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NGALSO
Path to Enlightenment

How can we transform pain and suffering into something meaningful? Lama Michel Rinpoche

This text is a clean and unedited transcription of a public speech given by Lama Michel Rinpoche in VU Medical Center, Amsterdam, Netherlands on November 14, 2017. Link to video: <https://youtu.be/DiYAONIX64M>

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Prayers and introduction

Good morning. First of all, I would like to thank for the opportunity of being here and I would like to start with a short prayer that I do anywhere I go. It doesn't matter if I am here like today in a hospital, or if I am in a conference or in a temple. It doesn't matter where I go. In a school... I always start with a short prayer because, for me, it's very important, the gratitude. If there is anything that I can share with you, it is because someone has taught me. So, I will just start with this prayer in which I remember my Masters and the Masters of my Masters, which is: Thanks to them that I can have anything that I have learned up to today. So the first part of this prayer is in Tibetan, the second part of the prayer is in Sanskrit.

lo chok sangpoi pel gyur trashi pa
thub chen ten pe trinle yar ngo da
pel gye dro lor tsam pe dze pa chen
pal den lame shab la sol wa deb

OM AH GURU VAJRADHARA SUMATI MUNI SHASANE KARMA UHTA
VARDANAYE SHRI BADHRA VAR SAMANYA SARWA SIDDHI HUNG
HUNG

pa khyo kyi ku dang dag gyi lu
pa khyo kyi sung dang dag gyi ngag
pa khyo kyi tug dang dag gyi yi
don yer me chig tu jin gyi lob



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ma khyo kyi ku dang dag gyi lu
ma khyo kyi sung dang dag gyi ngag
ma khyo kyi tug dang dag gyi yi
don yer me chig tu jin gyi lob

OM MUNI MUNI MAHA MUNI SHAKYAMUNIYE SOHA

As I was saying, I am happy to be here, honored to have this opportunity. And my intention today is not that of teaching anything, I'm not here with that intention. But it's mainly just to share with you some things that I have had the opportunity, in these years, to learn and to experience myself and they have been beneficial for me, so I think they can be also of benefit for others. So basically that's the idea. The idea is not to teach on Buddhism; the idea is not to bring anyone to Buddhism. The idea is just to share some things, which I believe that they're beneficial. We, as human beings, we are very similar. So, what can be of benefit for one can also be of benefit for others, most of the times. So I just like to share few things that are useful to myself.

Everyone wants to be happy, no-one wants to suffer

First of all I have had the opportunities in this... I'm quite young still but I traveled a lot in all these years, and I come from Brazil... My father's family they're Jewish, my mother's family they're Christians. And I have had the opportunity 'till I was twelve to... I had a very good life in Brazil and after that I could travel more. I went to live in India for twelve years where I wanted to study Buddhist philosophy and during that period, I was, for about two months a year, together with my teacher. He was travelling, going to give lectures and teachings in different countries; so around two months a year, I would travel with him also. And, in all this time... I've been now living in Europe for about, in Italy, for about twelve years. And in all this time what I have seen is that I was meeting people from all different kinds of backgrounds. Very rich people, very poor people, people with different cultures, different levels of education, people in different situations, very healthy, very sick people following religion, not following religion, people with very high level of education, people with not much education. All types of people. And in all these occasions, something becomes very very clear. First of all, is that there is not much difference between us and others. Normally, when we see another person, because the person is in a different condition than the one in which we are, we think there is a lot of difference. Maybe the social condition, maybe the physical condition, maybe the cultural difference. Very often we see there is difference and because this is something different then we think, "Oh.... We are not similar." But actually we are much more similar than we expect, you know. Just... my own experience. And from that... What makes us really so similar is the fact that we want the same thing. It doesn't matter who we are. What we want is: we want to be happy and we don't want to suffer. That's the main thing. That's what we want most of all. So... And the next thing is that, every one of us, independently of who we are, we do everything we do, thinking it is the best for our own happiness. Very often we do that, guided by our own ignorance, but still we do, thinking it is the best. So based on this, what I believe is that: it's not a matter of one religion or another religion, or this or that... The matter is: What do we do to have a better life; what do we do for ourselves, so



that we are more happy and that we suffer less and how can we interact with others to help others also to suffer less and to be more happy. This for me is the most important part.

Physical suffering and mental suffering

So based on this, if we look: Normally, when we talk about suffering, we have two different types of suffering mainly, which is physical suffering and mental suffering. So, being here, in the context in a hospital, I think, very often, people experience and we see a lot of physical suffering also. But, from this perspective, I think we have developed very well. If we look at our modern medicine and so on, we take care of pain in quite an excellent way. We take care of the physical aspect of the suffering quite well. So... and I'm not the right person to talk about that. I don't have the knowledge for that; I'm not the right person to talk about that, and there'll be many other people much more prepared to talk about how to deal with physical pain and so on. But, normally there is, as we said before, two main types of suffering. There is physical suffering and we have mental suffering. And the mental suffering, such as our anxieties, our fears, our expectations that were not fulfilled. Then, we have attachments that we cannot be separate from things and people and situations that we are attached to. Then, we have objectives that cannot be fulfilled. Then at the same time, there is hatred accumulated. And then, we have all different types of inner states of mind, which bring us suffering also. And If we go around and if we look at most people and ask: which suffering you have more? Mental suffering or physical suffering? In most cases what would we find? Mental suffering I suppose. I have seen also... One time I was talking to my mom. She's a psychologist working with terminally ill patients in Brazil and one interesting thing was that you know... What I saw at the time that I was talking to her is: When people come and they are in a very difficult state, so in the end of their lives, mostly, very often with very difficult disease, but there is not much hope anymore physically, what we normally would think - many of you, maybe, have more experience than me - but normally, whenever we would think about it, we would say, okay, what's the main issue that a person that is in this state would bring to a psychologist? And you may think, maybe it's how to deal with the sickness, maybe it is how to prepare for ones own death, and so on. But actually not. Most of the times the issues are: my husband, my wife, my parents, my children; the normal issues that anyone else would bring. Which means that very often, okay, the physical pain has been taken care of. But there are other issues there also that everyone has, independently if we are sick or not. Issues, which are related to jealousy, which are related to traumas of the past, which is related to the pain. And especially when we, how to say, when we live in a more superficial way, some things we don't look much at them... because we get busy with superficial things. So, for example, if we have a conflict with another person and in the meantime, we are busy with our work... We are busy (going) out, looking for pleasures, this and that, whatever. You know! Sometimes we try to deal like that to eliminate the conflict. Sometimes it comes about and we feel sad and upset. But then, very often, we just go out to do something else, and to make our mind busy. And somehow, it's not really to escape but not to deal with that conflict that is lying there.

