

The fourth slogan, **See confusion as Buddha and practice emptiness**, requires a bit of explanation. This is a slogan of absolute bodhicitta, which, we will recall, goes beyond our conventional or relative understanding to a deeper sense of what we are. It is not dissimilar to what I have just been writing about: the impossibility of an isolated self, or in other words, the emptiness of the concepts of self and other. Though conventionally I am me and you are you, from an absolute perspective, a God's-eye view, if you will, there is no self and other. There's only Being, and there's only Love, which is Being sharing itself with itself without impediment and with warmth. It just happens to look like you and me to us, because this is how our minds and sensory apparatus works. This love without boundary is "emptiness practice."

See confusion as Buddha and practice emptiness means that we practice situating ourselves differently with respect to our ordinary human confusion, our resistance, our pain, our fear, our grief, and so on. Rather than hoping these emotions and reactions will eventually go away and we will be free of them, we take them to a deeper level. We look at their underlying reality. What is actually going on when we are upset or angry? What is happening? If we could unhook ourselves for a moment from the blaming and the wishing and the self-pitying and could look instead at the actual basis of what is in fact going on, what would we see? We would see time passing. We would see things changing. We would see life arising and passing away, coming from nowhere and going nowhere. Moment by moment, time slips away and things transform. The present becomes the past—or does it become the future? And yet

right now there is no past or future. As soon as we examine “now” it is gone. And we cannot know how or where it goes. This may sound like philosophy, but it doesn’t feel like philosophy when you or someone close to you is giving birth. If at that moment you are standing in the delivery room or are yourself, in pain and joy, giving birth—in that first bursting-forth moment, you are amazed. This small life you think you have been living, with its various issues and problems, completely disappears in the face of the miracle of visceral life springing forth in front of your eyes. Or if you are present when someone leaves this world and enters death (if there is such a place to enter), breathes his or her last and is gone, you know then that this emptiness is not just philosophy. You may not know what it is, but you will know that it is real. And that this reality is powerful and makes you see your life, and the whole of life, quite differently in that moment. A new context emerges that is more than thought, more than concept. When you view your daily human problems in the light of actual birth and actual death, you are practicing with this slogan. Every moment of your life, even (and maybe especially) your moments of pain or despair or confusion, is a moment of Buddha.