

[In Search for the Meaning and Purpose of Life]

Quote from

The Seven-Point Mind Training

By B. Alan Wallace; Edited by Zara Houshmand

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from pages 9-10

Gary's introduction:

Why am I including this quote from Buddhism? While I am a devotee of Pathwork, Pat has been a devotee of a form of Tibetan Buddhism for seven years. Our paths are interwoven and sometimes the views of her path speak to me and sometimes vice versa. This is one of those times where a writing from her Buddhist path spoke to me. Pat read to me what follows during our morning coffee times – both on January 8 and January 9, 2014. It fit our conversations and my **blog entry for January 11**.

(Note: most of the *italics* and all of the **bolding** are mine, my commentary is set off in [brackets] and in blue)

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From the Introduction...

In our search for the meaning of life, we may overlook the fact that life doesn't necessarily have any meaning at all. *[For example, what is the meaning or purpose of a tree growing in a forest of Alaska? It just is. Perhaps if we saw the tree we would be awed by its beauty; is inspiring awe in us the tree's purpose? What if no one ever saw the tree during its lifetime, would the tree cease to have meaning or purpose? So if we carry this inquiry to our own lives, what do we see?]* The meaning of life is not presented to us, but is something that we create ourselves. In the third chapter of *Dhammapada* the Buddha says, "As a fletcher makes straight his arrow, a wise man makes straight his trembling and unsteady thought, which is difficult to guard, difficult to hold back." In this society with its hurl-burly pace demanding of our time, it is ever so easy to let life slip by. Looking back after ten, twenty, thirty years, we wonder what we have really accomplished. We have mad so much money per year and spent so much again. We have bought new clothes and worn them out, eaten and defecated, experienced sickness and health. *This process of simply existing is not necessarily meaningful. And yet, there is an unlimited potential for meaning and value in this human existence.* The Seven-Point Mind Training is one eminently practical way of tapping into that meaning. *[And so is any truly authentic spiritual path – including the program Pat has been in for seven years, **Awakening Into Presence** (which includes the Seven-Point Mind Training practices) and **Pathwork**, the program I have been in for thirteen years.]*

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B. Alan Wallace speaks thusly about his teacher...

[My teacher, Ku-ngo Barshi] was from an aristocratic family in Tibet, and had experienced first-hand the great tragedy inflicted on his homeland when the Chinese communists took over. He fled with his wife to India, but some of his family members stayed behind and had suffered greatly. Later when I got to know him well, he told me that the Chinese had in fact done him a great service. In Tibet, although devoted to the Dharma [*the Buddhist teachings*], he said he had been complacent and somewhat lax in his practice. The hardships he experienced in exile had given him insight into the nature of suffering that enhanced the depth and quality of his motivation for practicing Dharma.

The serenity, humility, and good cheer of this man, [*despite the many sufferings in his life*] then in his sixties, proved his point, and I was honored to be taught by him: *at the heart of the Seven-Point Mind Training [or any valid spiritual path] lies this transformation of the circumstances that life brings us, however hard, as the raw material from which we create our own spiritual path. [As Pathwork says, Life is our teacher!]*