Our mortality is a fact

Sometimes, not always, but sometimes sickness puts us in a position in which we don't have anymore all that superficial things to fill up. And also, because it brings us to the fact that it is nothing new, for anyone... It brings us to the fact of our own mortality. So, this brings us to the necessity to deal with things that are inside of us. I think this is something very important that we need to address and to take care. But I just remember now one story, a true story. It was a friend of my friend in the monastery. So, my friend was Geshe Losang Nyingje. So, he had a friend living in the north of India. I was living in the south near Dharamsala. He was a monk making meditation in the mountains. He had a small hut and he was like there for many many years just making his own meditation practice in the mountains. So, his friends went to see him, like every six months or something like that. He was not receiving a lot of visitors. And when they went there the last times to see him, they would see his health was very bad. He was coughing a lot. He was really not okay. So, they urged him and they forced him almost to go down to the city, to Delhi, to make exams in the hospital. So, he went down to the hospital finally - which I think the trauma itself going out of the little cave in the mountain to the chaotic New Delhi was already big enough - but when he got down in the hospital, he was staying there for a few days. He did all the exams that were requested. But the doctor never looked him in the eyes and was avoiding talking to him. And he was getting tired of being there in the hospital and waiting and waiting and waiting and not understanding what was happening. So, one day, he caught the doctor walking in the corridor and he ran, and he jumped on him.

He kneeled himself and he held the legs of the doctor, and he said, "Now you tell me what I have!"

The doctor didn't know much what to do, so the doctor looked at him and he said, "You have cancer."

He said, "What does that mean?"

He said, "That you're going to die and there is nothing else I can do."

Then he asked, "So, the fact that I have a cancer means that I'm going to die?"

The doctor said, "Yes".

Then he started laughing and laughing.... He couldn't stop laughing. And he went back and said, "Doctor, look... If the fact that I have a cancer means that I'm going to die I always had a cancer since I was born because since I was born, I need to die." Because this is the simple common fact of every one of us. From the moment we are born what is the only certainty we have? Sooner or later, we are going to die.

What matters is the quality of our life

In Buddhism, this is an issue that is very commonly taught, to be aware of our own mortality. It's not to have fear of death. It's the other way around; It's to be aware of our own mortality and understand that life is impermanent. It's part of life. And understand that, in life, what matters is not how long we live; it's the quality of our life. That's the most important thing. I see often, when someone passed away. Then, someone comes and asks, "But, how long did he live, how old was he, how old was she..." And I look and say, "What does it matter?" Why don't we ask, "Oh, what did he do in his life? How good was his or her life? How meaningful was it?" Also because, when we talk about time, what matters in time, it's not the quantity, but it's the quality. Even in our daily life, if we go for a holiday with a friend, someone that

we like. We have some time for holiday. What is more important: the quality or the quantity? It is the quality! Sometimes you can stay one day with a person, with such a strong connection, that it's worth for a long time! Other times, you can stay two weeks with a person, Okay nice, but not really any connection, no any special feeling. Then okay, after when it finishes, we can forget easy. Isn't it? So, in life generally speaking, what's most important when we talk about the quantity of life, about the time - because life is made of time - it's much more important the quality than the quantity. So, when we judge our life - or if we need to judge the life of someone, which is very difficult to do - we don't need to judge about time; we need to judge about quality. What have I done? How have I lived? This is more important than how long have I lived. And the next part, what is very important for me personally, it is not what I do in this life, not what I have done. But it's much more important, the experiences I have had, the people I have met, the places I have been; in which way all of this has shaped myself. Who am I today compared to who I was yesterday, last year and so on.

Who we become is more important than what we do

In other words: it's not so important in life what we do. It's more important what we become. And what I become, for me, it is: if I am more patient, if I have more love, if I am more kind, if I am more humble, if I am more generous, if I have more wisdom... That's what really matters. Also because you know... When I see, life is short for everyone. I want to bring this to us because, I see that sometimes we have the tendency to make a distinction between a healthy and sick person. It's understandable, sure. But truly, there is no difference between a healthy and a sick person relating to one's own certainty of death. It's not something: oh because now I got sick so now I'm going to die. Something that all of us... And truly speaking, we have no idea who is going to die first. The one that is healthy or the one that is sick. In the sense that life is so complex and so many things can happen. We never know. I even got a very complex situation one time, which was: two friends, a mother and a daughter. The mother got very sick. She was very very sick, and she was sure that she was going to die soon. So, what she did was that all her material things she had, she gave to her daughter, while she was still alive. But then what happened was that she got cured of the sickness, and in the meantime, the daughter died. Then she couldn't have any of her things back again. It was a very complicated situation. This is just to give one example that we never know what happens. Even in this situation that everything looks very clear and very precise, of which will go in this way. Truly we don't know.

Four questions about our own death

But, which is the direction that this needs to take us? In Buddhism, it says that a Buddhist practitioner should think about death, at least once a day. Our own death; not someone else's. And I tried to do that by making four questions to myself, which are...

First question: Am I going to die or not? Looks like a stupid question. But it's very important. Because, the answer should not come from the head. We should feel it. Until the answer is yes. Am I sure? Yeah, I'm sure! Okay.

If I'm going to die, comes the next question: When? Okay, I'm now 36. I have a good health. I don't do anything really dangerous. Okay, I have a healthy lifestyle. I don't



think there is anyone that wants to harm me to the point of taking away my life. So...? Nothing is lacking. Nothing is missing. Is it too much to ask to live at least another, maybe, forty years? Okay, my grandparents... my grandfather is now 93 and healthy. Okay, okay. At least until sixty. Is it too much? I would not say so. But, can anyone assure me that I'm going to live until sixty? Actually not. So the truth is that, in the same way that we have a certainty of our own mortality, of our own death, there's a certainty of the uncertainty of the moment... of our own death. We have no idea when we're going to die! It's a fact. But, when we come and we make the question: "When am I going to die?", and we answer, "I don't know!", we need to analyze this "I don't know." Does it comprehend today? Or is: "I don't know" after sometime? I say: "I don't know..." but within this there is first a certainty, like, okay, in a week... a year, ten years, whatever period which I know I'm not going to die. And then maybe after that, who knows... Maybe it could happen. It's like sometimes when I talk to people, people say: "IF I die..." And I look and say, "Which other possibility do you have?" It's a fact! It's not a problem. It's a fact. It's part of our life. It's something so natural. And I don't know exactly why but in our societies, it has become a taboo. Something that we cannot talk (about). Something that, it's difficult. Sure. I have had many people around in my life that I have really loved so much and then they passed away. Some in a nice way, some in a very difficult way. But for me, sincerely speaking, the problem is not the death itself. The problem is to live one's own life in a way that is not meaningful.

