

“It is important to go beyond negative emotions.” H. H. Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche, in a biography, *Brilliant Moon*,

Emotions are ways we hold psychic energy within and project that energy out to the world. It may seem that emotions arise from the events in our life, but they actually arise from how we hold and process events rather than from events themselves. Emotions can be helpful or harmful on our path and the paths of others.

“The degree of one's emotions varies inversely with one's knowledge of the facts.” Bertrand Russell

Emotions are opportunistic feeders, growing on whatever is there. They can feed on fear—our own or others—and that can become a way of life, or they can feed on wisdom. We usually have a mixture of healthy and unhealthy emotions, but the negative ones can cause suffering that can last a long time. We can see this in politics and in our personal lives.

If we want to go beyond negativity in emotions and be a force for health, we need to go deep within and touch into our inherent wisdom before fear known as Buddha Nature. We can then nurture emotions on that wisdom and bring that wisdom out to the world in a healthy way.

Medicine Buddha is a health-focused anthropomorphic form of our Buddha Nature, linking ordinary health, compassion, and a universal brilliance called enlightenment. It does this by holding us with love in the dynamic union of form and emptiness in a vision and practice open to all. Here, form means just ordinary experience and emptiness refers to an openness beyond self-focus. The trouble we often run into is that without the benefit of a good sense of openness we tend to get caught up in the drama of relating to experiences in a long, dark tunnel of self-focused attraction, repulsion, or ignorance reactions to experience. We lose a sense of vision and react with fear, which then feeds emotions, and from that emotions can entrench, take center stage and make trouble for ourselves and others. You can read and hear about the form-emptiness paradigm and how it can be resolved via a wonderful teaching known as The Heart Sutra on this site at <https://medicinebuddhatoday.com/medicine-buddha/the-heart-sutra/>

A great text written by Chinese Zen Master, Seng-Ts'an, around 1500 years ago, *The Mind of Absolute Trust*, reads:

The Great Way isn't difficult
For those who are not (emotionally) attached to their preferences.
Let go of longing and aversion
And everything will be perfectly clear.
When you cling to a hairbreadth of distinction
Heaven and earth are set apart.

As mentioned earlier, most people have positive emotions as negative, but even there, problems can arise if, as Seng-Ts'an says, we become attached to them, or put another way, fixated. Charity toward some may lead to stinginess toward others. Any time we get fixated, or mentally stuck, problems can arise. The remedy for stuckness is holding to the union of form and emptiness. We have lots of form, and if we know the emptiness in form we see the events in our life more clearly and in a healthier way.

We might encounter this form-emptiness union at certain points of non-fixation in ordinary life, but usually we begin this learning journey of waking up to inner wisdom by the collapsing of some fixation, an event often heralded by fear. As Trungpa Rinpoche said in *The Sanity We Are Born With*, on page 49, by "relating with emotional situations in daily life in a meditative way...every situation becomes a learning process....We discover a precision that is already there. These situations...are the scriptures. You don't need more than that."

As we practice identifying with Menla in our meditation, we can use that natural, inner wisdom to help us see and use fear in daily life for what it can best be—not a dig-in call, but a call to return to and appreciate a non-self focused wakefulness in life. From that, healthy emotions can flow from our heart out to life.

There are five primal fear/wisdom themes of Buddha Nature corresponding to the general process of recognition first of our own inner wisdom and then bring that wisdom out to life. These themes are: openness, clarity, connection, discerning, and action. Again, because of our tendency to fixate on preferences, we might react to these wisdoms in fear, as though they were strangers rather than

expressions of who we are. Eventually we see that it is not external events that scare us, but our unfamiliarity with the wisdoms invoked by those events. As we get to know Menla and the wisdoms embodied therein, we develop confidence in those wisdoms as natural and enjoyable and from that do good in the world.

The pure wisdoms are:

All Accommodating Space—It may seem that opening to reality scares us, but looking deeper, we see that the true fear is of the fact that on that deep level we are already spacious and open.

Mirror Like Wisdom—Here we realize that it is not events that scare us but rather the natural clarity in seeing them. We might constrict in anger in reaction to events. When we don't feed anger, we realize a natural clarity and that alone is satisfying.

Wisdom of Equanimity—When we see clearly we free ourselves from fear-based reactions to life. We are in touch with everything, and the evenness, rather than being dull, is satisfying.

Wisdom of Discernment—When we realize natural groundedness, we no longer fear becoming overwhelmed by relating to particulars of any situation. We enjoy them.

All Accomplishing Action—We no longer fear getting out of our own way. We appreciate the natural unfolding of open, clear, grounded, discerning wakefulness in life.

As we make friends with these wisdoms, we can still have our emotions but they can transform from being problematic to being problem solvers. They can bring happiness to our world.

There may be many ways of appreciating these aspects of our true nature before fear. We have all realized some of this already. We may study and work with these as steps on our path. We might recognize a wisdom as our own nature by suddenly opening to it, or waking up to how we missed it even after an event that called it out in us is long past. We can learn from everything. As Trungpa Rinpoche said, with practice, life can be our scripture. It is never too late. At age 87, Michelangelo had a sign in his studio saying,

"Ancora Imparo", or, "I am still learning." We teach ourselves in life, and as we might do in group, we can help others too.

(Even) A mind that envies or wishes to harm
Is also luminous emptiness;
Therefore, open into the state of luminous emptiness-
[Khenpo Tsültrim Gyamtso Rinpoche](#)

There may be many ways to work with emotions. Here we just work with basics of life. We hold Menla in our heart, and resting in Basic Goodness, as in sitting, we tune into our heart and offer our emotions a healthy diet of natural, life wisdoms. Not only can our emotions can grow strong and healthy, but we also gain more confidence in our inner wisdom as lighting healthy pathways for living well.