

Point One: First Train in the preliminaries.

Four thoughts are keys to progress:

1. Life is precious, and fragile. We're very lucky that we have the ability and means to examine our lives and pursue the true causes of happiness.
2. Death and impermanence. Inevitably, life ends, and with it, the precious opportunity listed above. Reflect on the many others you've known who are now deceased and remember that we're no different from them.
3. Action and result. Whatever we think, say and do in life has consequences, good and bad. These consequences affect us and others. Reflect that you have the opportunity to affect this process for the better.
4. Ordinary happiness is a misnomer. We're preoccupied with getting things that, in the end, will never make us happy. Similarly, we're preoccupied with worries about things that, in the end, do not merit our preoccupation on them. We find genuine happiness when we abandon abstraction and wake up.

Essentially, the things we think we need to be happy will never make us happy for the long run, and the process of preoccupation with such hopes and fears makes us unhappy. Life is disappointing if we bank on gain and loss, and negative emotions arise. Negative emotions lead to behavior that will produce new disappointments, suffering, and new negative emotions.

A sense of world-weariness is essential to developing our meditation practice and opening our hearts and minds to the great possibilities they hold.

Trungpa, C., 1993. Training the mind and cultivating loving-kindness. Boston, Shambhala.