This brings us to the next question, which is: Okay, as I don't know when I'm going to die, if I die today, who am I, in front of my own death? What do I leave to the world around me? Which means: What image do I leave to the other people? What memories I leave to other people? What is the... Even material things, what I'm leaving for them. For example, if I write a nice book or a nice poem. And many years after, someone reads that poem and receives a benefit from that. "I'm part of that also." So, in one way or another we continue to live, which means: we continue to interact with people in the world through the things that we do and through the things that we leave for them. In Buddhism it says that, even many many years after our own death, the things that we have done and we left when we died, if they interact with other people and generate positive experiences, we are part of that, and we receive the benefit also; it doesn't matter where we are. So, if I die today, who am I, in front of my own death? What do I bring with me and what do I give to others? Because, this body, I cannot take. Okay, I am presuming the fact - which I believe quite strongly - that death is the moment that the body cannot sustain this life anymore. And then there is what we call the very subtle mind or we can call it the soul; we can call it different names. A part of ourselves, which separates from the body. And then what happens after, this is a long discussion. But the fact is that, I believe there is a continuity after death. This is my own personal belief. So the question, which comes is: What do I take with myself?

But, the main point comes to the fourth question, which is: Okay, so what am I doing in my life today, yesterday, to cultivate what I leave for others and what I take with me? And in the moment that we start living our lives with the awareness of our own mortality, what it brings is not a fear of death but the preciousness of every moment that we have. And I think this is something very important that we can learn. And I believe that, as human beings, we can only become truly mature as a human being, once we have a non-conceptual experience of our own mortality. It can come in many different ways. When we really understand, not conceptually, that yet, at some

point, "this", as I know, is going to finish, and I don't know when... What does that mean? I need to live, in the best way as I can, what I have right now. One of the things which is important is that, in front of our own fragility, in front of our own mortality, what it brings to us is a change of... priorities. It changes completely the priorities that we have in life, and it brings us back to more deep priorities. Which are the priorities of the relationships we have?

The importance of a healthy state of mind

I remember one time, there was an old lady in Brazil, and she was a healer and a spiritual guide. And I knew her since I was a very small kid. My parents used to go to see her and somehow... A very good lady, very lovely lady. And one time I was there with her, one of the last times I saw her. She already passed away. And at that time two of her daughters were together. She had six children. And the daughters were already over sixty. So, they were together and then the daughter said, "Oh, you know, you see our mother, she's so nice and kind and sweet. But with us, she has never been so much like this as she has always been also quite hard on us." Then she said, "You know what she used to say to us, and up to today? Whenever, between us brothers and sisters, whenever we would fight she would come to us and say, 'Stop fighting! Because you never know when you are going to die. And there's nothing worse than dying with a brother that you were fighting with, you had a bad relation with. So, if you have something to discuss, you discuss, but you should separate hugging and being with a good connection to each other, because you never know what can happen.'" And she used to say this with so much truth and belief, that they followed it. And they said, "Okay, we had many times in our life we had discussions and things, but we always followed what our mother taught us. And we never separated, we never left each other without looking at each others' eyes and feeling good with each other.

This is a big lesson, because this is one of the aspects that our mortality brings to us, our fragility. And the other thing that it brings to us is the fact of: okay! What really matters, you know? Because, for example, now I am young. Let's say, I may have a long life, like I wish for everyone; long and healthy. But, how can I be sure that the body is going to be there healthy to support me? Let's say, I reach ninety. I cannot be sure of that. How can I be sure that the material things, which I accumulate, will still be there? I cannot be sure of that. How can I be sure the relationships that I create, they will be there in the same way? I cannot be sure of that. But, one thing that I can be sure of: The more patience I develop the more it will help me, independently of if I will be healthy or sick. The more love, kindness, inner stability, satisfaction, joy; the more it will help me, independently of where I am, which situation I find myself with.

So, what I believe is that, in the moment that we are in a situation which is not easy in which, because of our own body, we cannot work as we used to do, our relations become difficult, we have pain, we have more clear certainty of our own mortality and fragility of ourselves... One of the most important things that I believe we need to take from that is the need to take care of our own emotional state and our own mind. But this is not something that we need to wait for the day that we may get sick to do. Sure, when we are sick, it is something that I believe is very very important. Also because... I don't know if any of you are doctors. But, from my understanding, and as I said before at the beginning: I'm not the right person to talk about the physical aspect of the body and health and so on, but I'm very sure that there is a

very strong connection between the mind and the body. I have no doubt about that. The body influences the mind, the mind influences the body. And in this way, it becomes so important for us to take care of our own mind. So, there are some small tricks - not tricks; it's not the right word - some small tools, which I believe that can help us, in this whole situation.

Transform difficulties

In Tibetan tradition, there is one thing, which is called [*Speaks Tibetan*], which means: 'To transform adverse circumstances into the Path.' Which means, in our lives, there are many moments, which are difficult. There are many moments in which things do not go in the way how we expect. We have material difficulties, relationship difficulties, physical difficulties, and so on. So, there are different ways how we can deal with these situations, and there are some tools that can help us really, to transform them, and to deal with them in another way. Even sometimes to find meaning within it.

So, first thing is the fact that when there is a sickness, and not necessarily a sickness; whenever there is pain, whenever there is suffering, which can be physical or mental... I believe that, the reason why we have pain and suffering, is because something is not in the right place. Something is out of balance in our life, out of harmony. This can be in our relationships... If in our relationship there is conflict, it means there is something that is not okay. If, in our own body there is pain, that means something is not correct. Because pain, what is pain actually saying to us? Something is not okay.

So. Now, I've seen some documentaries that were showing these kids that had this sickness - I don't remember the name of that sickness now - that they never feel pain, since birth. It's quite terrible actually. Because, you see, these kids they are like eight years old, they are completely broken. Because, it's like they put their hand in the fire and they see the smoke coming out, and they think it's funny. There is no pain. So pain, somehow, protects us. And pain is teaching us to say, "Look, something is wrong."

