

The practice of **Transforming bad circumstances into the path** is associated with the practice of patience, my all-time favorite spiritual quality. Patience is the capacity to welcome difficulty when it comes, with a spirit of strength, endurance, forbearance, and dignity rather than fear, anxiety, and avoidance. None of us likes to be oppressed or defeated, yet if we can endure oppression and defeat with strength, without whining, we are ennobled by it. Patience makes this possible. Still, in our culture, we think of patience as passive and unglamorous. Other qualities like love or compassion or insight are much more popular. Naturally, we want the good stuff, the pleasant and inspiring stuff. But when tough times cause our love to fray into annoyance, our compassion to be overwhelmed by our fear, and our insight to evaporate, then patience begins to make sense. To me it is the most substantial, most serviceable, and most reliable of all spiritual qualities. Without it all other qualities are shaky.

The practice of patience is simple enough. When difficulty arises, notice the obvious and not so obvious ways we try to avoid it. The things we say and do, the subtle ways in which our very bodies recoil and clench when someone says or does something to us that we don't like. To practice patience is to simply notice these things and be fiercely present with them (taking a breath helps; returning to mindfulness of the body helps) rather than reacting to them and flailing around. Paying attention to body, paying attention to mind. And when possible, giving ourselves good teachings about the virtue of being with, rather than trying to run away from, the anguish we are feeling in this moment.

There are six slogans under this third point:

- 11. Turn all mishaps into the path.**
- 12. Drive all blames into one.**
- 13. Be grateful to everyone.**
- 14. See confusion as Buddha and practice emptiness.**
- 15. Do good, avoid evil, appreciate your lunacy, pray for help.**
- 16. Whatever you meet is the path.**