

Meditation Master JinBodhi's Dharma Teachings

My Future Is In My Hands: The Journey Starts Right Here

Hello, my young friends! (Hello, Master.)

There are many indicators of a wise child. First, he must have a dream, though he may have nothing else. He may be poor and plain, with no physical strength; it doesn't matter. I want to ask, "Is there anyone who wants to have a better future?"

Say, you want to become an engineer, politician or lawyer. Each person has their own fate, dream and life. All of you here are young. When you reach adulthood, a new life starts. Through a few decades of study, I have found that a satisfying life is doing an occupation one likes. It is like getting married: People want to marry the person they like. Surely, you won't feel comfortable marrying the girl your dad forces on you. This is true of marriage; it is also true of your occupation. You want to do your dream job.

Just now the handsome 14-year-old said, "My mother wants me to play the violin. In fact, I don't know what I will do. I don't think I will be a violinist." But, if you enjoy playing the cello, learning and practicing it, you can be a cello player. That student said he wanted to be a cartoonist. I think it is good. Through cartoon stories, you give others happiness and inspiration. It is wonderful. Many book-length stories are told through cartoons. If you like this occupation and turn it into your focus and pursuit, you will feel happy when you are learning and pursuing this occupation.

I know many people from different trades. A grandpa's entire family was making tofu. His grandson wanted to be an artist, a cello player. The family was against him going from entrepreneur to artist. "We have bought a house and car, and sent you to a good school. Now you don't like it." The

entire family criticized him. This child was suffering and came to me. "Master, do you think I am wrong?" "Do you feel happy when you play the cello?" "Yes, I'm happy, though I don't play that well." This is love in action. I told his parents, "Don't force him. Making tofu supports your family. But your son may support his kids as an artist. Don't force him to follow you in making tofu."

Liking a job makes you interested, happy and motivated. After school, you finish homework and are motivated to play the cello, though you don't play it well. If you want to be a cartoonist, whenever you are free, you will draw. Though you don't draw well, you like it. As you are young, you want to find a teacher to teach you to draw cartoons or play the cello. When you like it, you will keep learning. In a few years, you will become an expert. It is very possible.

When I was young, I knew a boy of my age who was learning martial arts. When he started, in the first month, he learned kicking and boxing from his master. We laughed at him so much our stomachs hurt. When his master said "left," he turned right. He did it every time. It was weird. When instructed to turn right, he turned left. It made his master very angry. How could he teach this kid? I met this boy 10 years later. He was so different. He had become a master in martial arts. His fist smashed a stone to pieces. Remarkable! At first, no one thought he had a bright future. He was slow-witted. But he liked martial arts. He practiced for 3 hours daily. Now he is a master in martial arts. He is my age and has taught many disciples. He has generated such motivation.

After school, aside from assignments you have to do, you spend time going online, reading randomly, chatting, or playing video games. Of course, some learn some knowledge informally. But many kids just destroy their body and waste their precious time, creating no help for their future life and occupation. For now, it is OK that you may not have a clear dream. An immediate and short-term dream is to improve your grades. As a student, don't you want to improve your grades? If you want to raise your grades, raise your hand. Let me have a look. OK. Put it down. Those who don't, please raise your hand. Those who are among the top 3, if they still raise

their hand, the Earth would explode. How could we live?

Many students raise their hands, wishing to improve their grades. It is not difficult to boost your grades. First, reduce the time spent on video games, meaningless chatting and watching movies. Reduce this by 40 minutes daily. This requirement isn't high. Use the 40 minutes to review your lessons. Isn't this practical? It isn't that you chant today, and you will become smart tomorrow. You use 40 minutes to review all you have learned in the day. You don't need to test yourself, just review what you were taught. A month later, if there is a test, your grade usually rises by 10%. If you don't believe me, just try. Your grade will rise.

This is one method. The second method is to find a tutor. Usually, not all your subjects' grades are low, right? Maybe a couple among all subjects are low. Find a tutor or ask your teacher to help you catch up. Within 3 weeks, you can make up ground. If you can't catch up in 3 weeks with others in the class, you won't have good grades in that subject. A poor grade in a subject results in difficulty entering college. Without a college education, it is hard to find a good job. Unless you are super-smart, you can't find a good job without going to college. Unless you are a genius. Otherwise, life will be challenging. You may do manual labor more than intellectual work. Manual labor often isn't highly paid. School performance or marks are important for college admission. The next thing is the meaningful charity work that you partake in. However, your grades are the basic requirements.

