

## **Don't strike at the heart**

For me this week, this slogan means "don't strike at the heart even though you really really want to and all forms of logic and justice point at the correctness in doing so. " I was listening to a talk the other day, and the story about the [Buddha's enemy](#) was discussed. I sort of wondered if I had any enemies -- couldn't think of anyone I could stay mad at. All it took this week, however, was for someone to get annoyed with me via email, and suddenly I had found myself an enemy, all my reactive tendencies in full display.

What was additionally weird was that at times I could feel my judgements, anger, self-righteousness, etc just melt away and almost vanish -- I could certainly see the textbook justifications for my point of view and the incorrectness of theirs, but somehow, it was OK. Found myself flip flopping between a peaceful state and a livid state during the day, sort of driving me nuts. At some point, a scene in Alice in Wonderland came up -- the Red Queen is about to launch an attack against the White Queen and a momentary flash of love and admiration for her sister crosses her face before she recalls her thirst for revenge. It reminded me that I also have a choice between following the actions and speech recommended by the peaceful mind versus the type recommended by the angry mind.

Honestly, the angry mind is still so convincing to me, and really what I want is some sort of cure for this mind, some sort of total cessation. In the meantime, I guess I'll have to do my best, but if anyone has ideas about how to work with this mind, I'd love to hear :).

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Part of the trickiness of anger is that it can feel like if I don't turn it outwards onto someone else, it will turn inwards back onto myself. That choice can't possibly be right -- it must be possible to respect oneself as well as the enemy -- but when angry, they can seem like the only (mutually exclusive) options.

## **Practicing while distracted is good training**

For me, being angry is the ultimate distracted state, and it is extremely difficult to practice at these times. Sometimes I can barely maintain a count as the angry thoughts come crashing back in; other times I'm actively "against" practice -- don't want to be suckered in by some fakey peaceful state. Does it help? I don't know. But as Gaya has mentioned in another context, it can be a ritualistic gesture that at least reminds me that I'm still part of a larger situation, however momentarily.