

3 Steps to Stop Vengeful Thoughts

For those of you who don't know me, I am Margaret Blaine. This is the place where we discuss applying Buddhist philosophy and practice to daily life.

This Week's Question

"How to I handle thoughts of vengeance? I have always borne a grudge in pre-Buddhist days as a badge of honor. I cannot chant for the happiness of those who exhibit dishonesty, cunning and sheer nastiness to my family. I can chant for honesty and justice regarding these individuals, but I find I slip back into negative thoughts very easily."

This is an excellent question. We all deal with this kind of negativity from time to time. You have come a long way but, as you know, there is further to go.

This is where applying the concepts from our Buddhist philosophy comes into play, to help us do our human revolution. There are a group of concepts, when closely examined in relationship to one another, indicate a clear path.

Oneness of Self and Environment

Former SGI-USA general director, Bill Aiken wrote an article in the World Tribune, November 21, 2003. He points out,

"Our objective reality and our subjective reality arise in relationship with one another. As Nichiren says,' Environment is like the shadow and life, the body. Without the body, no shadow can exist, and without life, no environment. In the same way life is shaped by its environment.'

Bill goes on to say,

"Rather than their being one static 'environment' that we living beings are all born into, every environment is uniquely customized to suit each of us according to the state of our inner lives. They are the causes and conditions into which we were born and reflect the effect of our past causes..." so in a sense we are all going around with our personal universe, one that extends from the inner depths of our hearts outward to all of the phenomena of our surroundings."

When dealing with a relationship issues, usually we feel we are right, it isn't our fault, and blame the other person for the situation.

It's hard to hear, but we have to accept that everything that comes into our environment comes from the inside out. We are 100% responsible.

An Internal and External Cause

Satori Izumi, a Japanese leader well known for his effective guidance, points out in *Guidelines of Faith* that two things together create a life circumstance, an internal cause and an external cause. Let's say you have a glass of water with sediment in the bottom and a spoon. It takes both to create the effect of cloudy water. If there was no spoon, the sediment would just lie on the bottom. If there was no sediment, stirring the water with the spoon, would cause cloudiness.

Let's take the difficult relationship with these people. You probably asking, "Why do I have to deal with people like this?" They are the external cause. The internal cause is that you have the karma to have a difficult relationship of this type.

You might say. "I didn't do anything to cause this. "Perhaps not in this lifetime. But remember the law of cause and effect covers the eternity of life. At some point in another lifetime, you created the cause for this effect today.

Steps to Resolve the Problem

In order to produce a resolution to the problem, you can't just work on the effect – their behavior. You must work on the internal cause in yourself. what we do know from the point of view of Buddhism, is that we must change ourselves for the outer situation to change.

It's important to recognize that your bad karma is the cause of your unhappiness and pray sincerely to change it.

Try an experiment.

1. Sit in front of the Gohonzon and set a determination to change the karma that contributed to the problem.
2. Chant in front of the Gohonzon and ask for the insight to know what you need to change.
3. Take action and behave differently. Once you have changed that karma then the other people's behavior will change of itself.

Taking full responsibility is hard. I think what makes it possible is knowing that through karma, every thought, word and deed is setting a seed in the core of their lives which will appear when circumstances are right in the future. As Daisaku Ikeda says,

"Benefit and loss are not imparted by someone else. When we act in accordance with the law, value is produced. When we go against the law, we receive retribution...." *Faith into Action*

This means by their continuing behavior, those people are creating negative karma which will create suffering in their future. They're not going to get away with it.

Ask yourself, knowing these laws, so I want to continue creating negative karma for myself? Do I want to be connected with these people in another lifetime? Because that could happen if you can't let go of the situation and let the law of karma work on your behalf, knowing they will have to face the results of their behavior.

There is another concept aligned with this.

we know that everyone has the Buddha nature. That means that even these people have it. Could you possibly chant for their happiness knowing that. Right now they are immersed in fundamental darkness, living in the lower ten worlds which create suffering, and can't even see a way out.

Since, for now, since their behavior will continue until you achieve your goal, also chant for protection for yourself and your family.

I'm sure this response seems to ask a lot, but if we put these concepts into practice with any problem, we will see the negative situations in our lives disappear. Taking this kind of responsibility, gives us the great power to be able to take control over our lives and create them as we want them. To do this is difficult. But who said human revolution is easy?

In Summary

This week we discussed how to handle a difficult relationship.

We talked about the laws of cause and effect, oneness of self and the environment and that every person has the Buddha nature.

Finally we covered three steps while chanting to do our human revolution.

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As always I want to hear your comments and ideas. See you in two weeks.

