



Awakening Compassion: Meditation Practice for Difficult Times

Pema Chödrön

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For more than 800 years, Tibetan Buddhists have used the principles of "lojong (literally, "mind training") to transform difficulties into insights, and conflict into genuine communication. "Awakening Compassion is the first audio retreat on the practice of lojong taught by Pema Chodron herself. With many on-the-spot techniques for dealing with jealousy, anger, and fear, this perennial bestseller--now available on CD--is a unique resource for bringing compassion into the world and stopping the cycle of suffering in our own lives.

Awakening Compassion: Meditation Practice for Difficult Times Details

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From Reader Review Awakening Compassion: Meditation Practice for Difficult Times for online ebook

T.Kay Browning says

Awakening Compassion is one of the most important books that I have read or listened to in a long time. I had as many deeply impactful moments listening to this as I have had in a while, and I still missed plenty of what was going on. The most important insight for me was that we are all born with this soft spot in our soul, so tender and vulnerable that we build all sorts of walls around it. We feel the urge to distance ourselves so much from this place, but still recognize the fountain of strength and love that is in that soft spot, that we name it God and push it outside of ourselves and deny our own natures, naming that very soft spot "original sin" because we do so many mean and hurtful things to protect that spot. So we need to find ways to re-approach that soft spot and break down some the walls, but also recognize that this spot only grows and deepens as we approach it so we will never be truly reconciled with it.

That isn't just mumbo jumbo to me, that deeply reflects part of my lived human experience that I have never had words for before. I am very grateful I found this book and will return to it soon.

Erin says

They call it enlightenment for a reason.

Camia Young says

Formative for my thinking, in particularly how to make peace with my suffering.

Erin Rouleau says

If I could give this 11 stars, I would. Of all the Pema books and audiofiles I've listened to, this has been the most helpful and ponderous. I need to listen to this again and again to remind myself to let go, not label, hold space in openness, give and receive, communicate honestly, show up, ask questions, lean in closer, go inward more, breath in and breath out, and that right now is the perfect place to be. But most importantly, that there's no such thing as the separation of beings.

On a side note, she mentions how we can find teachers in the unlikeliest of places, and that she felt the greatest dharma teacher is Dr. Seuss. I couldn't agree more. I'm so glad I grew up on his children's books :)

Paige says

I would give this one a 3.5 if I could. I really enjoyed listening to Pema Chodron on my way to and from

work. Some of the content was too advanced for me (or maybe too buddhist for me?), but she gave me a great deal to think about and I have found some of the "slogans" and practices that she discussed to be very useful in everyday life. I will be looking for more from this author/speaker.

Min says

Pema Chödrön offers here an advanced workshop of several challenging practices that enable us to better encounter those people and situations that bring out the worst in us. The confrontations in life by others that push our buttons. Offering us practitioners a way to "widen the circle of compassion" to include everyone; that certainly includes enemies, strangers, and friends, and include those same people in one's meditations and thoughts of joy, hoping they, too, can feel this wonderful experience.

The slogans begin with "The point where all Dharmas agree", "Drive all Blames into One", "Be grateful to everyone". Effectively, how other people enable us to perfect our patience, anger control, and compassion, particularly those that irritate us most. So often a person's practice of meditation and the teachings is often isolated away from others that think or act differently. The perfect wisdom to live in the world, and function with one's doors and windows open to the world, yet with boundaries.

Then she moves to another set of Tonglen, and qualities of the Bodhichitta
Presented with lectures, and question period.

Steve H says

I got this to learn a bit more about Tonglen practice - essentially taking in the pain of others and releasing something positive to them and the universe. There's a lot to absorb and digest in this, and I can probably learn from it in future listenings. Some practical information - She goes through "slogans" of the practice, and early on she says "and the last slogan," which kind of threw me until I recognized that it was the last slogan for the session that was being recorded and that more slogans would appear in recordings of other sessions. I'm so glad she's been recorded so those of us who can't be with her in person have a chance to experience and learn from her. Her teachings have certainly helped me in my recent journey.

LemontreeLime says

One of the very best audios you could listen to on this. I love how Pema can say things in a real earthy fashion while pulling in the big picture perspective AND be funny at the same time. She is one of the best! There is a lot on the lojong meditation practice in here too, but the most important part is all the discussions on how to work with life itself.

relistened to this in oct, 2015. This is still my favorite.

MaryJohanna says

Another great series of lectures and discussions on meditation, with an advanced section on the practice of tonglen.

From the Pema Chodron website: "The tonglen practice is a method for connecting with suffering — ours and that which is all around us — everywhere we go. It is a method for overcoming fear of suffering and for dissolving the tightness of our heart. Primarily it is a method for awakening the compassion that is inherent in all of us, ... "

Ed says

She seemed to ramble on several topics. When asked questions by the students she didn't have an answer for many of the questions and she also said that you should get a teacher, however, they probably won't have answers either. She seemed friendly enough and the students loved her. I guess I needed to be there and then maybe it would have been better.

Also I'm not sure about sucking in other people's bad vibes to make the world a better place. To be fair Chodron did say that the practice may not make the world better but it makes the practitioner better.

Meredith Holley says

This is my favorite-favorite of all of Pema Chodron's lectures. I haven't listened to this one in a while, but it was really influential in my total life overhaul last year.

