

~From the Archives of Teachings by Venerable Gyatrul Rinpoche~

Advice on Bringing the Dharma into Your Life (Even if You Aren't Buddhist)

*Words offered from a self-proclaimed "funky old man" to the massage therapists at the
Lavender Hill Spa in Calistoga, April 2012.*

Part I

A Motivation of Universal Compassion

The work that you are doing, giving massage, is very beneficial to people. Of course you know this, and of course you do it primarily in order to bring that benefit. It seems that everyone has a very good motivation. But your motivation is something that you should check, because if you make your motivation even better, if it is purely altruistic, then the benefit you bring will be even greater—for the clients you work on and for yourself, too.

In Buddhism, the mind is what must be worked with. The mind is more important than either the body or speech. Of course, the work that you are doing is physical, helping the physical body, but when that suffering is eased, then mental suffering is eased, too. When the body relaxes, the mind can relax. In the same way, you bring not only your skill and physical strength when you work on someone, you also bring your mind, your motivation.

The work that you are doing, helping to bring ease and relieve others' sufferings, is naturally compassionate. The altruistic basis of that work is strong and continuous whether or not you are aware of it. However, if you recognize it, it is an opportunity to consciously make your motivation altruistic and compassionate, too. The nature of your work supports and expresses the generation of compassion in your mind. Therefore, you are in a situation which makes it relatively easy to have and maintain a pure motivation.

You can check your own mind, your own motivation—in fact, who else could check it for you? Ask yourself, is your main purpose to do your work for money, thinking constantly

and only of how much you'll be paid? Of course, the money is part of why you do your work, yes. However, if your mind is compassionate, then that need only be a small part of your motivation, and the greater part of your focus can be altruistic. Whether a client is old or young, male or female, rich or poor doesn't matter—just try to benefit them, whoever they are, however much you can. Don't think about how much they can pay you, but of how much you can help ease, support, and bring delight and comfort to their body for their benefit.

~ teaching continues in Part 2...