

## The Six Far-Reaching Attitudes in General and How They Complement One Another

(lightly edited transcript)

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The six far-reaching attitudes are the six practices that we engage in because we want to attain enlightenment for the benefit of others. First, we generate this altruistic intention to attain enlightenment. Then, to be able to actualize it, to be able to purify our mind and develop our good qualities, according to the sutra path, these are the six things that we must do.

In Sanskrit, the term is the six *paramitas* – sometimes it is translated as the six perfections. I don't think 'perfection' is such a good translation, because in English, 'perfection' is such a sticky word. We have such perfection complexes anyway that I think it's better to just say six 'far-reaching attitudes'.

### Why "far-reaching"?

These attitudes are very far-reaching because:

- they encompass all sentient beings in the scope of who we are doing them for, and
- we have a far-reaching motivation to attain enlightenment for the benefit of all those beings, no matter how they act, whether they bite your toes or not. [laughter]

All these six far-reaching attitudes are necessary to attain enlightenment. If we miss one of them, then, we miss a big chunk. There are various ways in which we can discuss these six. Before I start discussing them individually, I'm going to talk a little bit about them generally and how they fit together.

The path to enlightenment consists of the method aspect of the path and the wisdom aspect of the path. The method aspect of the path are all the actions done out of the altruistic intention to attain enlightenment for the benefit of all sentient beings, where this intention is truly cognizant, present in the mind. The wisdom aspect of the path is the wisdom that realizes emptiness.

The first five of the six far-reaching attitudes are considered part of the method aspect:

- **generosity**
- **ethics**
- **patience**
- **enthusiastic perseverance**
- **concentration**

The **wisdom** aspect of the path is the sixth far-reaching attitude, the far-reaching attitude of wisdom.

There are other ways to look at the far-reaching attitudes too. One way is to say that we practice the first three – generosity, ethics and patience – for the purpose of others, to accomplish their purpose. We practice the next three – enthusiastic perseverance, concentration and wisdom – to accomplish our own purpose.

Accomplishing others' purpose refers to being able to directly benefit others. In order to do that, we need to have what's called the *rupakaya* or the form body of the Buddha. To accomplish self-purpose is to attain enlightenment and attain the *dharmakaya*. The *dharmakaya* is analogous to the mind of the

Buddha. When we become Buddhas, we need both a Buddha's mind and a Buddha's physical form, a Buddha's physical form not being like our physical form, but rather, a body made of light and the ability to manifest in many different forms.

## Mahayana disposition

When we talk about the six far-reaching attitudes, the basis upon which they're practiced is somebody whose Mahayana disposition has been awakened. What's Mahayana disposition? 'Mahayana' refers to the vast vehicle of practice, the one that is vast in terms of our motivation, in terms of the number of sentient beings it encompasses, in terms of the goal that we're aiming for. So the basis is somebody who has the altruistic intention to attain enlightenment for the benefit of others, where that has been awakened.

We may not have spontaneous bodhicitta, but there is at least some spark, some interest. In the scriptures, there is a lot of mention about the Mahayana disposition being awakened. It's quite important, because when you think of our lives, the difference between when you've heard teachings on bodhicitta and have some aspiration towards that, versus the time before you heard teachings on bodhicitta where you didn't even know about it, you can see that there's a big difference.

Even though we haven't actualized bodhicitta yet, just knowing that it exists, knowing that it is a possibility, having admiration, having it awakened in our hearts that we want to become that altruistic and have that loving-kindness, that's a big change in the mind. So, we say the Mahayana disposition has been awakened.

And then through relying on teachers and receiving extensive teachings on Mahayana texts, together with the bodhicitta and the wisdom realizing emptiness, we try and practice these six far-reaching attitudes to attain enlightenment. So the basis of doing these six is somebody who has the appreciation or the actualization of bodhicitta.

## The six far-reaching attitudes

### 1. Generosity

There's a difference between the far-reaching attitude of generosity and regular old generosity. Regular old generosity, everybody has – almost. You give something to somebody. That's regular old generosity. It's virtuous. But it's different from the far-reaching attitude of generosity that is undertaken on the basis of the bodhicitta. There is a big difference in the action and a big difference in the result that you attain, because of the basis of the motivation. So we have to remember the importance of the motivation here. We keep coming back to it again and again.

