

COMMITMENT

[Notes: a last-minute winter storm rolled and dumped a pile of snow on us. And it was the wet, stick-to-the-branches kind of snow. It won't be here tomorrow or the next day, but it's here now. We are going to curl up and watch a movie.]

As for taking on responsibility in adversity, we often must step forward and into the breach. That "stepping into the breach" is an act of commitment on our part, a sign that we are willing to put our actions where our mouth is and do something about the situation. It means we have some of our own skin in the game, providing protection to the one (or whatever) we sense is in danger.

Times of increased upheaval or danger can motivate us to take on additional responsibilities as a gesture of concern. I could give several examples, but they are probably too personal to be of much use. Let me use a generic example.

Let's say someone I care about has a health problem, one that is serious. I want to do something to help and of course I can add them to my daily prayers, praying for their well-being. Yet, in this case IMO it's not enough. And this is because I don't feel it is enough.

I am already doing as much daily practice as I want to, but still feel that I must do something to get some skin in the game. So, I might add another entire sadhana or liturgy to my daily practice and do that sadhana from then on each day forever. This, of course, takes me more time and is an effort on my part to show my intent and sincerity.

I have done this, for example, years ago in some cases and am still doing that added practice. It's like a subscription service. I am subscribing to this practice that I otherwise may not have done. And it adds up. LOL.

It probably sounds a little weird or silly, but my guess is that we each have our way of signifying to the cosmos that we are serious or mean business and are willing to back up our words with actions. Whether this helps or not, I can't say, but it does send a message that I am concerned enough to make such a commitment.

Or, on a more short term basis, if someone dies that I have a connection to and I worry about their well-being in the bardo realms, I will say special prayers for them morning and evening for the 49 days after their death, which days are said to be crucial for their rebirth. This is another example of committing ourselves to action through actual deeds.

I don't add on more daily practice on a regular basis, but when I do, usually that practice is here to stay. I only do this when I have reached points where lip-service on my part was not enough, IMO. I had to put my foot in the door or jump into the breach in some very tangible way. However, as mentioned, the practices I have added on remain today, years later. Again, I can't say it if helps or not, but it helps me to know that I'm serious and to back up my thoughts and words with deeds.

“As Bodhicitta is so precious,
May those without it now create it,
May those who have it not destroy it,
And may it ever grow and flourish”

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