So, if I have a headache, If I have whatever type of pain, what is it telling me? Something is not right. One thing, which I believe is very important, first of all, is that we need to take the pain - physical, mental, emotional - as a sign, as an alarm that is ringing. That sure we need to turn off the alarm. But, we need to go back and understand why the alarm is ringing. And most of all, we need to take away the cause instead of only dealing with the symptom. And, very often in our life, what we want is to take away the symptom. Because also, very often, we don't know really what is the cause. Very often, the cause is related to our lifestyle; to problems that we have and other things and maybe we don't want to deal with them, we don't know how to deal with them. But the fact is that: as long as the cause is not really taken care of, even though we take care of the symptom, it's going to come back again and again, from time to time. So, it's so important for us to deal with the symptom, but at the same time, we need to try to go to look for the cause.

For example, relating to cancer, I have a friend. She's a doctor making research on how to prevent cancer. She was the head of the Department of Cancer Research in Italy. Now she lives in Canada. Talking to her, she was telling that, putting together all the research; if we ask, "What's the cause of cancer?", she would say, "That's the modern lifestyle." It's basically so many things put together. But it's basically most of all, the modern lifestyle that we have. The way how we eat, the pollution in the

cities that we live in, this mental and stress in which we live, and many other things put together. All these things put together are the main factors that actually create this disease.

If we truly look, we're at a time where there is an epidemic of cancer. Or not? How many people... Is there anyone here that has never known, or doesn't know anyone between one's own relationships of friends and family, that has not have cancer? We don't know anyone? I've made this question with hundreds of people. Normally, one or two raise their hand. So, what is this showing us? That, yes, we need to deal with the pain; we need to deal with the sickness. But, we need to deal with the cause. And the cause, I believe, is related mainly to the lifestyle that we have. We have so many strong changes in our lifestyle, in the past hundred years, as human beings, that we think they're wonderful. The speed of traveling, the use of light, the way we eat, the change of timing or the way how we sleep. So many things have changed so drastically actually. And I think, we need to go back and look really at our own lifestyle. But, this is just one part, which I just wanted to add. But the main thing is that it's important for us to look at the cause and not to remain only in the symptom.

To accept means to put energy in the solution

But now, let's go to these few tools that we can have that can help us to transform and to deal better with these difficult situations that we have. First of all, and difficult; I don't say it's easy. But there is one inner attitude that makes a big difference, which we could call it many different ways. But the name that I use for myself is 'acceptance'. What do I mean by acceptance? Acceptance, it doesn't mean to... How could you say in English? In Italian we say '*sottomettersi*'. It's not like just to undergo something and say, "Okay, there's nothing I can do. So somehow I accept." This is not acceptance. Like there is something very difficult, and we simply say, "Okay. That's how it is, and I'm not going to fight back." That's not acceptance. Acceptance means: not to connect with the problem, or better, not to put energy in the problem, but to put energy in the solution. It's like, if I'm in the middle of the road and a car is coming to hit me. What would it mean: to accept the fact that the car is coming to hit me? It's not to remain the middle of the road. Instead of looking and saying, "Why is the car coming? The car should not have come in this direction. I didn't do anything for the car to come in this direction. Okay? Let's try to see: what's the model of the car? And what's the color of the car? And what will I do the day that the car hit me? If the car hits me, to which hospital will I go? What do I do? What will happen? What will not happen?" That's not what I should do, right? What it means to accept? The car is coming to hit me. That's a fact. Now, what do I do? Which is the easiest direction to reach. Should I run or jump away? That is to accept it. The old example that is given in the Buddhist texts is like, if we receive an arrow, if we're shot by an arrow, we don't need to start looking where the arrow comes from. "Why did anyone shoot me? Oh? I should not have been shot; I didn't do anything to receive this arrow." I don't think why, and who, and it's wrong, and so on. And it's useless to analyze what the material is of which the arrow is made. And how this and that and what. How will my future be when this happened? What we need to do? Try to take away the arrow, try to find a doctor or something. We need to take care of the fact that we were shot by an arrow. That's all. This is to accept it. So, to accept means, to put energy in the solution instead of remaining blocked in the conflict, in the problem. It's not easy. Also because we have a habit in our life, you know. For me, it's very clear. The way how we deal when we're sick, is the way

how we deal when we're healthy. We die the same way how we live. So if normally I'm always complaining, when I get sick I'm going to complain. And most probably I will die complaining. If normally I'm grateful, I'm going to be grateful even in my sickness. But sometimes the difficult moments have the power to force us to change ourselves. Because, one thing, which for me is very clear, is that... - myself I have no doubt about this but I think many of us - we are very lazy by nature. We don't want to change our way of being so easily, you know. If we are in our comfort zone we try to remain there. But when we are forced out of our comfort zone, maybe by a family situation, maybe by a material situation, or often by sickness then we must do something to change, in order to try to feel comfortable again.

We live in a complex reality

And one of the things that really help is to understand that we live in a very complex reality in which, truly speaking, I have no idea why things happen the way they happen. Because, very often, we try to understand the reasons why things happen. So I get something and I try to ask, "But why did it happen to me? Why am I in this situation? What did I do? Who is to blame?" What I believe is there is no one to blame. There are too many things to blame if we need to find something to blame. The causes are way too many. The reason why things happen: it's out of such a complex interdependence of so many things put together. Even if we just ask ourselves: Why are we here today? How many things have happened for us to be here today? Each one of us, if we need to tell the story of the day of today it's almost endless. So imagine if we think: Why did I get sick? That's a very complex thing truly to understand, from my point of view. "Oh, maybe I got this, and I ate something that I was not supposed to eat or I went to a place where I got a virus," or whatever, okay? But, if you think, "Why I was there? Why did this happen?" It's so complex, the whole thing together.

So. One thing, which really helps me is the fact of looking at the present, and saying, "Okay, things are the way how they are supposed to be." Are they how I expected them to be? No. Are things the way how I would like them to be? Some yes, others no. But they are just as they are supposed to be, in a sense that causes and conditions were created. In the complex interaction of our lives, it brought things to be just as they are. And what if something would have been different? What if at that time I didn't do what I did? What if I didn't go to that place? What if I went to that other place? What if I said this? What if I went to that doctor? What if this and that? What if....? I have no idea! One of the things that really helps me is taking away the word 'if' from my vocabulary. I understood that, and I made this change...

