

Is Your Practice Wavering?

There are two aspects to this question, your practice for yourself, and practicing for others. To me, it's almost like they are concurrent also sequential steps in the journey to enlightenment. It takes these two legs to move toward enlightenment.

In this video we'll be looking at what putting the practice in the center of your life looks like. Then we'll contrast it with what it looks like when you aren't putting the practice in the center, even though you might be chanting. This is when your practice might be wavering.

The Practice for Yourself

Here are five examples how it looks when the practice is in the center of your life.

1. When a problem or obstacle arises, you start by chanting first, rather than trying to solve it through getting advice, strategizing etc. This is when you start by going to the Gohonzon with everything that happens, no matter how big or small the issue.
2. Another aspect of putting the practice in the center of your life is to practice morning and evening, as well as attend and contribute to meetings without begrudging the time. It becomes a way of life.
3. If you have practiced for a while, instead of going to meetings just for what you can get out of it, you also go to help others understand Buddhist teachings and to show them how to apply the practice to solve their problems through encouragement, discussion, experiences and presentations.
4. The practice is in the center of your life when you do your absolute best to create value in everything you do by taking the time to do it well. You know that your daily life is your practice as well as the time you spend chanting.
5. When issues come up in daily life you apply some of the Buddhist teachings to resolving them. You know that blaming others or your environment is not the Buddhist way, that your situation comes from the inside of you to manifest in the outer world.

For ex., Sylvia found herself being isolated at work. She chanted about it and saw that this had been the situation much of her life. But now she had learned about oneness of self and the environment and so she understood that this situation came from inside her. She examined her behavior and realized she wasn't saying hello to the others or asking about their lives. She resolved to change that behavior and once she did it wasn't long before she was included as part of the group.

How it Looks When Practice is at the Periphery of Your Life?

The practice is at the periphery of your life when:

Other things have priority over morning practice.

You find yourself using excuses to avoid chanting or going to meetings.

Other activities consistently have priority over meetings

You quit when you run into problems or when things don't work out the way you expected.

You only chant and connect with practitioners when your life isn't working.

You are resenting something a leader is or is not doing and withdrawing because of it. One long term practitioner commented that if she had stopped going to meetings because of being irritated with a leader she would have stopped practicing years ago.

You're blaming something outside yourself such as other people or the environment for your situation.

Your practice can waver without your even being aware of it, so periodically its good to review what you have been doing.

Your Practice for Others

Sometimes people do chant regularly, but don't really do the work of practicing for others. Others leap right in.

Tsunesaburo Makaguchi was very clear about the importance of the practice for others in our own lives. He says,

“While there is no dispute about the fact that someone who believes in the Mystic Law will have their prayers answered and realize benefit, this does not constitute bodhisattva practice. There is no such thing as a self-centered Buddha who simply accumulates personal benefit and does not work for the well-being of others. Unless we carry out bodhisattva practice we cannot attain Buddhahood.” *Heritage of the Ultimate Law of Life*, p. 107

There is a major shift that occurs in your life when you take up the practice for others, chanting for them, introducing new people and supporting them in the practice. In *The Wisdom of the Lotus Sutra* V. 5, p. 23, Daisaku Ikeda says,

“When we devote ourselves to the happiness of others, when, of our own free will, we undertake the struggle of a bodhisattva, the immense force of life without beginning or end wells up in our being. The eternal life of the Buddha permeates our being like a rising tide. Then there is no way we cannot dramatically change our lives for the better. “

When we begrudge the time we give to Buddhist activities, without realizing it, we're just inhibiting our own growth. These activities exist for our growth. We are not doing them for the organization. Following the guidelines given to us by the three presidents will place you firmly on the evolutionary fast track.

I've experienced this myself and heard many experiences of people who care for others and support their growth. They find that their own lives take a great leap forward and they feel they are moving forward at light speed. They have discovered that the more effort they put into activities, the better things go in their lives.

Caring for others is introducing someone new to Buddhism, helping newbies understand the concepts or learn gongyo, encouraging them and sharing your experiences. It means taking a friend and making a home visit to chant and encourage a practitioner who is struggling with an obstacle or challenging life situation.

Summary

Today we looked at what it looks like when you are firmly grounded in the practice.

Then we analyzed what it looks like when your practice is wavering.

And finally showed that it is important to be aware because you can waver without being aware of it.

In the next vlog we'll look at the process of human revolution and how you can address these issues through doing your human revolution.

Comments

I want to hear from you. Do you have other ideas on how either putting the practice in the center of your life looks or other ideas on how it looks when you aren't.

Here are some other references you might like.

1. Faith Slipped? 6 Ways to Get Back on Track. <https://wp.me/p3V1J9-UA2.2>.
2. Know the Warning signs You Are Battling Fundamental Darkness?
<https://wp.me/p3V1J9-T8>
3. Do You Know How to Refresh Your Practice? <https://wp.me/p3V1J9-Ou>
These Url's are listed in the downloadable transcript under each video on my website and, on You Tube under notes.