

Chapter Eleven

Part 4

Conventional Meditation

Ending Greed, Anger, Fear, and Depression

If we don't practice virtue, we automatically practice vice. This is not to be accepted on blind faith like some cliché. And we don't accept it just because we accept it. Rather, we must analyze and analyze until it becomes as logical as common, everyday arithmetic. $2 + 2 = 4$. Then it's not necessary to analyze any more.

So we either practice virtue or we practice vice. A vice is something we are addicted to. There is an instinctual, automatic reaction of the mind (i.e., we're born with it) to our addiction—our vices! Most of us have several. And we just repeat old patterns—even against our will. Here is a list of some common vices:

1. Anger
2. Greed
3. Fear
4. Depression
5. Compulsive eating

Ending Greed, Anger, Fear, and Depression

6. Compulsive tobacco use
7. Compulsive sex—including all the perversions
8. Compulsive coffee use
9. Compulsive gambling
10. Compulsive drug use
11. Compulsive working
12. Compulsive buying
13. Compulsive procrastination
14. Compulsive lying
15. Compulsive thrill seeking

These are all examples of self-grasping ignorance. Although we know they are not good for us, we do them anyway. Ultimately, it's self-grasping ignorance that causes all emotional pain—nothing else!

Debunking a Common Myth: Anger Turned Inward Causes Depression

This myth refers to the modern theory that anger should always be expressed. And if it's not expressed, this causes depression. This is easy to analyze. Initially this seems logical but not if we analyze thoroughly. Let's review the three states of consciousness again:

1. *Rajas*: EXCESS ENERGY (self-will run riot) Only greed and anger operate in

Ending Greed, Anger, Fear, and Depression

this state of mind. It is impossible for fear and depression to occur. It occurs by seeking the passions in life: that is, money, property, prestige, and sex. If we achieve them, happiness is the temporary result. But if thwarted, some form of misery happens.

2. *Sattva*: HUMILITY (balanced energy) No emotional pain ever happens here. It is impossible to be greedy, angry, fearful, or depressed in this state of mind. It's a non-reactive state of mind. It's produced by practicing virtue.

3. *Tamas*: DECREASED ENERGY (the couch potato) Only fear and depression happen in this state of mind. It happens by seeking love and protection. If we get our desires, we're happy. But if not, some form of misery result. It is impossible to be angry or greedy in this state of mind. It always occurs by the practice of vice.

Anger only happens in the state of EXCESS ENERGY. So when we don't express our anger, especially when we think we should have expressed it, the mind could react with self condemnation. In this case the mind goes in the state of *Tamas*. We're depressed! And so, if our anger is thwarted and we are not able to get in our angry insult, we will naturally be depressed. Anyone can see this.

But is expressing anger the way to go? If we express our anger, our mind stays in the state of *Rajas*. Yes, we're not depressed. But is it possible to be happy in *Rajas*? Yes, but only if we get what we want. Just expressing anger verbally is sometimes enough. This appeases anger and it's gone. But in many cases this is not enough. Anger always involves ill will or revenge. And so if we believe our verbal abuse makes us even, this is enough. All is well and good.

Ending Greed, Anger, Fear, and Depression

But if verbal abuse is not enough, we have a problem. We won't let the other person off the hook so easily. We want more. Anger always involves our being hurt, and so if we analyze, our anger always takes the form of hurting the other person back—getting even! And if we can't get even verbally, our anger will still cause our depression.

We heard an interesting story about a girl who was expert at expressing her anger. She always did this immediately—according to the instructions of her therapist. Then her boy friend cheated on her. He dated another girl. She was furious and let him know about it in a barrage of well chosen words. But his dating the other girl really hurt her badly. Words weren't enough! So she got out of bed at about 2:00 AM, took his baseball bat, and broke out all the windows in his car. And since this still wasn't enough, she poured paint all over his upholstery. At 9:00 AM she was arrested by the police.