My favorite part of this lecture is Pema Chodron's description of the Buddhist idea of ego, which is so different, I think, from the western idea of ego, which is more like hubris. But, I do think that the two descriptions are different ways to get at the same thing. They both see ego as something that alienates us from other people.

The Buddhist idea of ego, like everything else in Buddhism, is a way to describe aversion and clinging and the chaos they cause in our lives. She describes it like this: ego is like if you're in a room you love. The temperature is your perfect temperature, the food is your favorite. Your favorite music is playing and the walls are your favorite color.

But, you suddenly realize that you can hear sounds from outside and there is an uncomfortable breeze, and so you close the window. Then, you realize there's a little air still coming in under your door, so you put a towel down. You can hear the neighbors through the wall, and so you brick up that wall, and pretty soon you are trapped in your perfect room.

Anything from the outside is threatening to your comfortable space, and you can't tolerate anything coming into your space or being taken from it.

I'll tell you about how I've seen this play out in my own life with the topic I'm so passionate about right now (as always) – sexism. I used to react when someone said something sexist by pulling into myself and seeking

out people who I knew wouldn't be sexist, jobs that would encourage me to show myself. I assumed I wasn't welcome where sexism existed, and since I wasn't welcome, I should go home.

For example, a supervisor said, "Women often have trouble promoting themselves in their resumes." Even though I listened to his advice about my resume, I decided that this was evidence that so many lawyers just assume women are pushovers. Maybe we are pushovers, I thought. I also thought there are so many benefits to being humble and straightforward about skills and not bragging, but maybe the law and especially men in the law, can't accept that.

Maybe I don't belong in the law, I thought. Men in the law were the outside world, they claimed it, and my inclination was to withdraw into my comfortable house and let them have the outside.

But, that was a limitation I was putting on myself; it was not reality. In reality, I can go out into any situation and be safe in my own thinking. Who cares if this guy thinks women have trouble promoting themselves? I don't have to think that, and him being wrong doesn't hurt me. My thought that maybe I'm a pushover and don't belong was super uncomfortable, but that was allll my choice.

I can open my door and step outside, and then I can step back into my comfortable spot when I want to. I can open the window, and then close it again when I'm tired of the outside smells. But, I can still be me no matter what feelings are out there. I can hear someone say that women have trouble with promotion, I can sit with the thought and let my supervisor think it, and I can still not choose to believe it.

So, this is the kind of coaching I'm doing with people now. Transforming their workplace through managing their mind and setting boundaries. It's the most fun ever. Check me out, and get my free guide to getting the respect you deserve at work!

Will Simpson says

A practical, useful teaching of some of the Lojong slogans. Audio from several talks she gave during retreats. Pema has a reputation in my mind of a soft fluffy buddhist teacher. This talk changed my mind. She is down to earth and mired with the same problems as everyone. Well maybe not exactly the same but close. This is part of my continued exploration of Lojong. She emphasized Tonglen Meditation. This is part of Lojong Practice and I'll have to incorporate it. Recommended.

Happyreader says

This installment of my audio Pema-palooza is all about what to do when we hit our edge – those moments where suddenly everything feels so solid and we're anxious or angry and frantic to do something about it, to get illusory ground beneath our feet, desperate for resolution. These lengthy lectures on tonglen practice (breathing in what is difficult, breathing out what is helpful to create space around difficult emotions and awaken compassion) and the lojong (mind training) slogans are ultimately about removing the restrictive barriers we erect to protect our soft spot, our Bodhichitta (awakened heart), so that we can live more fully.

To me, the most helpful emphasis of these talks has been on breaking out of our old habits. To just keep going (letting go), to try something new, to temper our drive for resolution, to realize that we don't really

crave whatever our addictive substance is but that we really crave getting closer to our awakened heart and feeling more at home in not knowing what happens next. To experience joy and sadness in equal measure and realize that we are not defective for feeling sorrow, pain, or fear. That our reality is nothing more than the sum of our thoughts about our identity, which are not solid and can shift, just as it did for the woman with multiple personalities.

As Pema says, relaxing with groundlessness is uncomfortable. That's an understatement. At least she offers some guidelines for dealing with the extreme discomfort.

Dominic says

I would not have gotten through the February blues with this much grace or health without this 6-CD audio on tonglen meditation and lojong teachings by my favorite Buddhist author, Pema Chödrön. Listening to these tapes again, which are recordings from one of her retreats, I've realized how long I've come and the scope and reach of this practice.

Whether one integrates a sitting practice or just institutes a paradigm shift of the heart, Chödrön's teachings will transform. And while I've read many of her books, there is real power here in hearing her own voice and her own talks. So calming. So challenging. So down to earth.

Cynthia says

Combine a voice that sounds a little like Teri Gross, a self-deprecating laugh, and wisdom--you've got Pema Chodron's workshops recorded on the audio book. I just bought one of her books, but I'm glad I was introduced to this Buddhist nun through her own words. I have been practicing yoga on and off most of my life, dabbling in meditation, but wanting something more. This book, which tackles the particular kind of practice called lojong; not everyone may appreciate this, but it's a very good fit for me. I appreciate that I feel like I'm really being asked to think about this approach, not just adopt it, and that I have to struggle to really understand how this works for the individual and society. I appreciate this more than the "7 ideas to get yourself together" kind of bromides that are so typical today. Highly recommend, but I think it's a personal fit, and may not be for everyone.
