

~ Key Points of Meditation ~

Letting Go of Expectations Part 1

By Mingyur Rinpoche

Letting go of expectations when you meditate does not mean giving up. There is some kind of expectation in your mind that, "If I meditate, I should feel like this. And I should have this kind of experience, this kind of taste." You have these kinds of particular ideas and beliefs about what the result of meditation is. All these things, normally, is in your belief system. Then, when you meditate, the mind almost unknowingly try to match your expectations and beliefs about meditation. Once they match, you feel very happy, you feel satisfaction, "This is nice!" But it will not always match your expectations, because meditation experiences go up and down and up and down, all the time.

When I was young, the first time when I learned meditation, I had this nice experience. I felt very calm and peaceful. And then, at that time, I build up, automatically, some kind of expectation that "Meditation should be like this." and "This is the standard experience of meditation." That was in my head for a long time. No matter how much I tried to let go of these expectations, I was still hoping, "If I let go of these expectations, the standards of my beliefs and experiences will be matched." Deep in my mind, I was thinking like that. Therefore, one of the important things, when you begin to meditate, is to let go of expectations — not just thinking that you should let go of expectations. First, look at what the expectations are, what kind of beliefs you have about meditation, what kind of "shoulds," or "ways," or "ought to's" — When you meditate, it has to be like this — look at those things, those things that stay in the background. And when you see those, let go.