

~ *How to Manage Conflict* ~

Mingyur Rinpoche

Today, the topic is how to manage conflict. Normally, of course, when different people come together, everybody has different opinions and ideas. And normally we think, “My idea is quite good. I know much better.” [Mingyur Rinpoche laughs.]

For example, there are some studies about taxi drivers, and they asked them about their driving skill. I think above 70% of taxi drivers said that their driving skill is above average. That is impossible, right? Maybe for you, if you are traveling with your friend and your friend is driving, and the road is not so good and is bumpy, and you almost get into an accident, what will you think? Normally we think, “If I drive, it will be safer.”

This is self-image, something like that. Sometimes it could be low self-esteem and sometimes high self-esteem — they are two sides of the same coin.

For me, what I do is . . . The first important thing is to listen. Really important. Normally, I discuss basic innate goodness. Everybody has unique talents, unique qualities, unique ways of solving problems, and unique ways of getting things done. Everybody has great qualities. Especially when I am in a group, I listen first. What I see is that there are a lot of good things when we communicate human to human. A lot of great things come out of that.

Then, sometimes what happens is that I have some idea. I think my idea is quite good. But then when I listen, there is another great idea! Now the problem is that both are very good, so which one should we choose? Normally, we think, “Mine is better.” And sometimes people show off: “How smart am I?” Their self-esteem comes — high self-esteem comes. Once we present our idea, then most of the time we really want to hold on to it. On the subconscious level, we do not want to lose face. “Both ideas are wonderful, so why not use mine?” In

that moment, I let go of mine. I embrace the other's good idea, and then we work together. And the other person feels very happy: "The idea was mine, and everybody and I agree." And the other person puts a lot of energy into it. And of course I put a lot of energy into it. And all the people, together, put a lot of energy into it.

Therefore, for me, listening is really important, one of the key points. Sometimes I have some idea, and sometimes I know the answer at the beginning of the discussion, but if I say it first it will not be so valuable. I listen first. After everyone finishes giving suggestions, I say my idea. Actually I am saying the same thing I would have said earlier, but after listening, it becomes very valuable.

Therefore, I think it is really important that we listen first. And not just "uh-huh, uh-huh," but deep listening! To really see the basic goodness within the other person. Try to connect with that person. And most of the time I can find different ways to communicate with that person. That person has basic innate goodness. At a deeper level, that person wants to be happy and does not want to suffer, just like you. And there are so many ways to connect! Once you become friends with that person, then everything is okay. There are no conflicts.

It is really important to connect, to listen, and to become friends, and all of this is based on seeing the innate qualities, on seeing the connection with love and compassion.

Thank you.