One day in Brazil, I was with my sister, and I needed to go to get a vaccine for yellow fever. As Brazilians we need to get a vaccine for yellow fever to travel to some places and so on. And, my sister asked me - we were in San Paolo, this big city, crowded city - and my sister asked me, "Shall we go by car or by subway?" I said, "Okay, we go by car." Okay, without traffic, it would take no more than ten minutes. It took like almost an hour. So we got there. Too much traffic. To park, another forty minutes to find a place to park. Then, to go to the place of the vaccine, was very easy and quick. Maybe ten minutes at most; done! Then to go back home; another 45 minutes, whatever. So on the way back my sister looked at me and said, "Oh, you see: if we would have gone by subway, we would have already been home, and we could be watching a movie. Instead, we're here in the middle of traffic." And it just came to my mind that I told her, "It's true! But what if we had gone by subway and

you had fell down and broken your arm? Now, we would be in the hospital. What if we would have gone by subway and someone had stolen my bag? Now we would be at the police station."

After if... anything can come. So what we have is what is here now. Just what we know, which is the present. Because also if we look within our sufferings, our mental suffering; we suffer more about the past and the future or we suffer more for the present? Very often? Past... and future. So, we pass more time re-suffering the past and pre-suffering the future, than actually dealing with the suffering of the present. So one thing to help on that is the fact of not saying the word 'if'. We really take it out of the vocabulary! "If this..." may be related to the past. What I know is what happened. Then, I have no idea if it were different what would have happened. Sure, it would be different. How different? I don't know. So with this it helps us to bring us to the acceptance of the present in which you say, "Okay. This is the condition in which I am. My family, my friends, my body, material things; whatever. This is the condition in which I am. Yes, this is where I am. Okay, so from here, where can I go? From here, what can I do? Which is the best way how I can deal with this? This is one first thing that really... if we're able to bring this philosophy to our lives it makes a big change.

Acceptance is a key for happiness

So acceptance for me is one of the keys of happiness. Because most of the times we suffer not for what is happening, but we suffer a lot because things are not in the way we thought they should have been. Very often we suffer because we make expectations for the future. Then the future becomes present and it's not in the way how we thought it should be. Then we try to find someone to blame for it. Or ourselves, or someone else. And then we're going into conflict with that. And then it becomes past, and then we are upset by how things were in the past. And they should not have been like that. While things just go the way how they are. So to have this acceptance, I think it's something, which finally relaxes. And then we can really deal with what we have. Okay, this is what I have. Let's deal with it. The best way we can.

Like, two months ago, more or less, I was in Beijing, with my mother. My mother got cancer in the thyroid, which from all the possibilities it's, well, the easiest one. And we were there. For many different reasons we were traveling. We went to Tibet together and she knew just before. And the doctor said to her, "Look, you need to come back... Within forty-five days we need to make surgery." Because she did a biopsy and it came out, that cancer. So we were there in Beijing. Then a friend of ours in Beijing, a good friend, told, "Oh look, I have a very good doctor here. If you like to see this doctor, that's okay." My mom said, "Yes, why not." She went to the doctor. She really liked very much the approach of the doctor, and so on. Making a long story short, she chose to do the surgery in Beijing. She had the best hospital in Brazil, but she chose to do this. And so I stayed with her for around a month then. And what was really interesting was that, we had one of the most wonderful times in our lives. Not because of the cancer. But because, we enjoyed the time that we were together. Which normally never happens because, she's completely busy with so many things; I am completely busy with many other things. And, for the first time in our lives, after I was a small kid, at least after I was twelve we had one month together with no any specific schedule other than going to the hospital and doing the exams, and so and so on. And the friends that were helping were a little bit

shocked because they said, "I don't see you sad... You look very happy." And we said, "Yes, there are beautiful things to enjoy at the same time." Sure, my mom was not happy to do the surgery. She was not happy at all with the idea to take away her thyroid. And she was not happy with all this process, and it's not the most pleasurable thing. Here, hospitals are much more nice. Very nice hospital there, but still, it's not the place where we would like to pass the afternoon. But still, the fact was: here we are; we have beautiful moments together. There are beautiful things. So one thing, which I believe is very important, that this acceptance also teaches us, is that: it's not because there is something bad that everything needs to be bad. It's not because there is something difficult, it's not because there is something that has a bitter taste that everything must have the same taste. There is a saying in Brazil, which is: *uma coisa é uma coisa, outra coisa é outra coisa*. One thing is one thing; another thing is another thing. Which is the fact: Okay, yes, there is this difficulty; Yes, there is the pain; Yes, there is this. We need to deal with it. We need to take care of it. But in the meantime there are so many other good things also. And we should never forget to connect with the good things that we have. This is something that makes a big difference also. Because otherwise we may get trapped, you know. Because when there is a problem, when there is a difficulty, when there is a suffering I believe sometimes we get trapped into it, like if it becomes a bubble, and we enter into that bubble, and it becomes our world. Then we see only everything through that perspective. We are not able to get out of it. Instead, yes, it is there. Let's deal with it in the best way as we can. But in the meantime there are other things going on. There is the relationship with the people that I have. And at the moment that I see my own fragility, I see how fragile I am, based on my own sickness and so on, this opens myself to actually overcome conflicts that I have had. To make the relationships better also, very often. This is something, which is good, that can come out. But to change the behaviors that I have, I say, "Okay, how can I live my life better, here, right now." Okay, I have too much hatred. This is not good for me. I don't need that for myself. And I cannot wait - one day when something will happen for me, to change my behavior. Because life is short. Even if we have a long life, life is short. So I need to do now. Oh, I am a very proud person and I say... (These are things that only we know.) "Yes, this pride is really not so good. When am I going to start to be more humble?" Put myself in that way. Today! Because tomorrow I don't know what will happen, how it will be.

To open our heart

I see that one of the things that harms us a lot, is the inability to connect to other people, to open our heart. You know... When we have a very closed heart: the more our heart is closed, only looking towards our own selves, the more we suffer, the more difficult life becomes. Instead, when we truly open ourselves to others... And when we are in a difficult situation, somehow it's more easy for us to connect to others that are in a difficult situation also. When we suffer more, we become more sensitive to suffering somehow. So in this way to open ourselves, which is one of the most beautiful things that we can do, actually to truly open our heart towards other people. I think this is one of the greatest gifts that we can give to ourselves. From my personal experience, there are many wonderful things in life, that can give us a lot of joy and a lot of well-being But when we truly open ourselves to others, when we look at others, being able to see the other person, and we really love the other person, in the sense that: "Your happiness is important for me." I don't know really



who you are necessarily, but your happiness is important for me, and I wish you truly to be happy." This gives a big change in ourselves.

