

Party Advice from the Lama: Be Careful Not to Gossip

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When a student mentioned they were going to a family gathering this summer, Rinpoche gave this advice.

Be careful!

Everybody thinks a party is so wonderful. But in a group, gossip and slander come very easily. You don't even have the intention to gossip or slander, but everybody is blah-blah-blahing together and it naturally leads you there. Everybody starts talking and then suddenly everybody has a demon in their mouth: "She is so wonderful! He is so terrible! That one is good! That one is bad! I hate this one! I love that one! This one delicious! This one disgusting!" This kind of talk just increases your attachment and aversion. That means the fire of your three poisons is burning hotter.

Don't get too excited. Slow down, stay calm. Be conscious of what you are saying and doing.

Actually, if something is wonderful and makes you happy, so what? You don't need to blah to everybody. If something is terrible and makes you upset or angry, you don't need to let your own non-virtue fire burn others through your blah blah blah.

You think you love your friends and family? Then don't make non-virtue with them by gossiping and slandering. Just enjoy each other, but in a way that makes merit and virtue. You don't need to complain to each other and say nasty things. That doesn't benefit you and doesn't benefit them. It doesn't benefit anybody.

Really, if you are trying to practice dharma, then when you gossip or slander you really destroy your merit, what you have been accumulating. If the other person is a dharma practitioner, you don't need to destroy their merit, too, by bringing them down to your low place with your mouth. If the other person is not in the dharma, then why do you want to screw them up? Really if you are a follower of the Buddha, you shouldn't be supporting non-virtue in others, it makes no difference if they are Buddhist or not. They are sentient beings, my goodness, it's supposed to be that you are trying to benefit them. So don't let your mouth become a demon.

If others want to gossip or slander, that's their business. You don't have to follow them into the sewer. You don't need to pollute your party with that kind of ugly thing. Please, everybody, when you are enjoying yourselves, and especially in a group, be careful. Even more than just wasting your time, you don't want to destroy your goodness, your virtue. So be careful of your mouth, and if others want to be stupid, don't just jump and blindly follow them.

-Gyatrul