

## THE FOUR OPPONENT POWERS

*To purify negative actions of body, speech, or mind*

- **Regret.** Generate sincere, profound remorse and regret for the specific negativities of body, speech, or mind that you need to purify. The practice of regret can at first be painful, as we recall our harmful acts. Offer your own pain to relieve the pain of others, and as you practice, the pain of regret transforms into gratitude. Do the practice of regret *gently*. It is a gift, not a punishment. As you feel able, you may also, over time, recall your negativities of this and all lifetimes, generating regret for them as well as for all those you cannot now recall. Bodhisattvas generate sincere regret also for the negativities of all sentient beings, offering this practice of the Four Opponent Powers for their merit and liberation.
- **Reliance.** Rely on the wisdom being or the wisdom in which you have great faith and devotion. Make offerings (mental and/or physical) and supplications. With sincere remorse and strong confidence and faith, confess your thoughts, words, and actions that now give you the heartache of regret. Relying and practicing on this spiritual friend or spiritual truth is relying on a pure support, to purify your negative deeds of body, speech, and mind.
- **Remedy.** In a general sense the remedy is the opposite of the negativity to be purified – e.g., for anger, practice “patience devoid of hostility”; for grasping, practice generosity; for harming others, practice harmlessness and benefitting others; and so on. Since all negativities of body, speech, or mind involve one’s own confusion rooted in self-grasping, remedy in all cases calls for generating bodhicitta, the altruistic intention. Specifically, there is the remedy of the particular practice you are doing and the particular support upon which you are relying in the second instruction above, Reliance.
- **Resolve.** Make firm resolve and commitment to abandon these negative actions of body, speech, and mind. In the event of lapse, repeat these four steps – and especially, supplicate the lama (or that in which you have great faith) for the courage and commitment born of great love and compassion.

H.E. Garchen Rinpoche says that practicing the Four Opponent Powers will purify even the greatest negativity. He also says that we can purify by giving rise to bodhicitta and by realizing the true nature: “In an instant all can be purified.”

*Excerpt from Brave, Generous, & Undefended:  
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