

~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
Lavendar Hill Spa in Calistoga, April 2012.*

Part 3

Focusing on the Benefit of Others as You Work

Where I grew up, there were a lot of herders—sheep herders, yak herders, goat herders. For the herders, the most important thing was their animals, and they always were thinking of them, their needs, and their comfort—where can they find clean water and good grass, what are the best paths to use, where will they be safe, and so forth. They didn't spend too much time thinking about themselves, mostly just their animals.

I don't know about carpenters in this country, but when I have seen builders in other countries, mostly it is the same thing. Honest workers care about doing a job nicely—using the best materials they can get and making the building as strong and solid as they can for their employers. They think about that rather than about themselves. Of course, everybody cares about the money a little bit, but honest carpenters try to do their best job to be of benefit to the ones who own the building or who will use the building, not thinking about themselves too much.

Same with cooks, who try to prepare everything nicely for the pleasure and health of the ones who will be eating it. Farmers, too, try to grow their crops well to benefit those who will eat or use them. Even gardeners and landscapers check everything carefully, always trying to make everything pleasing and lovely and caring tenderly for their plants.

These examples are not so profound, but just everyday instances of people whose focus is on caring for something else without so much obsession with themselves. You should

try to do this same thing when you are working, too—consciously set your intention to benefit others as much as you can, and then carry out that intention by caring for them to the very best of your ability. Focus just on helping them.

~ teaching concludes in Part 4...