This made me now remember one girl, which I went to see a few weeks ago. I was in Sao Paulo, Brazil. They invited me to give a talk in a hospital. The biggest hospital in Sao Paulo. Quite many people there. But the most special moment for me sincerely, was not talking to this five hundred people there. It was actually... I went to see a few patients. And there was one girl especially. She was... she's still, she's 21 and she had... you say in English: leukemia? And she did a bone marrow transplant, but it didn't go well. So, there she was, 21, her body looked like the body of an old lady. Very very weak. Every... One day yes, one day not... she's almost dying. For whatever reason, the body is reacting in very strange ways, and so and so on. Not so much hope to do another transplant, even though the mother is willing to do it. But when I went into the room and started talking to this girl, she transmitted so much joy to everyone around. And it was so beautiful to see the love that she had, and the respect and gratitude that she had for everyone that was around. So all the nurses and the doctors that took me there, they were all so touched by this girl. And they were like amazingly happy to be there. They were all touched because even though she was ... she is in the circumstance that she is still she was grateful and treated each and everyone with so much respect, with so much love. And you could see in her face, I could see in her face so much joy. Joy from where? From the love she has for others. Sure she was not happy, when I saw her, of the physical condition in which she is. Sure it is difficult, I believe very difficult. But still, the joy that was coming; where was it coming from, from my own point of view? From love.

Because, when we love someone else, how do we feel? Good or bad? We feel good. Even if we don't know that person. So, very selfishly speaking... Because truly; do we care about our own happiness? I would say, yes. So very selfishly speaking the best thing is to be altruistic. The best thing is to truly open our hearts to others. And when we are able even in a very fragile moment of our own sickness... Actually the sickness sometimes takes away some blockages; some barriers there are between us and others. The way how other people relate to us when we are sick and so on. So if in this moment we are able actually to open our heart and to love the other, even in our own fragile difficult situation; this actually opens the heart of the other person also. And we can heal many other things through that. If, in a fragile situation of our own sickness, we are able to open our heart and to say sorry for the people that we've hurt, to be able to accept the other people that maybe harmed us in the past, and they said sorry to us. Are we able even to love them and to care for them? You know, it's a very powerful practice. And it is much more powerful than when we are in a normal moment of our life in our own healthy situation. But, sure, when we are healthy, it's the moment where we need to take care of our health: mental, physical, emotional. But one of the things that... we can train ourselves in and that is what really gives us joy, in every moment, and what can really help us, is to love others; it's to truly open our heart. And one important thing when we talk about loving others, is the fact that if I love someone, I don't need necessary to agree with that person. It's not because I love you that I agree with everything you do. It's not because I love you that I will go in the same direction. I may really not agree with what you did, I may really not agree with the way you are, but I still love you. One thing is not taking away the other. I say this because often we have this attitude to say: How can I love that person! Look what he did to me! How can I love that person, look the way how he behaves! And this blocks us, and this keeps our heart closed.

And this is very painful. Because, as we said before, when we are completely... how to say... distracted by things in our daily lives, even if our heart is closed somewhere, sometimes we connect with it and we feel the pain of it and many other moments, we are just busy with many other things. But, when we have less opportunities of doing superficial things and disconnecting from ourselves - and sickness often brings this - then it becomes even more important, truly, to open our heart. Somehow to relax inside, and love others. Who do we mean by others? Others, we mean: our family, our friends, the people we relate with, the people that are around us, the doctors, the nurses, the other patients, everyone around. That's the people that we really need to open ourselves to.

To love ourselves

And one other aspect, which is important, is that when we talk about love, it's not only loving others, but we also, first of all, need to love ourselves. And one of the things that help in that is that, in the moment that we have pain - and I'm talking about mental, emotional pain - if we try to block that pain, it's not going to work. I think we have all tried to do that in our lives. There's something that there is some sadness, there's some hatred, there's something that is some mental, emotional suffering. And what we do? We try to block it. We try to put it down, or hide it somehow from ourselves. What happens? The more I hide, the stronger it becomes until one day it comes completely out.

Like one time, there was one friend of ours. She was talking to my teacher, my master, Lama Gangchen and she had a big problem of her liver. So she was there talking to Lama Gangchen about that she just had been to the hospital and so on. And then he asked her - I was translating - and he asked, "Do you get angry often?" And I knew her. I still know her very well. She didn't look at all as an angry person. And then she said, "Actually yes. You know, it has been now 25 years that I get very angry towards one specific person (which in that case was her husband). But I never manifest that anger. And whenever I get angry, I just go and smoke something. I tried to forget about that anger but actually it is still there." So there it is: 25 years of this anger accumulated. Sooner or later, it manifests itself in one way or another. Or in a reaction, which is uncommon to the person: overreaction. Or in the form of a sickness, often. So, what happens is that, when we have some sort of emotional pain or difficulty, to hide it, it's not working. Try to push it away, it's also not working. So what I believe that we need to do, which is what I try to do myself, is whenever there is something that is difficult, we need to, somehow, embrace ourselves. But not without diving into the suffering. I take care of myself, I embrace myself and say, "Okay... Yes, there is this situation, yes I'm feeling that. But bring the mind to the present, embrace oneself in the present. Without worrying so much about the future because really, the future is uncertain and we truly don't know how things are going to be. And my own perspective is that, when there is uncertainty, then I relax. Because I don't know! And it's useless to stay, thinking about thousands of possibilities or one possibility, when the one possibility is one in a thousand. So I will just relax in the present moment that I have, and I will do my best to go in the best way as I can. So I embrace myself bringing myself to the present, saying, "Yes, this pain is there." We're talking about emotional pain.

Emotional pain as a powerful resource

But one thing, which is interesting is that, this emotional pain, which can come from sadness, it can come from hatred, it can come from jealousy, from envy, from different types of emotions, actually it's a very powerful resource. It's energy. It's like energy in the sense like putting gas into the car; it gives strength. Out of emotional pain, can we do crazy things? Out of anger, out of jealousy, out of envy, out of sadness? It actually is a very strong force in our lives.

So what I try to do, and I believe is that we can take that force and we can redirect it. We don't need to stay within it. So for example, one thing I always try to do is like... - I do it with myself, so I share it with others normally - So for example, there comes a person that I love and this person is in a difficult situation, is sick or this person passes away.

In both cases, first thing: Remember the person's good things, and develop gratitude towards that person. Say, "Thank you," inside.

Second thing: Generate a positive feeling and emotion directed to that person. What I wish for you. Because our emotions are very powerful. Our feelings... our mind is very powerful actually. So what do I wish for you? What I wish, is basically making a prayer, is dedicating something for the person, wishing something for the person.

