

Driving meditation

As I do not drive, kind friends would often ferry me around to classes and talks, and back. This reflection recalls such journeys and some wise words from another friend. This reflection is also a gesture of deep joyful appreciation for you who have offered me the gift of being transported in comfort for the sake for inner peace.

A car has **four wheels**, but they all work together to go in one direction. The true wheels in our lives are the four noble truths: the true model for ultimate problem solving. First, we identify and define what is really troubling us. Second, we look for the conditions that bring it about. Third, we envision a problem-free situation. And fourth, we apply ourselves to attaining that problem free goal. Whenever we fail, or are not sure, we ask: What do we do next?

Prayer should not merely be a “spare tyre” that we pull out when we have a puncture. It should be a “steering wheel” with which we carefully keep ourselves on the right path as we move through life. The best prayer is a silent one filling our body and mind with lovingkindness so that others feel it, too. Such a prayer asks for nothing, yet gives every goodness without any conditions.

Worrying about tomorrow only takes away today’s peace. Regretting about the past only turns us away from this moment’s opportunity. If we keep thinking that someone who has hurt or harmed us, we are only carrying him around in our lives: what a burden! People can only hurt what we *have*; they can never hurt what we *are*. If our pride is hurt, it is because we have it. It is the pride that is hurting; so let the pride go; let us accept ourselves unconditionally, just as we are. To move on is to let go of the past.

Notice how large a car’s **windshield** is, and how small a rear-mirror is. We need to spend as much time as possible looking ahead and keep moving on. Occasionally, we might look back into the rear-mirror of the past, but only if this helps up to move safely on. Sometimes, we might have to stop, even let others move ahead of us so that the path is clear and safe for us. Sometimes, we might need to stop, but as long as we keep moving on, even slowly, we will reach our goal.

Everything in life is **impermanent**. Even people we love, and friends, come and go, and cannot always be the way we want them to be. They are like the traffic ahead and that passes us by. Since we are on the road, we must watch the traffic. If the road is good and clear, enjoy it, for it will not last forever. If the way is jammed, or we have lost our way, keep a patient look-out. It does not go on forever.

Friends, like **books**, should be few and good. Even if we might not have the time or inclination to read through every book or even through a single book, especially when they are very thick and deep, we could still surprise ourselves with its wisdom, when we leisurely browse through one, or open and read a random page. Friendship is like a book: it takes but a moment to burn it, but years and sometimes tears to write one.

Old friends are like good wine. The older they are, the sweeter they taste. Yet there must be some space amongst us. For, too much wine might intoxicate and blur us. Even the best of friends must be at times be apart. The moments of silence in our

friendship allows our words to be clearly and truly heard. Even the best of friends must part, so let us treasure the moment with love and respect. Yet true friends never say goodbye: we wish one another farewell, till we meet again.

Our **eyes** alone, no matter how good, does not make a good driver. When we do not look at the road or where we are really going, we are as good as being blind. We all have eyes but not always vision. We might travel the world and visit great places and see great sights, but without a proper purpose in life, we would keep coming back to the same spot. A good sense of direction in life is not found by looking outside, nor by looking up, nor looking down, but by looking within, by diligently making the journey to inner peace.

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