Until it all got straightened out in her life, her revenge cost her over \$20,000 in legal fees and making restitution. So expressing anger is fine as far as it goes, but the point is, expressing anger verbally doesn't always go far enough. We agree, suppressing anger is not good. We don't believe that suppressing anger will ever make anyone happy. In fact, suppressing anger is almost as bad as expressing anger. But there's another way. It's called sublimation.

Anger is really just the natural reaction of the mind if we lack Love and Understanding. And so we practice Love and Understanding: that is, virtue. This is not the same as suppressing anger. Suppressing anger doesn't act to solve the problem. But sublimation solves the problem. It reverses the currents of the mind, forces the mind into

Ending Greed, Anger, Fear, and Depression

Sattva, and ends the anger immediately. We have already discussed sublimating anger using *Metta*. But it's not the only way. There is a really good way used by Christians too. We can sublimate our anger by using the prayer of Saint Frances. Naturally it's necessary to repeat the prayer over and over until the currents of our mind are reversed and the anger is gone.

*Lord, make me a channel of thy peace;
that where there is hatred, I may bring love;
that where there is wrong, I may bring the spirit of forgiveness;
that where there is discord, I may bring harmony;
that where there is error, I may bring truth;
that where there is doubt, I may bring faith;
that where there is despair, I may bring hope;
that where there are shadows, I may bring light;
that where there is sadness, I may bring joy.*

*Lord, grant that I may seek rather to comfort than to be comforted;
to understand, than to be understood;
to love, than to be loved.*

*For it is by self-forgetting that one finds.
It is by forgiving that one is forgiven.
It is by dying (to ego Self) that one awakens to eternal life.*

Ending Greed, Anger, Fear, and Depression

This reverses the current of our mind. So instead of screaming obscenities, we practice virtue and reverse the currents of our mind to the Middle Path. As fact out of our own experience, we find that our mind has gone from the state of EXCESS ENERGY into the mind of HUMILITY. No emotional pain can exist here! And our anger is gone.

We are not in the least bit depressed, and on top of that, we have what the Christians call “the peace that surpasses all understanding.”

This is a good example of the practice of virtue. We can also see that any other method for dealing with anger would actually be a vice. Expressing anger is really a vice. We get angry because we can not stop from getting angry. But suppose we don't express our anger and just stay depressed. How could that still be practicing vice?

This is still the practice of vice. We are allowing our mind to instinctually and involuntarily remain in a state of emotional pain. By definition this is the practice of vice. We are usually always depressed because we have no other choice. But we do have a choice. We can practice virtue.

When we practice virtue, we can respond to all situations instead of reacting automatically. Thus, life is not predestined. Otherwise, we have no choice. We'll be angry, depressed or happy depending on the circumstances. We will be miserable when we don't want to be miserable. That is, the vices of greed, anger, fear, and depression will erupt when the events warrant their existence. And we'll be forced to automatically wallow in the cesspools of emotional misery. Or if we're lucky and we get what we want, we'll be happy. Our happiness or misery will be predestined by the fickle finger of fate.

If we practice virtue, we learn quickly to control our mind. If we practice vice, we

Ending Greed, Anger, Fear, and Depression

will lose even the little control we have now. That is, over any period of time, defects of character get worse—never better! If we're willing to practice virtue, we will get well—within days or weeks. If we practice vice, we shall never get better.

Vice is total delusion. It's a false teaching. It erroneously tells us we can be happy by practicing vice—that it's the only way to be happy. But it's actually the path that causes misery—not happiness! It's the vice that causes and reinforces our self-grasping ignorance.

Any method that feeds our selfishness and self-centeredness is the path of vice. Any method that reverses these currents is the path of virtue.

In order to practice virtue, it's necessary fully understand this logic. This is because the practice of vice comes to us naturally, normally, and spontaneously from birth. We already know the practice of vice, we were born that way. Lower animals all practice vice instinctually. Only humans have the opportunity to practice virtue and grow beyond this lower animal nature. In order to stop this cause of misery and gain control of our emotions, a proper education in scientific psychology is necessary. It's necessary to make a 180-degree turnaround in our understanding. It's necessary to turn our minds inside out, so to speak.

