

Transforming Anger into Gratitude

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[[Master's Teachings](#)]

When we're dealing with people and matters in our life, sometimes we get frustrated and mad with people and at things. When this happens, we hold onto our anger and frustration in order to deal with it. But afterwards we still feel this anger and frustration and cannot get rid of them. Gradually this feeling develops into a knot in our heart and becomes a spiritual illness. Even though we don't display our feelings outwardly to the people we are mad at in this life, our resentment will be transformed into a seed in our consciousness so that when we encounter the same people again in our future life, we will naturally dislike them. If in our future life we are not born into the karmic conditions which allow us to cultivate our wisdom and offer us the chance to dissolve these negative emotions, we will very likely form bad karma and bad affinities with these people again and again, thus perpetuating a vicious cycle.

Since the goal of our cultivation is to get rid of our afflictions, we should get rid of them completely, by letting go of our anger and resentment toward people after the troubling experience is over. It's like eating. When we eat breakfast, the food we eat in the morning will be digested by lunch, absorbed into our body, turned into nutrients, and used up completely. Likewise, we shouldn't hold and build anger and resentment toward people. We should form good karmic affinities with them instead.

How do we form good affinities with people? We need to harbor gratitude toward people all the time, even to those who give us a hard time. Even if we know that a person is deliberately giving us trouble, we still have to be grateful to him or her—for letting us nurture our heart of gratitude and grow our wisdom in dealing with it. It is through this that we get to know how strong our tolerance and forbearance are, and how broad our heart is in treating the person after the matter is over. So, in facing this situation, we need to constantly remind ourselves to nurture gratitude.

If we can learn to nurture a heart of gratitude, then no matter what kinds of people and situations we encounter, we will respect all the people involved and deal with the matter with love instead of anger and frustration. If we can do this, we will be cultivating a pure and broad heart. This is a training to transform our personality. If we can keep our heart pure and broad in this life, we will be sure that we are planting a seed of purity in our consciousness, not a seed of anger and resentment for our future life.

From Dharma Master Cheng Yen's Talks
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