

## Tonglen (part 2)

Hmm, I'm still hoping for advice about how to approach fears about "breathing in someone else's diseases". Some kinds of suffering don't seem so hard to breathe in -- perhaps the mental afflictions seem easier because they don't seem so real to begin with or maybe I've had some success in dealing with them in the past -- I'm familiar with feelings of low self-esteem for instance, and I can also see how unfair it is to judge oneself in this way -- not hard to breathe this kind of feeling in for others and feel some confidence about the potential for release.

But sickness is much more difficult -- sometimes it is not possible to "defeat" an illness. And when I'm opening myself to a state where I can feel the pain and difficulty of another person's sickness as my own sickness, I get quite nervous about it. The part that makes sense is the part where I don't turn away from another person's suffering, but beyond that, do I need to do more? It doesn't seem right that I should simply replicate someone else's suffering in my own body (do other people find this difficult? I'm naturally a mimic), especially when I'm uncertain about my ability to cope. I really appreciate the quote Eliza found ("Even beyond this, we -Great Knowledge- can transmute everything, making it all healthy"). She didn't mean to apply it to the context I'm describing here, but if I'm pretty sure I'm not there, what then?

A friend reminded me that breathing in and breathing out are not two separate pieces -- they are part of the same. Still learning about this...

In the end, I guess we don't "win" against old age, sickness and death -- physical pain and illness are quite honest with us. I suppose that's part of the gift -- somehow, there is a resource that can accept it.

Well, despite all these meanderings, I'm still curious to hear how others approach/frame these questions!

## Five Forces (part 2)

This week, I've been noticing an old shoulder injury, my tendency to over-protect it, the way it's pulling at my alignment. Can be quite difficult to sit with these little tensions, and have been noticing first my conscious attempts to correct it, giving way to my body's natural functioning and tendency toward alignment, and finally an OKness (Gaya's active resting?) that seems to be most central. Perhaps my commitment this week has shifted focus a bit from relaxation to acceptance?