes alive, and then turns into a memory. It's your duty to value the now and continue evolving and growing.

## Chapter 5 - In order to live more comfortably, increase your comfort zone.

We all have a comfort zone, the spots and things you're most comfortable with. However, the irony is that the more time you use doing just the things you're totally comfortable with, the smaller your comfort zone becomes. On the other hand, if you're constantly pushing and increasing the limits, the more comfortable you'll feel in life.

There are actually three zones in life: the middle, we have the comfort zone and outside of it is the learning zone. And outside that is the extreme danger zone. Not different from attempting to learn how to swim, the risk rests in jumping from comfort directly into the deep end of extreme risk. It can be shocking to do this that you withdraw even more into your comfort zone and become less confident in stepping out.

However, if you take regular small steps into the learning zone before slightly easing yourself into extreme risk, you'll find out that what was formerly viewed as terrifying and stressful can be comforting, like second nature.

For instance, if you're somewhat a hoarder and find it difficult getting rid of things, you can slightly begin changing this routine now by giving out only a small item. Tomorrow, select another item to give out or donate. The concept of giving out these items might activate extreme issues of insecurity and fill you with anxiety; however, after some small attempts, needing you to tackle these feelings instead of evading them, you can start to see that the discomfort disappears and you survive.

One of the key approaches to conquer your ego, increase your comfort zone, and get accustomed to connecting with those feelings that are unwanted feelings, is in the practice called tonglen, which is a Tibetan word for “sending and taking.”

Tonglen is a mental practice of taking what you want and sending out what you don't want, while simultaneously turning the routine of evading uncomfortable feelings or emotions. Basically, you coordinate your mind and your breathing so that when you breathe in, you visualize that you're taking in the whole fear, anxiety or discomfort that you would usually reject. Also, when you take it in, you're actually making it a part of your heart and your whole being.

As you carry on, you visualize your heart increasing to take in the fear of every other person in the world. Also, when you exhale, visualize you're releasing pure kindness and warmth and sending it out to everyone that requires it.

For you to be comfortable with unwanted feelings, you have to spend time sitting with those feelings and reframing them in your mind, which makes the tonglen exercise an ideal device.

## Chapter 6 - A sense of humor and good teachers are significant devices, as well as the simple sitting meditation.

Part of the path to enlightenment is to quit being judgmental and condemning yourself as well as others. Trying not to judge yourself severely can be hard; however, it reliefs when you have good friends.

Firstly, a good friend can be in the form of a good teacher, a person who minimizes your faults and supports the development of your skills. When a friend is a truly special teacher, they offer teaching and illustrations on how to awaken your mind and heart.

It's useful to have this notion of a good friend in mind since it can also provide you a good view on how to handle yourself. If you possess such kind of friend, are you unkind and cruel to them if they are temporarily defeated by jealousy or anger? Do you see them a bad person or are you forgiving and an understanding person?

Make sure you attempt to treat yourself like a beloved friend and not be really harsh on yourself when the fearful mind takes charge. Therefore, rather than criticizing yourself, just do as the Buddhist teaching states and “put the fearful mind in the cradle of loving-kindness.”

Simple sitting meditation is another beneficial device. This comprises sitting comfortably straight and your hands resting on your thighs, with crossed legs and opened eyes. Concentrate slightly on your breathing. Imagine your inhalation as opening yourself up and then your exhalation as allowing that opening turning into one with the remaining of the space around you.

Certainly, during this meditative method, you’re likely to be diverted from the concentration on your breathing by other feelings. However, don’t label these as bad or unwanted feelings. Catch yourself when a feeling comes and label it basically as a “feeling” and release it. Go back to your concentration to your next breath in or out.

Be calm with the labeling of these feelings and don’t become upset if they continue reappearing. Visualize a finger softly touching the feeling, labeling it and allowing it to go away.

Meditation is a very beneficial practice for learning how to lovingly accept your difficult feelings. The more you make use of it, the less difficult it will be to welcome the unwelcome. When you start to get relaxed with the sadness and worries we all feel regularly, the more you’ll be able to assist others to find their peace of mind too.

## Welcoming the Unwelcome: Wholehearted Living in a Brokenhearted World by Pema Chödrön Book Review

What we regularly think to be unwanted or unwelcome feelings or emotions, such as sadness and loneliness, can be beneficial chances for constant personal development and enlightenment. The Buddhist way of enlightenment called bodhicitta makes use of these feelings as a means of better understanding the human situation in order for you to understand yourself more and be better fortified to assist others.

Make the LESR device to welcome the unwelcome.

Use this method - Locate, Embrace, Stop, Remain – anytime you feel stuck in an unpleasant feeling. Firstly, locate the feeling by tracing it to the spot it lives in your body, which is commonly where you feel a tight contracted sensation. Afterward, accept it by sending it love and affection directly from your heart.

Afterward, break the storyline, which is any narrative that caused the feeling initially. Prevent anything that got you stuck into this feeling and release yourself from it. Finally, stay with the feeling rather than attempting to push it away or avoid it. Lean into those feelings of love and warmth and know that every other person in the world who are also feeling the exact way.

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