The first far-reaching attitude, generosity, is physical or verbal actions based on the willingness to give and the kind thought that wants to give. Generosity is not giving away everything you own. Generosity is not satisfying everybody else's wishes, because that's impossible. Generosity is the physical and verbal actions we undertake based on the wish to give.

### 2. Ethics

Ethics is restraint from the seven destructive actions of body and speech and the three destructive actions of mind. It's the wish not to harm others and so thereby getting our ethical act together.

### 3. Patience

Patience is the ability to remain undisturbed when we are facing difficulties, suffering, or harm from others. Patience isn't just suppressing your anger and putting a plastic smile on your face. But rather, patience is the mind that's undisturbed whether all hell is breaking loose around you or not. It's that mental attitude.

### 4. Enthusiastic perseverance (Joyous effort)

Enthusiastic perseverance is sometimes translated as joyous effort. I don't know which translation you prefer. I vacillate between the two. It is delight in accomplishing the purposes of self and others. In other words, delight in doing what is constructive, what is virtuous.

It is a mind that is happy to be of service to self and others. It's not the mind that is of service to self and others because we feel guilty and obliged and so on. But it's the mind that takes delight in service.

### **5. Concentration**

Concentration is the ability to remain fixed on a positive focal object without distraction. The ability to steer our mind towards a constructive or virtuous object and be able to keep our mind there at will, without the mind getting distracted by something, or falling asleep, or going bananas in some way or another. A mind that is very subdued. Instead of our mind controlling us, the mind is quite flexible.

### **6. Wisdom**

The far-reaching attitude of wisdom is the ability to distinguish accurately, conventional truths and ultimate truths – the conventional way that objects exist and the deeper or ultimate natures of their existence.

Wisdom is also the ability to distinguish what to practice on the path and what to abandon, in other words, what's constructive for enlightenment and what's destructive.

That's the **nature** of each of the far-reaching attitudes. I've gone through a quick definition of all of them to give you a brief overview.

## **Necessity & function of the six attitudes**

We can also talk about the necessity and function of each of the six attitudes.

### **Generosity**

To accomplish the welfare of others, in other words, to lead them along the path to enlightenment, we need generosity. We need to be able to provide them with the basic physical necessities, teachings and protection. Otherwise, it would be difficult to lead sentient beings to enlightenment. So, generosity is necessary to fulfill their purpose, to accomplish their welfare.

### **Ethics**

Also to accomplish their welfare, we need to stop harming them. That's fairly straightforward, isn't it? First way to start helping somebody is to stop harming him or her.

### **Patience**

The way in which we need patience to accomplish others' welfare, is that we need to be patient when other sentient beings don't act so nicely. If we're trying to work for other people's benefit, but instead we become angry and upset when they don't do what we want, then it becomes really difficult to work for their benefit and to be of service.

We need incredible patience to be able to let go and not hold on to all the stupid things that people do. And if we look at our own behavior, we know that there are lots of stupid things that we do. Just as we want others to be patient with us, we then turn around and extend that patience to them.

### **Enthusiastic perseverance (Joyous effort)**

We also need joyous effort to be able to continuously help them. To work for others' welfare, to serve them, we need to have this joy that can do it continuously. Because to really make changes, to really help people, it's not a one-time shot.

It's a real commitment to stick it out and be of service continually. We can see this even in regular helping professions – whether you're in social work, medicine or therapy, etc. It's a continuous process. We need that joyous effort to really make change.

### **Concentration**

We also need concentration because we need to develop different psychic powers in order to be able to serve others better. In other words, if we have psychic powers that can know people's past, where we could tell past karmic connections, then it becomes easier to know how to guide people. We will know who are the teachers whom people have karmic connections with and how to guide them there.

If we have psychic abilities that can understand people's thoughts and their dispositions, then again it becomes much easier to guide them. When we know what their interests are, what their personalities are, it's easier to give a practice that's suitable for them.

In Buddhism, we do have the practice of developing psychic powers, but it's always in the context of using them for the benefit of sentient beings. It is not to make a big deal out of oneself or to rake lots of money by showing them off.

### **Wisdom**

We need the far-reaching attitude of wisdom to accomplish others' welfare because we need to be wise in order to teach them. We need to know what to teach them. We need to know what is conventional reality, what is ultimate reality, because it's that teaching which is going to help others remove their defilements.

