

Patience Rewarded

Whatever wholesome deeds I have done
Such as venerating the Buddhas and generosity
Amassed over a thousand eons
Will be destroyed by one moment of anger

This is the start of the chapter on 'Patience' in Shantideva's Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life, one of the great classics of the Mahayana tradition. Patience – the antidote to anger. Patience – also the quality required to reach one's goal of memorizing all 134 stanzas in that chapter. This is what Harvey Horrocks, a 30-year practitioner and former executive director of FPMT, set out to do. He talked to Julia Hengst ...

When Lama Zopa Rinpoche asked in 1987 if I would be director of FPMT's International Office, I didn't think I had the right qualities. Nevertheless, I spent three or four months on tour with Lama Zopa Rinpoche and Ven. Roger Kunsang, and after that, I set up a base for the office in Nepal with a plan.

The office had a debt of about \$20,000, which seemed like a very large sum of money back then. That was when the idea of doing the preliminary practice of mandala offerings came up. There were four goals that I felt I could achieve for the office. The first one was *Mandala* magazine. The second was to get the FPMT handbook into the hands of all the center directors and their teams. The third was to find someone who could be a bridge between Lama Zopa and International Office – someone who traveled with Rinpoche, understood the organization, and who had extensive center director experience. Ven. Roger filled this role perfectly. And, financial stability was the fourth.

For this last project I decided to do the preliminary practice of mandala offerings dedicated to the financial strength of the work of the International Office. During those initial months on the road, Rinpoche gave a teaching in Sydney in which he explained the benefits of a three-year retreat. Before doing this long retreat, he said, it's important to do the nine preliminary practices. Since that time in Sydney I was always looking for a way to get these prelimi-

naries done. Starting the International Office seemed like the right time to start mandala offerings, dedicating them to bring financial strength to the office.

I began by doing a hundred mandala offerings a day, thinking it would take four years. (It takes three years if there aren't any gaps.) You do long mandala offerings at the beginning and at the end, otherwise it's all short ones. Actually, it's very, very blissful. It is a struggle at the beginning, but once you get into the simplicity of it, you think of three things: You need to think that you're really giving something away; you need to think that what you've given is really blissful and vast; and that the buddhas and the gurus receive it and are delighted by it.

We were in Kathmandu for two years, then political unrest and the observations said to move. The Cayton family in California had generously offered for us to move the office into Greenwood Lodge, which is now Land of Medicine Buddha. So, I continued with the practice, and it became even more important because we were now in America and needed even more money. The publishers of a newspaper in Watsonville, the nearby town, printed *Mandala* almost free of charge. I was able to complete the mandala offerings in about four years.

When I finished them, I offered the mandala offerings to Rinpoche. Rinpoche didn't really say anything at the time. But a couple of years later at Istituto Lama Tzong Khapa in Italy, Rinpoche was giving out personal practices – like several million Manis.¹ Rinpoche didn't give me any, maybe because there was so much going on at the office. Or maybe Rinpoche was giving out those big numbers to people who were not working for FPMT full-time, and it was a way of keeping them strongly connected. Then Rinpoche said, "The cause for FPMT International Office receiving funding was because of Harvey doing his mandala offerings." To hear Rinpoche say that this was connected with anything I had done completely blew my mind – it was so inspiring and empowering in terms of one's personal practice to keep going.

The business I am now involved in teaches how important it is to identify a goal, deciding when you're going to achieve it, and mapping out how you are going to get there. This is then broken down into tiny steps as to what I need

¹ The mantra OM MANI PADME HUNG

to do on a daily basis. You produce results which can almost appear magical. If you start to see the kind of mental activity that's normally taking place, and how berserk it is, and how non-directional, or multi-directional it is – then you can begin to see some logic behind it. If you're trying to hit a number of targets, with ideas like "I'd like to buy that house, I'd like to retire early, I'd like to drive that car, and I'd like to go to Nepal" – so many things are going on but none of them are focused. It's essential to narrow down what it is you're aiming at, and to make sure something happens on a daily basis that's in that direction. That's where the power of consistent motivation and dedication must come from – it's a way of directing our practice. That's where I recognize that the masters of the mind have already taught us all these methods – they know all this stuff.

Goal setting is a skill taught in the Unfranchise business I am now developing with my wife Angela. The importance of revisiting that goal twice a day is taught, and being able not to just verbalize the goal, but to bring it to life in a compelling way. So if it's a two-million-dollar house overlooking the ocean in San Diego you want, you need to go and find one that blows your mind. Go and stand in front of it and take pictures as if you already own it. Find out how much it costs or, if it's not for sale, find one like it to get the price, and work out all the financial side of it. Anything you can do that makes you identify with the goal – then you can begin to bring to life the experience of achieving the goal.

When Lama Zopa Rinpoche gave teachings in San Francisco on November 17, 2003, one of the things that came through strongly for me was that if you give the reasons for happiness to animals for countless eons, they won't get it. But for humans, it takes just a few seconds. I also felt some urgency about how there is a shortage of time and who knows what will happen in this life. I'd never before actually applied the business model in a Western way to my spiritual practice – to making progress along the stages of the path.

And so I set a goal to memorize the 'Patience' chapter of the *Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life* over a period of a year. I decided I would give it some time in my morning practice, and then review my memorized line each lunchtime: I'd go for a walk taking the book with me. I would go through it again so there was a second chance to make the imprint. I found that it was building up. It was magic because it was effortless in a way.