And the third and most powerful is: Okay, I make a commitment of something practical that I will do positive, dedicated for that person. So, what is something positive? It's an action that either will bring happiness, or will help others to suffer less. So maybe I help to give food for someone that needs food. Maybe I'm going to give company for someone that is without company. Maybe I'm going to do something that helps the environment. Maybe I do something to help a person, bringing joy to someone else; whatever. But I commit myself that I will do something that will generate a positive energy dedicated to that person that is sick. Because one of the things that is difficult is when we are in a state of suffering and somehow it brings a frustration of not being able to do anything about it. Either about something that has already happened, or about something that is happening. And it's true. Very often the tools that we have do not allow us to change the situation from what it is.

Limits of love and compassion

One question that one doctor made to me in this last meeting in this hospital in Brazil was: "How do we deal with compassion? Because compassion, it sometimes brings frustration." This was the question. Because we see so many people with so much suffering. And after some time, yes, we want them to be well, and we want them to be better. And we don't want them to suffer, and we connect with our heart to them. But sometimes this brings to ourselves our own frustration, because we cannot do everything. One very important thing is that both love and compassion have limits and we must respect the limits of love, and we must respect the limits of compassion. Which are those limits? It doesn't matter how much I love you; I cannot make you happy. That's a limitation that I have. Can I make anyone happy? Did we ever try to make someone happy? I think so... Did it work? Not really! We can interact with someone, and our interaction can help the person to be more happy. This is true. But we cannot make the other happy. The other person can make himself happy and my interaction can help for that. But no-one can make someone else happy. It doesn't matter how much compassion I have for you; I

cannot take away your suffering. I can interact in the best way as I can, to help you to suffer less, but I cannot do that by myself. So in this way, in the moments that we are together with other people that are in these difficult situations, just open our heart and give the best that we can give. And that's already a lot. And often we find ourselves in situations that we cannot do much truly to change the way how things are. But we can do many other things around.

Like this lady which I said, in the hospital. She was there, and one of the persons that was helping her the most actually was one lady; her job in the hospital was actually making makeup for the patients. I think maybe here you have also the same facility. Because patients within the whole process of cancer; in her case it was her whole skin that was very bad and so on. So to help them with their own image. She goes there, makes their hair and helps to make a nice makeup, and so on. But this lady, interestingly, she had a very very important function there. Which is not to paint the face of the patients. It's to interact with them, with something else that is not their sickness. And to give love to them. Very beautiful lady, internally. Beautiful person. Really interacting and making jokes and bringing and hugging and giving love and interacting in another way. This is something that anyone can do! As long as we open a bit our heart. And this means a lot. So yes, there are moments in which we cannot change the actual fact of how some things are, but we can do many other things, and I think this is something that makes a big difference also. So... We develop gratitude; we dedicate something good; we generate a positive feeling, positive thought; and then we make a commitment to do something dedicated for the person. So this is also in relation to ourselves, whatever pain we have. We take that sadness, we take that pain, and we acknowledge it, we embrace it. But then we direct it. We use it as a force to do something instead of becoming stuck into it. I don't know, is it clear, this concept? And this is something very powerful

And again, for us to be able to do that, we must have acceptance. And we must have love towards ourselves. Because if we don't have acceptance, we will say, "Yes, I could do something, but it's not what I wanted." And we get blocked in the past. But not in the past that happened, very often. We get blocked in the idea that we have of how things should have been. And because of that we are not able to move forward. So, one of the things which is very important is that: Relax where things are, even though they are difficult, yes. And I asked myself a few days ago, "But what is it actually like: really easy?" Is childhood easy? Not really. The childhoods of some people are more easy and of others are less easy, but generally speaking it's not an easy moment, right? We're growing up, trying to understand better who we are, learning how to relate to other people; it's not an easy process. Okay. Teenage, is it easy? Worse... So it's not easy also. Entering into adulthood and choosing a profession, relationships, building up a family, earning our money... Is it easy? No. Living the life of adulthood, in which we need to work and deal with the problems of life and the relationships, and all the rest of the things that come along with it; is it easy? Not so easy?! For some people more, for some people less... But there are all the problems related to it. Okay, retirement. Is it easy? For some people more, for some people less, but generally speaking, also not really. Dying? It's also not easy. And being born is also not easy. So life generally speaking, it's beautiful but it's not easy. There are always some difficulties here or some difficulties there. It's a very basic law, a very basic fact. Whenever one problem ends, at least one other problem starts.

There's one time, a friend that used to tell me always, "Okay. Rejoice how things are

because they could always get worse." In the sense that: here we are, and we have no idea how things can become; we have no idea how things can go. But one thing we're sure: There's always some problem going on. There's always something that is not in the way how we expected it to be. So when I understood that problems exist and will always exist, I finally relaxed. I said, "Okay! Now it is this problem, let's deal with it." But the focus of my life cannot be just to solve problems and try to make my life perfect. Because very often, we do have this expectation that, when this will be like this, and that will be like that, then everything will be fine. But truly speaking, for most of us, and I believe this is truly for most of us: We have everything in our life to have a perfect life. Our life, somehow it's already perfect by itself. And the main point is not changing the world; it is changing the way how we relate to the world. And one of the things that I believe that: when we are forced out of our zone of comfort, maybe through sickness, maybe through difficulty in life, is that, when we cannot truly change the world around us, we cannot make this change by ourselves - the world can be our health, the world can be the situation; whatever - then, we remain with one very powerful resource, actually the most powerful of all: it's the way how we relate to it. And this makes the biggest of all differences. Because the most powerful resource that we have is our own mind. And it's the way how we relate to the world, more than the world itself.

That monk, which I told the story before, that hit the doctor until he told he had cancer and he started laughing, he stood up, after that. He went back to this place of meditation, and he did three months of a practice of purification, which was making one exercise that we call 'prostrations', where you go down with the full body and come up again. He stayed the whole day doing that. And after three months, he stopped doing it, and continued his meditation, and he lived for many many years more. But sure, at that moment he had a long process of trying to understand what was happening with himself and he moved forward with this energy. Remembering that we cannot live our life trying to protect ourselves from our own mortality. Because that's useless. We need to live our lives, living every moment in the best way as we can. If we live our life well, this is the best thing that we can do also for having a long life, this is the best thing that we can do to deal with our own sicknesses, and so on.