Before we teach it, we have to understand it ourselves. We have to be able to teach them what to practice on the path, what kind of actions to cultivate, what kind of actions to abandon, what attitudes and actions are contradictory to happiness. In order to teach that to others, we have to be wise in those things ourselves.

### **How the six attitudes fulfill our own and others' purpose**

We can also talk about using the six far-reaching attitudes to fulfill others' purpose and to fulfill our own purpose. Like I was saying before, the first three fulfill others' purpose while the last three fulfill our own purpose. When we talk about "our" purpose and "others'" purpose, it's not like the first three only benefit others and do not benefit myself. And it's not like the last three only benefit me and not benefit others. It's just a matter of emphasis.

The first three far-reaching attitudes of generosity, ethics and patience all work to fulfill others' purpose. There is an interesting relationship between them.

### **How generosity, ethics and patience interrelate with one another and fulfill others' purpose**

#### **Generosity**

Through generosity, we try and make other people happy. We try and give them what they want. We satisfy their needs, so we make them happy. Also, it becomes a skillful method to interest others in the Dharma because if we give people things, then they tend to like us. They might then get interested in things we're interested in, like the Dharma. So it becomes a skillful way to make people think. And so generosity is one way in which we try and fulfill others' purpose.

#### **Ethics**

Now, while practicing generosity, we also have to stop harming them. If we keep giving people things and we are quite generous, but then we turn around the next day and slander or criticize them or beat them up, then all the good energy that we put out by being generous is completely contradicted. It doesn't fulfill their purpose. It makes them suffer more and it doesn't make them interested at all in what we are doing.

Being unethical is not the way to attract other sentient beings to be interested in the Dharma, because they tend to say: "Oh that person really acts awful. Whatever they are into, I want to go 180 degrees away."

I find this quite interesting to think about because often we think of ethics as something that we do to avoid lower rebirths and to create cause for upper rebirths. Or we think about it as not harming others, or something like this.

But, actually, if we start thinking about it in terms of how to guide other sentient beings, if we want to influence others in a positive way, being ethical is very, very essential, so that we don't undo everything.

Also, if we behave well, then other people are impressed, and again, they get quite interested. If they

see us at work and everybody else is involved in some kind of shady thing at work, or everybody else in the office is gossiping, but we stay away, then they may develop some trust in us, and may become interested in what we're doing.

### **Patience**

When we're practicing both generosity and ethics, we need to be patient as well. This is especially the case if we have been generous with other people but they turn around and harm us. If we lack patience, then what are we going to do? We're going to harm them in return. Patience is an essential quality to fulfill others' purpose because it's what supports our practice of generosity so that we don't regret being generous.

One thing that happens so often is we're very generous but the other person turns around and acts like a jerk to us, and then what do we do? We regret what we did. "Why was I so generous with that person? Why did I protect them? They turned around. They betrayed my trust." And so we get angry and resentful in return. And that destroys the practice of generosity that we did because we develop so much regret for our positive actions. And, then, of course we make a very strong determination not to help that person again in the future and not to be generous no matter what happens.

If we lack patience, then it really undermines the practice of generosity. We need to cultivate patience because very often, people don't repay kindness with kindness. They repay it otherwise. Of course when that happens to us, we feel like we're the only persons that it has ever happened to. But if you read the scriptures, you'll see that this has been happening since time immemorial.

If we look at our own lives, we probably will see that we, too, have behaved that way towards other people who had been kind to us. This is reality, and so if we can develop some patience for it, then it helps us to accomplish others' purpose. Also, if we can be patient, then we won't act unethically towards them when they act poorly towards us after we've been generous.

So that's how these first three attitudes – generosity, ethics and patience – all fit together. There is an interesting interplay between them. I think it is very important to contemplate this kind of thing, because we tend to see things as individual, isolated units – there's generosity here and ethics here and patience here; this one here and that one there.

But when you hear this kind of teaching, then you see that, well, generosity and ethics blend and they fit and they complement each other. Patience is in there too and it's necessary. And then you need the effort, the joyous effort to be able to do it too. So you start seeing inter-relationships between practices. I think that's very important, so that our minds don't get too blocked up and square.

It's interesting to think about this in relationship to your life and to different things that happened.

### **[Audience:] How do we dedicate the positive potential accumulated from a generous act?**

It's the same kind of dedication that we do at the end of Dharma teachings. At the end of any kind of virtuous acts, whether it's generosity or other actions, take that positive potential and dedicate it principally for the enlightenment of ourselves and others. And also dedicate for the long lives of our teachers and also for the existence of the Dharma in a pure way in the world and in our minds. You take some time and imagine sending out positive energy to other beings so that it ripens in that way.

