

Point Five: Evaluation of Mind Training

Point five and Meditation

You're catching the "fever" of knowledge by now. Therefore, you're developing a tremendous sense of awareness and mindfulness. Mindfulness and awareness protect us from the fangs of the *kleshas*. With these two we can hope to benefit others as well.

19. All teachings agree at one point

It's about subjugating ego. At the simplest level, shamatha meditation cuts through ego's processes of subconscious gossip and discursive thought. At our current level, we're more concerned with warmth and skillfulness. If we're without territory, we can afford to be warm, workable, and gentle. The more we progress, the more unencumbered we are. "The shedding of ego is the scale that measures the practitioner."

20. Of the two witnesses, hold the principal one.

In any situation, there are two witnesses: Other people's view of you and your view of you. Your own insight should be your principal witness. Trust your intelligence.

21. Always maintain only a joyful mind.

Treat every mishap as something good because it's encouragement to practice. Other people's mishaps are good for the same reason. Share them and bring them into your continuity. It connects to the previous slogan. You witness yourself, and therefore are unsurprised by whatever situation arises. You're excited by what you're doing. Joy is the beginning of compassion. You take the blame. It takes a lot of guts to practice it, and leaves us joyous.

22. If you can practice even when distracted, you are well trained.

If you're uptight, you're also not aware. Whenever something unexpected happens, a sudden memory of awareness should take place. Like an athlete who slips and can use the slip itself to regain balance. When something hits you (because you weren't mindful), unmindfulness creates a reminder automatically. The process of drifting off brings you back. The jolt of emotional emergence becomes mindfulness and awareness. You don't have to protect, understand, or be watchful. Your meditation practice has developed alertness as a fundamental frame of mind.