

~ *Basic Goodness and Joy: View* ~

Mingyur Rinpoche

The practice of joy is the third immeasurable practice. Of course, for it to be immeasurable, we have to practice step-by-step. Do you remember that there are four immeasurables? Immeasurable love, compassion, joy, and equanimity. Now, we will practice joy.

What is joy? "Joy" means "happiness," "contentment," "appreciation," and "gratitude." Suffering, as you know, is called "*dukkha*." The real translation of *dukkha* is "dissatisfaction," it is never enough. There is a feeling of insecurity, incompleteness, something missing, something not being right, loneliness, or sadness. These are *dukkha*. And when *dukkha* becomes stronger, then you always want more and more and cannot get it, and then you hate and you crave, and you are confused. There are a lot of problems.

How to be free from *dukkha*? One of the best practices is the practice of joy. What is the practice of joy? It is appreciation and gratitude. I heard about a lot of research being done around happiness. In a company, if you are getting a salary that is *a little bit* higher than everyone else in the company, you feel very happy. It does not matter if it is \$1000, \$4000, or \$70,000 every month. It does not matter.

Sometimes when I try to practice appreciation, I also look for very special things to appreciate. But actually, that is not necessary. Like now, you are alive, and that is amazing, right? You have this breathing — it is magical. Breathe in, breathe out. You have these wonderful eyes, ears, and nose, and you can see wonderful things around you.

Sometimes, when I give teachings, I drink a lot of water. I teach for about two hours, drinking water again and again. At the end of the session, my lower abdomen is full of water. I really want to go to the restroom. In my mind, I am thinking about the restroom. What I do is ask, "Now, does anyone have any questions? If there are no questions, then I want to go." And all of a sudden someone raises their hand and asks something like, "What is the meaning of life?" They ask a very complicated question. I give a very simple answer — "The meaning of

life is something like..." [Mingyur Rinpoche smiles as if to bring closure to the topic] — and I think we are finished. But that simple answer creates another question. [Mingyur Rinpoche laughs.] But in my mind I really want to go to the restroom. Finally, I say that it is finished and the time is up. And I go to the restroom. After using the restroom, life is wonderful! [Mingyur Rinpoche laughs.] You feel really relieved and happy, and when you look around it feels like you are on a different planet. But normally, we do not appreciate that. Do you have this problem now? The "lower abdomen" problem? [Mingyur Rinpoche laughs.] I do not think you have this problem, right now. But you do not appreciate that freedom.

There is no need to appreciate big things. Normally, what we think of as "big things" may not be big things. What we normally think of as "small things" are the big things. You can just appreciate those. They may seem like small things but are actually big ones.

Appreciation really becomes a cause of joy. Then, when you practice that, what happens is that you will discover a lot of great things within you, within others, and about the world. It is almost like you are finding *new* qualities within you. They are there from the beginning, but when you do not recognize them, then they are hidden from you. But when you practice joy, you discover this. Then it seems as if you transform and get new, great qualities. This is a really great practice.