

~ *Just Be* ~
The Key to Transformation

Mingyur Rinpoche

This teaching is about what we call the “power of being.” Normally, especially in modern life, we lose the being moments. So what do we do? Doing. Thinking. Analyzing. Going and getting! Even when we try to learn about who we are, and what is the nature of phenomena, the Earth, time, the brain, the mind, particles, we are in the doing mode, analyzing. The mind faces totally outward, and we miss the being moments.

Why? The reason is we do not see the benefit of the being moments. Sometimes we feel like being is stupid, because we feel like there is no logic to it and we are not doing anything, and if we do not do anything and there is no logic to it, then we will not achieve anything. That is our worry or fear, normally.

Scientific research was done on a group of people who were brought into a laboratory, into an empty room where there was nothing. They gave them two choices. The first choice was doing nothing for fifteen minutes. For the second choice, there was an electric shocker on the table, and they could give themselves an electric shock. [Mingyur Rinpoche mimics shocking himself.] So they had two choices, and the result was that most people gave themselves an electric shock. So doing nothing for fifteen minutes is worse than getting an electric shock. That is our normal mind — always looking for stimulation, with the mind facing out, and then we lose the present moment.

For example, I went on a wandering retreat, meaning I left my monastery and went on the street without much money, and eventually I went to the Himalaya mountains. In some places we had to walk for seven days, and in other places even ten days. There were no car roads, no airports, so we had to carry all the food and everything on our backs. Then we walked in the Himalayas.

Sometimes I met the people on the road, and we became friends and formed a group. Normally, people in the Himalayas walk very fast, so what I would do was start very early in the morning, while they were making morning tea. While they drank tea, I would walk, and that way, in the end, I would reach the destination at the same time as them. One day, somehow I forgot to wake up very early. All of my friends were gone, and then I began to walk fast. When I looked back, last night's destination was not so far away, and when I looked up, the first person from my group was way up there and had become very tiny. So my thinking went between the past — last night's destination — and the future — “When will I get there?” So going from past to future, past to future, I lost the present moment. And then suddenly my body became very heavy. I felt like my right leg had gained ten more kilos and my left leg had gained ten more kilos. So each step became very heavy. Then my heart sped up, and my breath became short. I was still thinking about the future and the past and the future. So then I thought, “What is happening today?” I had never experienced suddenly gaining all this weight, and I could not walk anymore. There was some kind of gravity in my body — a very strong gravity. I thought, “What happened?” Then I discovered, “Oh, I lost the present moment.” I only had the past and future, and in between those, there was no being here now. So I let go of the future and the past and could be there with my body and with my feet. Right, left . . . Just enjoying the beautiful moment. There was a path, grass, air, temperature, my body, and then I became lighter and lighter. My body became lighter and lighter.

Then, my group got up to a certain level and stopped to drink tea again, and I continued to walk. I did not feel very tired, so at the end of the day, I reached our destination first.

If we know how to be here and now in the present moment, the past is easy to let go of, and the future will be better! I watched the movie *Kung Fu Panda*, and there was this master turtle — Master Oogway — who said, “The past is history, the future is a mystery, and the present is a gift.” So the present is really a gift.

So now, how can we do that? Just be. Normally, we can learn how to be with just one object at the beginning. It could be your breath. Just be,

your mind with your breath as it is. It could be with your body and sensations — the gravity in the body, lightness, relaxation, tightness, or cold or warm temperature. Just be with whatever you experience. Or be with sound, whatever you hear. And be with whatever you are doing. Even when you are looking at a smartphone, be with it. There is knowing. There is consciousness that you are looking at your smartphone or watching it. Be with drinking water. Normally what happens is we become zombies, and we unconsciously drink water. We are lost in the past and in the future, and now in the present moment we become like robots. A robot is drinking the water. But if we can be here and now, we feel like we wake up, like we are no longer like zombies. And we drink water.

So being is really the key point for transformation. Scientists call it “meta-awareness.” That sense of being, sense of presence, has a really important role in transformation. Our brain, behavior, and emotional patterns can transform for the better just by applying that being. For example, if we are angry all the time (some people are angry-ish people), and anger comes automatically, what do we do? Just catch the anger. We do not need to fight with anger, or say “Sir” or “Madam” to the anger. Just catch it. “Oh! I am angry again.” Just catch it! If you catch the anger and try it again and again, then the power of anger or hatred will diminish. It will transform. Therefore, this is a really beneficial practice — just being. Hopefully this practice will benefit your life, and you can bring just being into your everyday life.