

The Actual Way to Meditate

(on exchanging self and others)

- Use mindfulness and vigilance to overcome self-cherishing, seeing it as your worst enemy.
- Be enthusiastic about cherishing others, seeing the benefits of doing that.
- Check constantly if this mind has been generated; if not, rely on a virtuous friend who teaches it.
- Read scriptures & commentaries; accumulate the two collections and purify obscurations.

Equalizing & Exchanging Self & Others

from *In Praise of Great Compassion* p. 118

1. equalizing self and others
2. becoming convinced of the disadvantages of self-centeredness
3. understanding the great benefits of cherishing others
4. exchanging self and others
5. taking others' duḥkha with compassion and giving them our happiness [tong-len]
6. bodhicitta.

The Nine-Point Meditation on Equalizing Self and Others

The first three points are from the perspective of **conventional truth**, with reasons related to **others**:

1. Everyone equally wants happiness and freedom from suffering, so discriminating among them is unsuitable.
2. Favoring some hungry beggars over others is unsuitable because each has their needs.
3. Curing the suffering of some patients and not others is not proper, because they all equally want to be free of pain.

The Nine-Point Meditation ...

The next three points are from the perspective of **conventional truth**, with reasons related to **oneself**:

4. All sentient beings are kind to us—past, present, and future— so we should help them equally in return.
5. Although they have also harmed us, their kindness outweighs the harm.
6. Since we are all impermanent and subject to death, there's no point in discriminating against anyone or holding grudges.

The Nine-Point Meditation ...

The last three points are from the perspective of **ultimate truth**:

7. If friends, enemies and strangers existed from their own side, the buddhas would see this, but they do not.
8. If there were permanent, truly existing friends, enemies, and strangers, such relationships would never change, but they do change.
9. Self and others are dependent designations, like “this side” and “that side” of a valley. Such labels change, depending on our viewpoint.