

I am looking forward to reading others' reports on 'don't go for the throat'/'don't strike at the heart'.

I've always had difficulty with directness with people when drawing lines, which has caused 'trouble'. When one is avoiding conflicts they're bound to build resentments.

So, I can think of an occasion where I wrestled and wrestled with how to deal with someone's intrusiveness and drama-creating in private unsuccessfully for a long time, and not being able to do so, a vulnerable moment came up and 'I sliced' them down. The reverberations from that moment are still playing out unfortunately.

There is also an especially vivid moment when I was overwhelmed & not feeling well, when my kids were small.

I'd completely forgotten about an appointment which I'd made with a relative, for my daughter to be picked up to be fitted for a flower girl dress. I am not used to having family around, and this was a part of my family that I didn't know until I was an adult and had made the effort to reach out. I guess there was hidden resentment toward them, though they are generally lovely people.

For the most part, until having to deal with an illness, the 'face' I put on before the world was one of being 'completely together on my own with no help', even though it wasn't \*true\*. Behind the scenes and in private I was often a mess... and in that state she arrived at my door. :)

Anyway, I apologized profusely, but she made a comment about three kids being too much and my being so young (not disagreeing, btw. I was very young) ... then went on with lighter comments. I'm not even sure how I managed it but I took her light comments and turned them into something rather cruel about age, in a flash. I still remember the look on her face. We recovered, as I think she was surprised by the way she talked to me in the first place too, being stressed by wedding plans.

The point though, is that it was 'completely reactive', and even now I can tangibly FEEL it as though there were a weapon in my hand. In all my life I can think of just a few of these moments, and even though I could try to justify it, I knew when I did that I was making a conscious decision to be viscious.

So looking at these two moments, I can see that they have a hidden resentment + vulnerable moment thing going on. I'm not sure that it does much good to determined 'not' to do this in a direct way, but noticing the conditions that lead up to its likelihood, one can address the deeper levels.

### **Re: Practicing while distrated**

For about 6 weeks I've set a habit of going to a diner to read contemplative/practice books, and to contemplate what I'm reading. Usually I go in the middle of the day when there are few people, but today (Saturday 3/13) it was quite busy. One of the books I take with me is Time, Space, Knowledge, which has visualization and energy exercises. As I sat in the midst of the noise and distractions I really played with the idea of everything that appears in consciousness is material. So not 'opening' the distractions but just seeing that the distractions are open allowed me to feel really happy... aware of a wealth that never runs out.

Maybe I should mention that I sort of made up my own tonglen practice a few months ago. I didn't tell anyone because I thought it might sound 'off' to others and I wanted to just see for myself.

The practice was breathing in appearances and out clarity... at least in an imaginative way. So when in a mall or even at home when chaos appears, Ive found this little exercize a way to practice with/using distraction. fwiw :)