



The fruition of the Buddha-Dharma is a life of awareness and compassion. Awareness and compassion can't be obtained mechanically or automatically. They require more than technique; they are alive and require care, intention, attention, and integration.

Reflecting on your actual experience, over time discern the differences between:

- Impulses and motives: what moves you to act?
- Aspirations: what do genuinely you wish for?
- Intentions: when you engage your aspirations and carry them into life.
- Skillful means: the behaviors that actually fulfill your intentions.

Do you have a daily practice that engages and challenges you?

- Does your practice engage body, speech, heart and mind?
- Does your practice connect to suffering and point you towards freedom?
- Do you engage practice regardless of mood, or only when inspired?
- Does your daily practice have the external and internal supports?

Explore the purpose, method, effects, and results of your practice.

Experiment, ask questions, take responsibility for how your practice unfolds.

- Do your motives and intentions truly align with the purposes of the practice(s)?
- Are you fooled or confused by various pleasant and unpleasant side effects?
- Do you know ways to refine your efforts? And are you actively refining?
- Results should occur -- but they aren't guaranteed, or immediate, or permanent.

When a difficult experience arises, what's your first reaction?

- Flee? Fight? Freeze? Analyze? Debate skeptically? Second-guess?
- How might these reactions be met with antidotes, renunciation, recognition, transformation, or self-liberation?

Is your daily practice a complete practice?

- Does your practice bring together relative awakening (compassion) and ultimate awakening (wisdom)?
- Are you carrying awareness-compassion into the arenas of your daily life, or is practice merely ephemeral experiences on the cushion?

Further Study and Reflection

- Review earlier BPP classes: *Right View and Right Intention* (Jan 23), *The Four Thoughts* (March 6 and 20), and *Refuge and Bodhicitta* (April 3 and 17)
- Dalai Lama and Thubten Chodron, *Approaching the Buddhist Path* (esp. chapters 5 and 8).
- Ringu Tulku, *Daring Steps Toward Fearlessness: the Three Vehicles of Buddhism*.