In the beginning, we will only get free from vice one day at a time. We never get cured. What we get is a daily reprieve based on our mental condition—our willingness to practice virtue and then actually practice it.

Practicing virtue in our morning meditation is a great way to start the day. If we

Ending Greed, Anger, Fear, and Depression

do this, the practice has a tendency to have an affect all day long. A method for doing this is to break the prayer of Saint Frances up into shorter pieces and concentrate on the meaning of each smaller section on each day of the week.

Monday: Lord, make me a channel of your peace. Where there is hatred, I will sow love. Where there is injury, I will bring the spirit of forgiveness. And by dying to self (the ego self), we awaken to true happiness.

If we don't understand this last line: that is, "And by dying to self (the ego self), we awaken to true happiness." We understand. By repeating this exercise many times a day and concentrating on the meaning, a very profound understanding will unfold. So if we don't understand it in the beginning, this is okay.

Tuesday: Lord, make me a channel of your peace. Where there is frustration, I will bring harmony. Today, I will seek to comfort others—not just myself. And it's by dying to self (the ego self) that we awaken to true happiness.

Wednesday: Lord, make me a channel of your peace. Where there is doubt, I will bring faith. Today, I will strive to understand rather than to be understood. And it's by dying to self (the ego self) that we awaken to true happiness.

Thursday: Lord, make me a channel of your peace. Where there is despair, I will bring hope. It's by forgiving that one is forgiven. And it's by dying to self (the ego self)

Ending Greed, Anger, Fear, and Depression

that we awaken to true happiness.

Friday: Lord, make me a channel of your peace. Where there is darkness, I will bring light. Today, I will strive to love rather than be loved. And it's by dying to self (the ego self) that we awaken to true happiness.

Saturday: Lord, make me a channel of your peace. Where there is sadness, I will bring joy. It's by giving that one receives. And it's by dying to self (the ego self) that we awaken to true happiness.

Sunday: Lord, make me a channel of your peace. I will be a channel of your peace. For it's by forgetting our self that one awakens to real peace of mind. And it's by dying to self (the ego self) that we awaken to true happiness.

The atheist can also take advantage of this process, because instead of using the words as a prayer only, we also concentrate on the words. Concentrating on the words can actually be more beneficial than praying the prayer. For it's by concentrating on the words that we understand the inner meaning.

The process is quite simple. All we do is repeat each daily section of the prayer in meditation 25 times. We can easily count the number of times by keeping track on our fingers. As we concentrate on the meaning for each daily section, we immediately come to understand how our daily focus for the day either agrees with or differs from the

Ending Greed, Anger, Fear, and Depression

meaning of the prayer.

Then, during the day, if we can repeat the prayer every time we can remember to do so, and this will warn us that our thinking has gone astray. Better to remember this way then when we're already in a screaming and yelling argument. Repeating the daily section of the prayer one hundred times or more is not too many. It helps us remember to stay away from confrontation.

Conventional meditation for ending anger

We can, of course, repeat the words of Saint Frances' prayer, concentrating on the words. And this pacifies our resentment. This is a great practice of virtue and it carries with it a great reward. It pacifies anger. But it's not the highest form of virtue.

The highest form of virtue

Is doing good to others!

It has always been this way!

It will always be this way!

While the prayer of Saint Frances pacifies anger and provides the proper direction for ending emotional pain, it really doesn't help the other person. So if we have a resentment and the other person has a resentment toward us, we only help ourselves by using the prayer of Saint Frances..

Ending Greed, Anger, Fear, and Depression

This is why we use *Metta*, which is fully explained in Chapter Six.

