

**# When practicing unconditional acceptance, start with yourself.**

I found that I didn't really want to pay attention to this one... wanted to skip to the next and write pages about that, but not see this one. Finally, noticed and asked myself why.

Maybe it comes with the territory of taking personal responsibility, but it is hard to accept oneself, especially when you see all the ways you might have handled things in life differently, or people you have injured/are injuring. When you see mistakes you've made, it is easy to be discouraged... "All that work and that's what I came up with/that is how I handled that?" etc.

To share something a bit personal, this week I found myself wrestling ever so slightly, with my relationship with my mother... feeling judgementalism and a sense of loss, when I had the thought "What if she was a friend telling me a similar 'story', or my sister?" I realized that if she were just someone not 'she in relation to me', I would listen more easily and possibly have much greater/softer understanding. That brought in a lot of space.

It isn't that the thought is entirely 'new', and it seems some things we revisit, but what was new perhaps is that looking at this aphorism, I then did the same thing for myself. I didn't base compassion on how circumstances conspired or some sense of weakness, but looked at myself as just someone, and being just someone it was easy to have an expanded scope of all of us as someones from whom compassion and acceptance should/could not be withheld.

**# When everything goes wrong, treat disaster as a way to wake up.**

A little bit of a cheeky response I guess, but..

When your favorite workshop changes and the teacher you've come to lean on decides to step out of it, then dig in 'independently' with just as much fervor as if he were still there teaching. :)))

Beyond the cheeky response though, an outsider would look at some of the circumstances of my life over the last few years in particular and find them 'disasterous', but oddly the very things which have limited and humbled me, have also removed obstructions from practice.

Romanticisms have been broken down, and trappings undone within. I might never have been single-pointed enough to intensely carve out time and attention, had I remained distracted/lost in the picture I'd been spending all my effort on.

**# Take all the blame yourself.**

To me this is about personal responsibility, and living in a way that, although acknowledging and working with/through what ever circumstances arise, doesn't deflect and project away but sees things just as they are... realizes the entrapment comes from projecting at one's own end. If there is 'blame' in play, as there was in my personal example above actually, then finding something or someone 'other' to carry it, or somewhere else to bury it, only lengthens the time we will be hindered from moving on.

If you take the blame, you get to step out more quickly. When others see you take the blame and step out, sometimes it changes the way the game is viewed/played, too. :)