

EMBRACING CONFLICT: Practice Steps on the Buddhist Path



Kagyü Sukha Chöling

Being a Good Dharma Friend

If you're upset with someone, speak with him or her directly. After this, if a healthy relationship is not reestablished, rather than discussing the issue with other sangha members, be a good dharma friend to that person and use the Embracing Conflict Team as soon as possible. Talking with someone not directly involved can feel like the right thing to do in the moment. However, this third party conversation can solidify the conflict in the mind, unnecessarily involve others, and can easily become side-talking and gossip.

If someone brings up a conflict about a third party with you, as a loyal dharma friend, urge him or her to speak directly with the other person involved. Other options to support our dharma friends include this brochure for ideas & resources and the use of the Embracing Conflict Team. This will support all of us in embracing conflict instead of avoiding it.



Practicing Conflict on the Buddhist Path

If we didn't learn effective skills from our family of origin for working with conflict, differences of opinion and discord can seem impossible to manage, even in our spiritual community.

Kagyü Sukha Chöling offers opportunities for sangha members to develop skills to embrace conflict. These skills can help us be effective during conflict rather than avoiding the situation and the others involved. Avoidance can easily lead to separation, isolation, and suffering for everyone.

Buddhist practice guides us to be kind and compassionate to all beings – ourselves and others. As we explore embracing conflict skills, we learn how to be kind to ourselves and stay connected with others, learn more about ourselves and others, and strengthen our relationships. Ultimately, this benefits our sangha through stronger connections across our community.

Embracing Conflict Precepts

Kagyü Sukha Chöling sangha embraces conflict as a part of our practice. These precepts guide our behavior in working with conflict:

1. Respect the Buddha nature in all beings.
2. Welcome conflict as impermanent.
3. Embrace conflict as an opportunity.
4. Hold loving kindness and compassion for self and others.
5. Be mindful of the fleeting nature of thoughts and feelings.
6. Adopt beneficial speech and compassionate listening.
7. Use adversity as a path to awakening.

These precepts are useful in considering any conflict situation and can guide our approach in working with others during conflict.

Embracing Conflict Team

The KSC Embracing Conflict Team is comprised of sangha members who are

available to support others in conflict.

Embracing Conflict team members will:

- Serve as sounding board (listen and help clarify the issues surrounding conflict)
- Support action and healthy interaction
- "Host" a conflict session to support positive interaction, if needed

To access the Embracing Conflict team, please call the KSC office: 541.552.1769.

Resources for Embracing Conflict

Meditation Practices We Can Use:

- Calm Abiding to calm the mind and body
- Tonglen to send compassion to ourselves and others
- Chenrezig to embody compassion for self and others

Contemplations:

- Embracing Conflict Precepts
- Tonglen commentaries on the Third Point
“Transforming Adversity into the Path of Awakening.”

Embracing Conflict Resources:

1. “Embracing Conflict Resources” – a white binder in the KSC Library with articles and links to resources, Buddhist and other, for resolving conflict.
2. “Resolving Differences by Beginning at Home” Dharma talk on dealing with conflict by Lama Yeshe, Calm Abiding Sunday, 2/9/2020. (MP3)
3. “Embracing Conflict on the Buddhist Path” by Lama Pema, 6/29/14. (MP3)
4. “Embracing Conflict on the Buddhist Path” by Lama Yeshe, 11/13. (MP3)
5. KSC Lending Library has books, audio - CD and MP3, and video teachings, including Dharma talks by Lama Pema, Lama Yeshe and other visiting teachers.
6. KSC Website has audio recordings of past Teachings that were offered during Calm Abiding and Tonglen Sundays. These are posted for a month or so, then available in the KSC library, and more recent ones are posted on the web site.