Metta: Wishing Loving Kindness stanza:

"I wish _____ (Name of Person(s), place(s) or Thing(s))

Physical Beauty;

Love, Health, & Happiness;

Success;

Wealth;

Fame;

Friendship;

and Enlightenment!

May we be free from hostility!

Free from Anger!

Free from affliction!

And free from distress!

May we live happily at peace with all beings.

May all beings be happy!"

We memorize the verse above. During meditation, we wish our loving kindness by repeating the stanza. As we do so, we visualize God (or universal love) inside our Heart Center in the middle of our chest. As we wish our love, we see all of God's love moving up the Central Channel and rushing out to that person through our Spiritual Eye

Ending Greed, Anger, Fear, and Depression

(point between our eyebrows). And we try to see that person actually getting all of our love and God's love.

We keep repeating the same stanza over and over until our resentment is gone. A very strong resentment will require many repetitions. Very slight resentment may require only a few times. But here's the fun of this practice:

It Cures Resentment in the Other Person

Once our resentment is gone, we discover the other person is changed, too. Their resentment toward us is also pacified. This seems unbelievable. But this becomes a fact out of our own experience. *Metta* is particularly effective in removing resentments from our boss or client for whom we rely on for our livelihood.

In this way, we do good to the other person by ending the other person's resentment also. Our resentment will be gone and we may forget about it. But very unexpectedly, the person we resented terribly may call and apologize.

The ability to change the other person is important. This is not only because it's the highest form of virtue, but because it's useful in everyday life. Anyone with an anger problem can easily identify the types of persons towards whom, he or she becomes most easily upset. Oddly enough, it turns out to be only certain types of persons—not everybody.

Whatever types of personalities these people have, all of them have one thing in common: these people always have an anger problem, too. So whatever we don't like

Ending Greed, Anger, Fear, and Depression

about their personality is usually immaterial. It's usually their inner turmoil that causes our anger to surface. It's always good to remember. Just because we're paranoid, it doesn't really mean the other person doesn't like us! In many cases we find this to be true.

Their number one defect is their anger problem. And if we have an anger problem, too, they will automatically not like us either—regardless of how hard we try to get along with them. This is especially useful to understand in the work area. But we can easily turn this problem around. The answer is *Metta*. We wish the other person love, etc., using the above method in meditation. We will notice a more cooperative attitude in the work place. Or if they have harmed us, the person may come to us with a polite apology. Or if we have harmed them, an apology from us is easily and willingly made after *Metta*. These easily become facts from experiments in the laboratory of our own life. None of this should be accepted on blind faith.

Using this technique will also develop our psychic ability. By using the above stanza and concentrating at the point between the eyebrows, we may have strong intuitive feelings about the person. The center between the eyebrows is also the transmitter and receiver for the body. But just because some impression is there, it doesn't mean it's actually a psychic impression. The only way is to verify, verify, verify, and verify some more.

If it's a friend, we can ask them. And in this way, it's possible to verify our perceptions. But there is a warning! A good psychic is only correct about eighty percent of the time. So even if we're good, we'll only be correct about eighty percent (80%) of the time.

Ending Greed, Anger, Fear, and Depression

Ending self-loathing

Metta ends self-loathing better than any other method. In this case, we wish ourselves *Metta*. This reverses the currents of our own mind about ourselves. Once we repeat this process a few times for ourselves, our self-loathing is no more. This is also a way to accomplish self-healing. If we're sick, a few rounds of *Metta* directed toward ourselves, makes us feel better. Longer periods actually causes us to get much better and in many cases, we even well.

Ending Greed, Fear and Depression

Meditation is also a good way to end other emotional pain too—not just anger. By concentrating at the point between the eyebrows, the emotional pain will dissolve into a space like vacuity as soon as the proper antidote is employed. The emotional pain will be no more. The big advantage to doing this in meditation, is the affect is more powerful. And we usually feel better about ourselves afterward. But the practice of virtue is always it's own reward, and it really doesn't matter if it's done in meditation or not. It will work for anyone who will work it.