Dedication is very important. If we have been generous or ethical or patient, but we don't dedicate the positive potential accumulated, then later on if we generate wrong views or get angry, we burn up the positive energy we accumulate. But, if we dedicate it, it's like putting it in the bank. We're all very wise "financially" here [laughter], we don't want to waste anything, so the dedication is quite important.

### **[Audience: Inaudible]**

You can also rejoice at other people's positive potential, plus the positive potential that you have accumulated, then take it all and imagine it as light that goes out and touches all the sentient beings. So we are not just dedicating our own positive potential. It's good to dedicate other peoples' too, because then that becomes a practice of rejoicing. Instead of getting jealous of other people who act better than we do and being in competition with them, we focus on how wonderful it is that there are all these people

doing kind things, and we dedicate all of it.

### [Audience: Inaudible]

That's why I prefer the translation 'positive potential' to 'merit'. When we translate the Tibetan word 'sonam' as 'merit', what do we think of? We think of little gold stars, "I got eighty-four gold stars!" I always like to tell the story in this regard. One time when I was in Singapore, one man came and wanted to do some chanting. I spent an hour teaching him "om mani padme hum" and how to do the chanting and the visualization.

At the end of the session, I said: "Now let's dedicate our positive potential for the enlightenment of others." He looked at me and said: "I don't want to dedicate it because I don't have very much." [laughter] It was so sweet because he was really concerned and worried that if he gave away his positive potential, what would happen to him? He was just so sweet. I'll never forget that. I had to remind him that it isn't like you give it away and then you don't experience the result of it anymore. You're not losing anything by dedicating. Rather, we're gaining by that.

### How enthusiastic perseverance, concentration and wisdom interrelate with one another and fulfill our own purpose

#### Wisdom

Then, to fulfill our own purpose (to attain the mind of a Buddha, to eliminate all of our defects and develop all of our qualities, to attain enlightenment and liberation) we definitely need wisdom. Wisdom is like a sword that cuts the root of the ignorance. Since ignorance is the source of all of the problems, then definitely wisdom is needed to transform our mind into a Buddha's mind.

#### Concentration

But to develop the right kind of wisdom, we need concentration. We need to be able to control our mind. We need to be able to focus on the object of this wisdom instead of having our mind run all over cyclic existence with its fantasies. If we need wisdom to attain enlightenment, then we need the concentration that supports the wisdom.

#### Enthusiastic perseverance

To develop concentration, we need to overcome laziness, so we need enthusiastic perseverance. It is the specific antidote to all the different kinds of laziness, which we'll get into in later sessions.

So that's another way of thinking about these six far-reaching attitudes, how the first three accomplish others' purpose and the last three accomplish our own purpose.

### Creating the cause for precious human rebirth with the six attitudes

#### The motivation for wanting a precious human life

Then, yet another way to think of these attitudes: if we want to become enlightened, we need to ensure that we have a whole series of precious human lives, because it's going to take a lot of practice to become a Buddha. We may do it in this one lifetime, but we may not. If we don't do it this one lifetime, then we need to be concerned with creating the causes to have precious human lives in future lifetimes so that we can continue our practice.

This is quite important. We try and create the cause for precious human life not just because we want it and we don't want a lower rebirth, but because we know that to help others, we need to have this kind of life in order to practice.

The motivation on this level of the path is different from that on the level of the initial being. The initial being just wants a good rebirth so that they don't have to go to a horrible one. But here, we want a good rebirth because we know that without it, it's going to be very difficult to help anybody.

I think this is an important thing to think about. They say try and attain enlightenment in this one lifetime, but don't count on it. Don't expect it – because it requires this huge accumulation of both positive potential and wisdom. Although some people do attain it in one lifetime, many people don't. Since we'll

be reborn if we're not Buddhas, then it's helpful to make sure we have a good lifetime in the future so that we can continue to practice.

It could be that, in previous lifetimes, we had precious human lives. We heard this teaching. We did this kind of practice, so this lifetime, we have another precious human life. We shouldn't see that our present life is something that just happened by accident or dropped in from outer space, or in the back by the store. It's something that we accumulated the cause for, quite deliberately in previous lives.