The other thing that's so incredible about it is that if you read the chapter it has one meaning. But if you memorize it, it takes on a totally new meaning. One practical result is that when you need the advice, you've got it. The biggest problem with practice is being mindful of when it needs to be applied. Stuff just comes up all the time without my even being aware of it. But if you have to turn to your texts to find out what to do, you're at a major disadvantage. It's like trying to have a war in another country while your army is back at home! It takes two months to get everybody over there, and by that time everything has changed anyway!

Associated with this was something Lama Yeshe said back in 1977: "You should have a goal for your practice." I thought, "What kind of goal do you start with?" Having a goal like memorizing is something you can measure. But also having a goal like the practice of patience in a family setting is very appropriate – it's so easy for anger to arise. In my case, I made a decision that I had to practice patience. What I did do was write out the full goal statement. "After thirty years of practice, I need to have solid goals" was one line in my goal statement.

In business, if there is no goal there is no result. I have no reason to think it's any different with the practice of Dharma. You hear people say, "I've been practicing for ten, twenty, or even thirty years, and I'm not quite sure what change is taking place here." Right?

After a couple of months it was clear that memorizing the 'Patience' chapter was working; I was absolutely clear I would finish in eleven months. However, memorizing a text and thinking you've removed anger – those are two totally different things. But to try and remove anger *without* memorizing the texts, you're really limiting your abilities.

Anger is a devastating enemy. But every verse is just so powerful. Nothing is superfluous. Every line is addressing a major issue. *Whatever wholesome deeds I have done such as venerating the Buddhas and generosity amassed over a thousand eons will be destroyed by one moment of anger:* You could spend weeks on that one verse alone! I have to understand – and I generally don't – that anger is the ultimate poison.

Only by beginning to look at it can one see that there is no good quality associated with anger. But then you think, 'Oh, am I supposed to become submissive?' There is an image, which I had not been able to capture until recently, of how of course it's correct that there is no good quality of

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anger. When you think of a master of martial arts in combat, the master has to remain completely clear, and then he has the power. If he loses the clarity, if he becomes angry, he has lost. If you have the clarity, you have the power. The verse from the chapter that explained this to me is:

*"The victorious warriors are those,
who having disregarded all suffering
vanquish the foes of hatred and so on,
common warriors slay only corpses."*

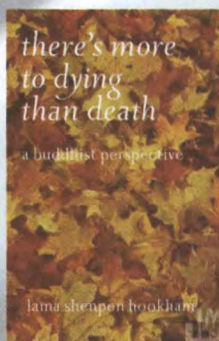
Having eliminated anger, it is said that the mind becomes blissfully happy, which is clearly an indication that anger has been stealing from us all the time. I say "all the time" – we're switching between aversion and attachment continuously. There's the middle land of neutral there, but there's an enormous amount of aversion that goes on every day. If one can stop that, the mind simply *must* become incredibly happy.

Rinpoche so kindly asked me to say a little about having a goal for my practice. I'm trying to come to terms with the fact that I need goals. I need a plan of action of how to get there, and I need to monitor what's going on in the process. I'm now worried that if I don't have a goal and a strategy, I am not going anywhere. There are trainings and disciplines in our Unfranchise business which, when implemented, produce results, so why would I not use the same systems for anything that is so dear to me and that I wish to achieve? In the process of reciting my goal each day, it injects an incredible ray of light into my thinking.

What is more motivating than the brilliant goals, they say – and maybe this is why Rinpoche spends a good section of the Kopan course on the hell realms – is what happens if I *don't* achieve my goals. Having a description of what happens if I don't is very important. For me, thinking about being in this kind of job until I'm sixty-five (considering they are kind enough to let me have it until then), even the idea of having to spend the ten most powerful hours of my day being involved in the process of marketing or legalizing a piece of electronic equipment is so mindless. So let's say we need the income, and I have to stick it out until I am completely exhausted. Not being able to give time to my practice and then having to face sickness and death, and then having to face incredible regret ...

Once I'd done two months of memorizing, I had full confidence that I would be able to memorize the whole

a wake-up call



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chapter in a year. If you manage to overcome anger, eliminate attachment, or realize impermanence, the view of enlightenment must become more focused.

When I got to the eleventh month, I started to do prostrations (I still need to do more of the nine preliminary practices). I'd do three prostrations and then I got to seven prostrations. You stay at seven until it becomes easy to do seven on a daily basis. You increase it so slowly it's almost like the mind and body don't even notice. Slowly you build up and then you're doing a hundred a day. It works.

Being able to address the elimination of anger – that's another thing. Now I see in the root text that *anger cannot arise unless the mind is unhappy*. Anger is impossible to deal with once it's up – it's got an attitude like 'in this situation it's absolutely correct to be angry.' To me it's not so much a question of working with anger – anger is impossible to work with – but working with the unhappy mind. So then of course the tricky thing is having sufficient awareness of what's going on, being aware of when the mind becomes unhappy and changing it before anger has a chance to manifest.

In terms of goals, there are three things one has to do:

- Be very clear about the end result – it has to be clearly and briefly described, and when it's going to be achieved. If you don't know whether you've got there or not, it's not a goal.

- You have to be clear what it is you're going to give up in order to get there, because everyone's time is completely full.

- You need to identify what it is you're going to do to get there, on a daily basis. Maybe sometimes it will be on a once-a-month basis, but the main thing is having a daily activity.

These three steps need to be read out loud twice a day, carry them written out on a card. Having understood this, basically it empowers you to achieve anything. ☸

Readers interested in Harvey's philosophy and his Unfranchise business are welcome to contact him at harveyangela@hotmail.com.



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