



Manjushri Buddha of Wisdom  
Dharma Jewel For  
Pacifying Compulsive Overeating, Compulsive  
Spending and other Compulsive Behavior

“A person who does not live for sense pleasures (alone) – who is in harmony with all beings – eats and sleeps in moderation – who has faith – and the Power of Virtue – such a person is not overpowered by temptations, as a great rock is not shaken by the wind.” [Dharmapada (DP) 1-8]

The above verse is a Dharma Jewel for ending all compulsive behaviors (otherwise known as temptations). The Dharma Jewel is applied by memorizing the verse and repeating it over and over whenever obsessive behavior arises in the mind as an overwhelming desire. The verse works as an antidote. And of course, we act like

a piece of wood: that is, not indulging in the obsession.

By analyzing our compulsive behavior, we immediately recognized it as a desire for pleasure. But in the final end, the little trickle of immediate pleasure causes us to be fat, spend more money than we think we should, and do all sorts of things we are sorry for at some later date.

We have discovered that using will power on these obsessions, it's like using will power on diarrhea. It's painful and it only works for a little while. But in the final end we are forced against our will to indulge in these compulsions.

With only a little practice, however, we discover that by repeating Dharmapada verse 1-8 over and over, the temptation dissolves completely in our mind. And in this way we can eventually gain perfect control of our mind by pacifying all compulsions.

Naturally this is an oversimplification. And more is needed. Other verses are applied also. But here's the good part. Although the first verse must be memorized, the other verses do not. Only understanding them is required. This can be accomplished by rereading this pamphlet many times in the beginning. Also it's helpful to reread the pamphlet should the compulsions get out of control in the future.

Dharmapada Verse 1-8: There are 6 six lines and each contains a special meaning:  
1: The person who does not live for sense pleasure (alone),  
2: who is in harmony with all beings,  
3: eats and sleeps in moderation,  
4: who has faith,  
5: and the Power of Virtue,  
6: such a person is not overpowered by temptations, as a great rock is not shaken by the wind.

Commentary on Line 1: “The person who does not live for sense pleasure (alone),”

Wisdom is the goal of life – not sense pleasure. Everyone loves the pleasures in life. But this is not a mandate to give up all pleasure – at least not all at once. Please note the bracketed word, “(alone)”. Naturally we will enjoy other pleasures, but there is something to note about all pleasures in the following Dharmapada verses:

(DP) 16-210, Let a man or woman be free from pleasure and free from pain. For not to have pleasure is sorrow. And to have pain is sorrow too.

(DP) 16-211, Therefore, don't be bound by pleasure, for the loss of pleasure is pain. There are no fetters for anyone beyond the grasp of pleasure or pain.

If we have an overeating problem, however, as with any addiction, like drugs and alcohol, it's necessary to give up these addiction totally. In the case of being addicted to food we must still eat, so we give up only the pleasure in food.

(DP) 21-290, If by forsaking small pleasures one finds greater joy, the wise will look to the greater and abandon what is less.

This does not mean we eat raw, bland and tasteless food. But we also do not seek out the delicacies either. Buddhism is a middle path. This includes wholesome and healthy food that tastes good.

Commentary on Line 2: “who is in harmony with all beings,”

Other verses explain this line more fully:  
5-79: The Bodhisattva Way of Life (BWL) says: One should only speak gentle, kind, loving, and pleasing words, full of compassion and pleasant to the ear.

5-81: (BWL) Great blessings arise in seeking the antidote for the misery of material life, which is to be kind and loving to all: that is, to plant only the seeds of kindness and love. As a result, he or she will only reap kindness and love.

5-97: (BWL) Courtesy and consideration is the Bodhisattva practice. It's not something that can be set down in rules. It develops with the practice of Dharma. Summed up, it's easily expressed: that is, offend no one!

(DP) 17-221, Forsake anger, give up pride. Sorrow can not touch the person who is not in bondage to anything and who owns nothing.

(DP) 17-232 Watch for anger of words, let your words be self-controlled. Hurt not with words, but use your words well.

(DP) 17-233, Watch for anger of the mind. Let your mind be self-controlled. Hurt not with the mind but use your mind well.

This means we no longer justify anger. Naturally some people aren't friendly and we can't be friends with them. But we remain friendly to all – even the criminals – as long as they're behind bars.

Commentary on Line 3: “eats and sleeps in moderation,”

Buddhism is the middle path. This means we do not go on a prolonged fast to lose weight, nor do we buy only from a thrift store, in order to save money. Moderation is the key. Naturally if addicted to drugs and alcohol, these must be abandoned totally. Otherwise moderation is the key.

Commentary on Line 4: “who has faith,”

Faith is everything. If we are Buddhists, this is not something to apply only when we lose weight or save money. But we have faith that it's a way of life leading to real happiness – to

enlightenment. Or if we can't accept it, we must agree to try it for one month. Then we will have faith that it works.

But in order for this to work as a Dharma Jewel, this practice must become our number one priority in faith. Otherwise it won't work. In fact, nothing will work.

Commentary on Line 5: “and has the Power of Virtue,”

There is power in virtue. According to the Buddha, the practice of Virtue has to do with giving up Greed, Anger, and Ignorance and then practicing the corresponding opposite quality of mind.

Giving up greed involves acquiring the virtue of generosity. This does not mean we give all our possessions to the poor and go in rags. As with all Buddhist virtue, it's a middle path based on logic and reason.

(DP) 17-224, Speak the truth, yield not to anger, and give to him or her who asks. These three steps lead you to the gods. This verse involves greed and anger.

Ignorance, as the Buddha uses it, refers to Fear, Depression, and Guilt as well as simple lack of information.

Fear is easily pacified by standing up to life heroically and taking refuge in the Buddha or one's own personal Deity of choice: that is, Jesus, Ala, Krishna, Shiva, etc.

Guilt is easily appeased by repentance.

And Depression, the BIG ONE, is easily appeased as well. The immediate antidote for depression is GRATITUDE. But how can we be grateful when there's nothing to be grateful for?

This is actually very easy: that is, by thinking about what our lives would have been like, had we been born as a chicken of some other animal.

“Be grateful for the little you have,” says the Buddha, “as you strive for more. Unless you give up the practice of being ungrateful for all you don't have (causing sorrow and depression), you will never be happy.”

“This is because even the richest of kings doesn't nearly come close to fulfilling all their desires. Often these kings are greedy for more and ungrateful: that is, sorrowful and hopelessly depressed” (Buddha's words paraphrased from several verses in the Anguttara Nikaya.)

Therefore, the immediate antidote for depression is GRATITUDE – Grateful we weren't born as a chicken. Money, property, prestige, sex and all else are secondary to the very fact that we were lucky enough to have been born as humans. When I can be grateful I wasn't born as a chicken – when I am really grateful for this single fact, my depression is no place to be found.

Therefore, pacifying Anger Greed and Ignorance is necessary. Otherwise, we will practice our addiction just to escape the emotional pain from anger, greed and ignorance, which the Buddha calls the the, “Three poisons of the mind.” .

Commentary on line 6: “such a person is not overpowered by temptations, as a great rock is not shaken by the wind.”

This last line is self-explanatory. But this is not something that takes years and years of practice – nor lifetimes. It can be done quickly. Unless there is very dramatic improvement – nearing perfection – within one week – be rest assured – we are practicing incorrectly.