By practicing the six far-reaching attitudes and dedicating the positive potential so that we can have a precious human life again, this gives us the excellent basis to continue our practice. Hopefully, we can continue to create the cause to get more precious human lives so we can continue to practice all the way until we become Buddhas. It provides a slightly different angle on how to view our life, how to view how we are.

We need all six far-reaching attitudes to attain this kind of precious human life in our next life. If one of them is missing, we won't be able to attain the precious human life and this will obstruct our practice of the Dharma.

### **The difference between a precious human life and a human life**

Like I was explaining before, a precious human life is very different from a human life. In a human life, you have a human body, but you don't necessarily have any kind of spiritual inclination or live in a place where the teachings are available and you can practice it, or have other favorable conditions for practice.

In a precious human life, you not only have a human body, but you have healthy senses and a healthy body so that you can practice. You're free from certain obscurations. You have an innate curiosity and interest in the spiritual practice. You are born in a country where there is religious freedom so that you can practice. You have the ability to meet teachings and teachers and there's a lineage of pure teachings that exists. There's a community of people that support you in your practice. There are enough financial things for you to be able to practice.

So, in order to practice, there's a lot of other conditions we need besides just the human body. On this planet, there're over five billion people who have human bodies, but there are actually very few who have precious human lives.

### **How the six attitudes help us to attain the precious human life**

#### **Generosity**

First of all, in order to attain enlightenment, we need to be able to practice the Dharma in our future lives. To be able to practice, we need resources. We need to have clothes, food, shelter and medicine. The cause of attaining these resources is being generous. Karmically, the cause to receive things is to give.

This is contrary to American philosophy whereby the cause of having is holding on to it yourself. In Buddhism, the cause of having is being generous and giving to others. If we want to practice in future lives, we need clothes, food, medicine and shelter. To have those, we need to karmically create the cause, we need to be generous this lifetime.

#### **Ethics**

But just having resources in a future lifetime isn't sufficient. We also need a human body. This is where ethics comes in. By abandoning the ten negative actions and practicing ethics, we're able to attain a human body. But it's not necessarily a precious human life, it's just we have the fortune of having a human body.

Through generosity, we have some kind of wealth and resources. Through ethics, we have the human body. But these are not sufficient.

#### **Patience**

When we practice, we also need to have good companions to practice with. We also need to have a good personality because it becomes extremely difficult to practice if we are grumpy and angry and short-tempered. It is extremely difficult to practice if nobody wants to practice with us because we turn

everybody off with our bad temper. So to avoid that, we need to practice patience.

Remember patience is the antidote to anger. So karmically, if we practice patience this lifetime, then the results in future lifetimes are that we have a kind personality and that we have a lot of companions and people to practice with. We can see the value in that.

### **Joyous effort**

And in future lifetimes, if we want to continue to practice, we have to be able to complete our projects. If we want to undertake some study or we want to do a retreat or something, we need to have the karma to be able to finish what we start. If we keep starting things but never finish anything, it is very difficult to become a Buddha, because you start the path and then you stop. And then you start and you stop. In order to have the ability to complete our practices in future lives, we need to practice joyous effort this lifetime, the mind that takes delight and acts continuously to practice in this lifetime.

So, do you see how the karma works? By being able to practice continuously and going through the ups and downs this lifetime, then, it creates the karma so that in future lives, when we undertake some kind of spiritual practice, we will be able to finish it without things getting interrupted.

And, so often, we can see things getting interrupted. Let's say you live in Tibet. Your practice got interrupted when you had to flee over the mountains. Or you start to study a text but you can't finish it because your visa runs out or your teacher goes and travels somewhere else. Or you start a retreat but you can't finish it because the food supply runs out or the weather turns bad or your mind goes nuts. [laughter] 'Nuts' meaning there was some distraction.

In order to complete things, we need enthusiastic perseverance, and so it needs to be cultivated this lifetime also.

### **Concentration**

Also, in future lifetimes, for our practice to be successful, we need to have a peaceful mind, a mind that isn't completely distracted and irascible. A mind that has some kind of control and can concentrate.

Also, we need to have the psychic abilities to be able to see other people's karma and their dispositions and tendencies. In order to have these kind of capabilities in future lives, then this lifetime, karmically, we need to practice concentration. Practicing concentration this lifetime leads to having those kinds of abilities in future lifetimes. And then, with those abilities, it becomes quite easy to attain enlightenment.