So. One thing, which I really think is good that a situation of difficulty can bring us - and when I talk about sicknesses this becomes quite clear for me - is the fact that every moment, every day is precious. Every moment I see you, is a very special moment. Because where is life happening? Here right now, nowhere else. And this is a fact. It's not a philosophical thinking. So let's live it in that way; let's take the advantage of every moment that we have; let's gain the joy of a smile; the way we look at each other, the way we say, "Thank you", the way we are grateful to each other. Also, because there is two very simple... how to say... rules - let's call it that. It's like equations. There are two very simple equations: The more I complain, the more unsatisfied I am. The more unsatisfied I am, the more I suffer. The more I rejoice, the more I'm grateful, the more I say, "Thank you," the more satisfied I become. The more satisfied I am, the more I am happy. Because happiness, it's very much connected to our own satisfaction. Okay?

Concluding

So... just to conclude this part: There are difficult things in life, and we need to embrace ourselves within them. But we need to take that energy and redirect it,



instead of remaining blocked within it. And if we look, very often in this world, great things that happened were because people were able to redirect the energy that came from sadness or from a loss, and so on. Quite many times. If we get blocked within our own pain, then it just becomes bigger and bigger and bigger because we're not able to see anything... We will see everything through the filter of that. And if we put away our pain, and we make it like as if it didn't exist that's also not going to work. After some point it will come up even stronger. So it's important for us to accept. It means to embrace our own difficulties. Say, "Okay. This is where I am. This is how it is. I will take care of it in the best way as I can." And then, once we are able to accept it, then we, how to say, embrace ourselves. Then after that we can take that energy, which is quite strong, and then we put it to do something. We direct it to help other people, to write a book, to paint, to do something for the environment. We need to transform that energy into something. This is something, which I believe is a very very important aspect. Okay?

And one thing last, but not least, is that as we said before: when we are in a fragile situation, we become more open to see the fragile situation of others. And this is a great gift. Because to open our hearts to others is a great gift. And as I said before: this is one of the things that really gives us joy.

Exercise

So, I like just to share one exercise with you, which I do, and for me it helps. And, the exercise is the following: We go to one person, every day. It doesn't matter who it is. It can be a doctor, it can be a nurse, it can be a patient, it can be a friend, it can be someone working in the canteen, in the coffee shop; it doesn't matter where we go. We see a person - every day, at least one - possibly someone that we don't really know. If it's someone that we know, try not to do the same person every day, okay? We go to this person, we look at the person's eyes, possibly, and we say to the person, "I love you!" No need to verbalize. Internally. *[laughter]* Because I see your face is a bit worried already. Because if we need to verbalize, then it can create a little bit of trouble. Because we have a concept of love, which is not really... I would not say correct, but we make a big confusion between love and desire. But here, I mean love as the simple fact, which is: I say to you, internally, "I love you, your happiness is important for me. I wish you to be happy." That's what I mean by saying, "I love you." I don't know necessarily where you come from, I don't know necessarily what you have done, what you have not done, who you are, but you exist and I love you, and I wish you to be happy.

And I have had a few experiences of doing this exercise and then having this exchange in which I start smiling, the person starts smiling back. And the person has no idea why I am doing, and what is happening. And then there is this warm beautiful feeling coming in, you know! When we love others, we are the ones that receive most of all. And this is something that no one can take out of us. And as I said before, when we are in a fragile situation, for example sickness, this becomes even more strong. This exchange can become even stronger. We are able to give so much to other people! For example, if I am in a very fragile situation with sickness and so on, and I'm able to smile and to give love, this love is much more powerful than the love of a person that is in a normal situation. And we can really help a lot of people around. We can really give a lot to the people that are around, with a simple smile! With a simple feeling of love.

So, if we just do this exercise, minimum once a day, try it for a week. If it's good,



continue. If you think it's not good, forget about it. Just try it. An important thing: don't need to say it to anyone, okay? "Oh you know, I did this today", "Oh yes, you know I'm going to do that..." Don't need to say to anyone, just do it within yourself. Go there. Look at the person. "Your happiness is important for me. I wish you to be happy. I love you" And gradually... The only danger of this is: it creates dependence. We want to do more and more. Because somehow it's really pleasurable!

So, based on this, what happens is that, our mind is based on familiarity; we need to train ourselves. So among everything that we said, that I shared today, if there is anything that anyone of you think that could be useful in one's own life, we need to train ourselves into it. Understanding is just one step. We train ourselves by bringing it into practice, by doing it, by accepting, by sharing, by loving, by reflecting. Then slowly slowly it comes to us. Okay? And one thing, as I was saying, sickness very often is a way how to speed up. I met many people that through their own sickness, they became a much better person than they were before. Many times! More humble, more loving, more understanding... It is actually a very good antidote against selfishness very often, and against pride and arrogance. So (this is) one thing, which we can do with that, okay? When we get sick, we need to deal with the sickness. It's part of it. It's in the hand of the doctors, the nurses, the medicines and so and so on. But at the same time, the question that we need to make to ourselves is: Who am I before the sickness and who I become after the sickness? Or in the process. How is it shaping my life? How am I reacting to others? And if we develop more acceptance, if we develop more humility, if we develop more love, then we are going on the good direction. And please remember, the energy that comes from grieving, from sadness, from seeing the pains of others and it's been difficult to accept it, from having our own pain, and so and so on; it's a very strong energy that we need to direct it. And the way how we direct it, we can get a lot of energy coming out of that, even to help other people to do many things. So, this is all I would like to say today. And as I said: I'm just here to share something with you. And if there was anything that you think, that it may be of any benefit... If there is nothing? Okay! We had an hour and a half together. That's all. If there is something that you think that is of any benefit, the only thing I ask: Try to bring it to your life, try to put it into practice. Okay? So I don't know how is the time, but if there is anybody that would like to make any question, it's also very welcome. So, just to conclude one phrase, which for me is very important. Because I believe in it. So it helps me to put me in the right direction.

One great master used to say:

Jé gö jé gö sam né nyi shu song
ma jung ma jung sam né nyi shu song
a ka a ka sam né nyi shu song
dé tar ngang lé o ngor druk chu long mi tsé tong par zé pé nam tar yin.

In English, it would be something like that:

*Thinking of doing it. Thinking of doing it... twenty years passed by.
I couldn't do it. I couldn't do it... twenty years passed by.
Oh, why I didn't do it. Oh, why I didn't do it... twenty years passed by.*



*In such a way sixty years passed by...
That's the biography of an empty life.*

Remember that in Tibet at that time, people used to live up to their sixties, okay? If we just put,

Not thinking to do it, not thinking to do it, twenty years passed by, we get to eighty.

But the fact is that: if there is anything that we believe that is important of changing in our behavior, changing the way how we relate to others, and so on, we must start now! Not tomorrow because tomorrow is too late. We must do it today without fear of making these changes. Okay? So thank you very much.