

THOUGHTS ON PREPARING FOR DHARMA TRAINING CLASS PRESENTATIONS

It's not easy to teach the Dhamma to others, Ananda. The Dhamma should be taught to others only when five qualities are established within the person teaching. Which five?

- 1/ The Dhamma should be taught with the thought, 'I will speak step-by-step.'*
- 2/ The Dhamma should be taught with the thought, 'I will speak explaining the sequence [of cause & effect].'*
- 3/ The Dhamma should be taught with the thought, 'I will speak out of compassion.'*
- 4/ The Dhamma should be taught with the thought, 'I will speak not for the purpose of material reward.'*
- 5/ The Dhamma should be taught with the thought, 'I will speak without disparaging myself or others.'*

It's not easy to teach the Dhamma to others, Ananda. The Dhamma should be taught to others only when these five qualities are established within the person teaching.

-- Anguttara Nikaya V.159

- 1/ **Have a daily practice:** this is an opportunity to get to know and to transform ourselves. Who we are and how we are makes a huge difference in what we say to a group.
- 2/ **Think about your topic:** Make an outline; make notes. You may want to begin your presentation with some questions that you will aim to answer.
- 3/ **Just before your presentation, spend some quiet time alone.** Reflect on your motivation and generate the sincere wish to be of benefit to the people who attend. You may wish to recite to yourself these verses:

May what I say be truthful and not distort the Buddha's teachings in any way.
May I say what is most suitable for this group of people. May I say what they need to hear.
May I say it clearly so that they can understand.
May what I say sink into their hearts and into my heart, transforming out hearts/minds into the realizations of the Dharma for the benefit of all sentient beings.
- 4/ **Your appearance should be neat and fresh.**
- 5/ **Your manner of speaking should be cheerful.** If you feel dull, cultivate your altruistic motivation.
- 6/ **Reflect on impermanence to abandon pride and self-judgment.**
- 7/ **Abandon miserliness and share all your understanding.**
- 8/ In responding to questions...it is not necessary to respond to every comment; sometimes people merely need a space to say something...**listen with your heart to try to understand the real question**...ask for more specificity or an example if you are not sure.

--excerpted from Thubten Chodron's Dharma Guide Training Workshop