### **Wisdom**

Similarly, in future lifetimes, we need to be able to discriminate between what is a correct teaching and what is an incorrect teaching. Between what is the path and what isn't the path. Between who is a qualified teacher and who isn't a qualified teacher. To do this, we need wisdom, and so we need to cultivate that wisdom this lifetime.

You can see it. Some people find it quite difficult to discriminate who's a good teacher and who's a charlatan. Or it becomes quite difficult to discriminate between what is a constructive action and what is a destructive one. Or it becomes difficult to understand what emptiness means. Having those obstacles in this lifetime comes from not having practiced the far-reaching attitude of wisdom in previous lives. If we practice it in this lifetime, then in the future lifetime, we'll have these abilities and then they all work together so that we can attain enlightenment much quicker.

What I am essentially doing is, I'm doing a big pitch for the six far-reaching attitudes. [laughter] I'm doing this so that you develop some kind of enthusiasm to practice them. Because you see the advantages for future lives, because you see the advantages for yourself and for others, then you want to practice them and you want to listen to teachings.

### **[Audience:] How do you practice the wisdom you haven't yet attained?**

First of all, we listen to teachings. There is a three-step process: listening, contemplation or thinking, and meditation. We are not wise. We are completely confused. Our minds cannot discern one thing from another. We have no discriminating wisdom. It's like our mind is totally foggy and we're constantly making unwise decisions. If we are experiencing these, then, what we need to do is listen to teachings

because the Buddha described quite clearly what is a constructive action, what is a destructive action, what is a constructive motivation, what is a destructive motivation, what are positive mental factors, what are negative mental factors.

By listening to teachings, you get a certain amount of wisdom right away. You get this outside information and even though you haven't integrated it into your character, you have some tools to use to start to assess your life.

When we talk about listening, it also includes reading books and things like that. It's the process of gathering information and learning. This is very important for spiritual practice. Some people say: "Oh, teachings – that's all just more intellectual garbage. I think I'm just going to sit and meditate." But what do they wind up doing? They make up their own meditation. Well, we've been making up our own path to liberation since beginningless time and we're still in cyclic existence.

At a certain point, we decide: "Well, instead of making up my own path, instead of making up my own teachings, maybe I need to listen to the teachings of a fully enlightened being, the Buddha, who was able to describe from his own experience, what's constructive and what's destructive."

So, there's a little bit of humility in there that wants to learn, because we recognize we can't do it ourselves. We've been trying to do everything ourselves since we were born. Look where we are at. We got somewhere. We can take care of ourselves more or less. But we're not enlightened. So we need some teachings. We need to learn.

The second step is we need to think about what we learned. Not just gathering information and learning it, but we need to think about it. We need to understand it. Here's the role of debate and discussion and talking and discussing things. I was telling you when I was in China, I was with these young men who would stay up very late just talking, debating this one point. In the beginning, they would translate for me. At the end, they were so into it that, forget the translation! [laughter] It was this kind of discussion. They were discussing what they had heard in the teachings: "Is this really true?" "How does this work?" "How do we know this?" "What about this?" "How come it says this here?" "How come it says that there?" "What do you really do?"

Trying to take the teachings and understand them is a very essential thing in Buddhism. Buddhism is not a thing of: "Well, I'll just listen. There's the dogma. There's the catechism. If I'm going to be a good Buddhist, I just stamp my seal and say, 'I believe!' and that's it!" That's not it. We need to think about it and make it our own.

The Buddha himself said: "Don't accept anything just because somebody else said so. Or just because it's written in some scripture. Or because everybody else believes it. But think about it on your own. Test it out yourself. Apply logic and reasoning. Apply it to your own life. Apply to what you see around you. And if it works, then believe it."

So, this process of thinking is very important, because it develops conviction, and it also ensures that we have the correct understanding of something. Because, often when we listen to teachings, we think we understand it correctly, but as soon as we enter into a discussion with somebody else, we can't explain ourselves at all. It's like: "I thought I understood this but this guy at work just asked me what loving-kindness is and I can't think of how to answer him." And then we realize: "Well, actually, I don't really understand what it is."

[Rest of the teaching was not recorded.]

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This teaching is based on the Lamrim or The Gradual Path to Enlightenment. Please refer to the following web-page for its outline and other transcripts or to listen to the audio recording of these talks: <http://www.thubtenchodron.org/GradualPathToEnlightenment/outline.html>