

*“People commonly feel  
that because  
I am considered  
a living Buddha,  
I must experience  
only serenity,  
perpetual happiness,  
and have no worries.  
Unfortunately  
this is not so.  
As a high lama  
and incarnation of  
enlightenment,  
I know better.”*



### **Kanju Khutush Tulku Rinpoche**

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Most of us *unconsciously* assume that awakening, living consciously, or being spiritual, will somehow take the worry, the anxiety, and the unhappiness out of daily life. As our Mystic notes above, this is not the case. So, why then are we engaging in this quest? This is the question to contemplate.

With the “facticity” of impermanence ever present, the notion of a life with constant serenity appears to be out of the question. So what then is this quest for ‘enlightenment’ all about? What do we do with unhappiness, worry, and anxiety?

If our quest is actually about being present to “what is”, we must become astute enough to *include* all the unpleasant and negative experiences that are part and parcel of being human. When people speak of being present to the moment, are you clear that this does *not* mean the content of your life experience will be all pleasant and serene?

The serenity we seek rests in becoming wise enough and conscious enough to embrace whatever drama or comedy that is unfolding as “what is”. This means developing the ability to simultaneously perceive the events of our lives in two paradoxical ways:

o first, “as the event itself” without the story that surrounds it, as “what is” – and o two, “as the story surrounding the event” - as also “what is” in the very human arena of making meaning and purpose.

One is not true and the other false. One is not right and the other wrong. Both are valid perceptions from different levels of reality.

This is a task far more difficult to master than we may realize. Most of us are constantly engaging in the quest to be different than we are. This usually includes shifting our story in some way that makes us look better or feel better. Or, we opt to tell no story at all and

end up ignoring the very fundamental activity that makes us human – storytelling our purpose and making sense of our existence and being.

Separating our story from the events that inspire them requires a very discriminating consciousness. This is difficult *because* the emotional component of our story is amazingly strong. Such strong emotion, generated by the images and soundtrack of the story, solidifies the belief that what we are *feeling* represents Reality or Truth – and for the body/mind, the feeling/emotion is indeed a real neuro-physiological reality.

But to find the *non-conceptual* Peace, Serenity, and Happiness we seek, we must recognize that the true and real feeling is being generated by an untrue and unreal story, and not by the event itself. If the feelings were generated by the event, then all beings would have the same response. So the emotions we feel must be generated by our *perception* of “what is” unfolding – or, more precisely, the meaning that we make of those events.

As the New Year unfolds, I invite you to explore your ability to note the difference between the events of your life and the story that you tell to make sense of those events. And to challenge the parts of your story that lead you to believe there will come a time when the feelings of unhappiness and worry and anxiety will no longer come to visit.

Relaxing into the shadows of life with the knowledge that they are but the other side of the light will shift them into an experience of a shade that can provide comfort, insight into the true nature of things, and a place to rest. There is no where else to be but where you are – and life will consistently bring you both happiness and unhappiness, worry and equanimity, anxiety and calm. I invite you to inquire into the truthfulness of this Mystical guidance via your own experience as you travel the path of your journey. Please join me again next month when a new reflection will appear. Meanwhile, may this New Year continue deepening your understanding of the Serenity, Happiness, and Peace that rests beyond the mind.

Ragini