

Don't be my past

We all have someone or some people who don't like us, who do not approve of us, no matter what good we do or however good we are. They have a fixed idea that we will always be what we WERE. We are always the past. The reasons or conditions for such dislike or hatred doesn't really matter because when we don't like someone, we can think of almost anything as an excuse to find fault with that person.

Perhaps, we may have committed some mistake or fallen into some lapse in the past. These distractors only remember those shadows, but never the light that we are NOW, that we mostly ARE, and what we WILL BE.

Notice how a fragile playful adorable child grows up to be a confident, successful, even more adorable adult—and then into a withering frame of not-so-adorable decaying matter. Are we going to live life with the burden of the past, especially the past of others?

If they choose to remember us for our dark past, it is not our fault. Our past no more exists, except in the sad dark memory of the distractor. They are still carrying the ghost of the past, from which we are free. We are living as devas and angels now, dwelling in the Dharma, but they are still stuck in the subhuman realms of greed, hate, delusion and fear, of animals, pretas, hell-beings and asuras demons.

When we are driven by greed, hate, delusion or fear, we are not really happy (despite what we have or what we are). Conversely, when we are not happy, we attract and strengthen these 4 biases. For this reason, we must cultivate LOVING-KINDNESS regularly.

There's nothing wrong in loving our "enemy." The reality is that we have no enemies—only ghosts of the past, our painful memories we keep feeding. It is like a cancer cell we allow to grow—it slowly takes over our life, and that's the end.

Lovingkindness is a bright light that heals these bad cells to become healthy cells again. We must brighten up with lovingkindness down to the cellular level, so to speak—our whole being must brighten up. This begins with a simple smile within our heart just as we are falling asleep, and as soon as we wake up, SMILE. Whatever is to come for the day has not yet come: now is the time to smile and be happily ready for the world.

It's those nasty looped voices, samsaric echoes, that whisper insidiously over and over in our heads. It tells us bad things about ourself; it reminds us of bad things about others; it creates nasty stories where there are none. So, we become the victims of our own stories, trapped in our own thoughts.

LOVINGKINDNESS does just the opposite: we silence those unwelcome voices. In their place, we say and hear happy messages and inputs: I am WELL! I am HAPPY! I am at PEACE with myself! I ACCEPT myself just as I am! I FORGIVE myself completely for all the bad I have done! I will be radiant with GOOD!

NOW is that moment of lovingkindness. In THE FINGER-SNAP SUTTA (A 1.6.3-5), the Buddha invites us to cultivate lovingkindness for just the moment it takes to snap

our fingers! Even for such a brief moment of lovingkindness, we have practised the Buddha's teaching.¹

When we live with lovingkindness, it does not matter what others think of us. If they want to hold dung in their hands, they will smell rotten. If we choose to offer fragrant flowers to the 3 jewels and keep the 5 precepts, we will smell with the fragrance of moral virtue that goes against even the wind!

The fragrance of flowers goes not against the wind,
nor does sandalwood, nor tagara, nor jasmine,
but the fragrance of the good blows against the wind:
the true individual sweetens every quarter. (Dh 54)

From this day forth, we must learn to be HAPPY inside us, always. Goodness begins NOW with lovingkindness. This is the best way of keeping the precepts and creating good karma: it starts with being habitually happy. Lovingkind in thought, lovingkind in speech, lovingkind in action. We keep our karmic doors open with lovingkindness and welcome only good, and brighten the bad into good.

In "The Discourse on Unattainable States" (A 5.48), the Buddha advises us how to live in a positive way, no matter what:

But he who is wise, facing misfortunes,
is unshaken, knowing how to analyze himself.
His enemies are afflicted,
seeing his face of old untroubled.²

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¹ **Cūḷ'accharā Sutta** (A 1.6.3-5), SD 16.6 (§5.2) in the Velāma Sutta (A 9.20):
<http://dharmafarer.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2009/12/16.6-Velama-S-a9.20-piya.pdf>.

² **Alabbhanīya Thāna Sutta** (A 5.48,70), SD 42.1:
<http://dharmafarer.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/42.1-Alabbhaniya-Thana-S-a5.48-piya.pdf>.