In class, please remember: If you don't understand, just ask. I am a meditation teacher. I like students to ask me questions. If you truly don't understand, ask me. I will see that you are very earnest. However, if you don't understand, and you are shy to ask. Others seem to understand, but you don't. It shows you are stupid. If you don't ask, you won't understand and you will fail exams. So, ask the teacher on the spot if you don't understand. Usually, teachers like students to ask questions. They hope all their students get excellent grades. Then teachers feel their job is done.

To improve one's grades in school, there are 3 methods. Let's review

them. Do you still remember them? The first one? Cut your playtime by 40 minutes to review the day's learning. Except for PE class, reviewing all the subjects once is enough. If you don't understand it, find a way to make sense of it. This doesn't include the time for doing assignments. Separate them. The second tip to improve grades is to find a tutor, be it your schoolteacher or a tutor outside. If you can catch up, you will be fine. If not, you will face difficulties. You won't have a chance to go to university. Going to college is a must. The third one is: If you don't know, ask questions. When you are in class and your teacher is explaining a math problem that you don't understand, say, "Teacher, could you please explain it again for me?"

You must ask if you don't understand. Teachers like being asked on the spot. However, many children are afraid teachers dislike them asking questions. Teachers like it, as they are happy if their students have good grades. They will think, "How wonderful my students are." They have to compete with other teachers. There are 30 students in a class. Their marks total 20,000, 200 more than other classes' marks. The teacher is happy because the principal will give him bonuses. Please ask if you don't understand. They like to explain the principle to you. So, there are 3 methods to improve grades. Hope you remember them. It's silly and simple!

A serious problem affecting children and adults is: poor communication skills. Many know a lot but can't speak clearly, though they want to. Does anyone feel unable to communicate? Raise your hand. Put it down. You suffer a lot without good communication skills. Dating requires communication. We can't just use our hands or body to touch, we must use our mouth to speak. With poor communication ability, you will be unsuccessful at dating. You won't have the chance to feel honored and valued. Whether you are a doctor, teacher, engineer, boss, president, premier, mayor or actor, don't you need communication skills? Yes. When hunting for a job, you need to have an interview. You are knowledgeable, but can't express yourself well. You aren't hired, as you can't work well without good communication.

In fact, you are so anxious that you get tongue-tied. I met many adults unable to express themselves well; they suffer a lot. Some get promoted and find a good job or partner; others are just helplessly anxious. People unable to communicate well tend not to be noticed by the opposite sex. Do you understand "opposite sex"? Boys and girls are opposite sexes. The ability to express yourself is easily noticed by the opposite sex. Do you want to elevate your ability to communicate effectively? It is needed in almost all occupations.

If this ability is improved a bit, your salary and sense of achievement will increase by more than double. A salary of \$30,000 will be raised to at least \$60,000. There may be a rising effect like yeast. It could be raised to \$300,000 or more. It sounds like an exaggeration, right? Let me give you an example. It is a true story of a tofu business that made a fortune. There was a renowned brand, Wang Family Tofu. Everyone liked it. Lao Wang was a craftsman whose ability to make tofu was top-notch, but his ability to sell tofu was poor. He believed it was enough to make the best tofu. No need to promote. Everyone knew his tofu without advertisement. This was true. The entire village bought his tofu. He made money and supported his family by making tofu, but he wasn't wealthy.

He hired many people to work for him, among whom there was Xiao Li. Xiao Li was smart and obtained Lao Wang's tofu-making skills. He had strong communication skills with which to promote his products, so he sold tofu not only in his own village but also in other villages. He said, "Why is my tofu so delicious? I use the best soybeans. Half a kg of soybeans makes 1kg of tofu. Tofu is substantial and delicious, without any artificial stuff. Other tofu isn't as good as mine, as they use half a kg of soybeans to make 1.5 to 2.5kg of tofu. So theirs isn't substantial, but mine is. Also, my soybeans are organic, free of chemicals."

Through his promotion, Xiao Li's tofu reached 10 villages; they all liked his tofu. 3 years later, Xiao Li's family income was more than Lao Wang's in 3 generations. 10 years later, Xiao Li became the wealthiest in the area. With the same skill, plus his communication ability, he sold more tofu. What made Lao Wang angry was this: Xiao Li's business was too busy to meet

people's needs; so, he bought Lao Wang's business. Lao Wang's tofu business lasted 3 generations, and it was suddenly bought by Xiao Li. Great communication results in good sales. In the words of Chinese ancients: With a silver tongue, one can conquer a country. Isn't good communication important?

Great achievers, such as wealthy people or celebrities, have succeeded with 10% skill, but 90% wisdom or 80% good communication. Good communication is extremely important. How can we develop this ability? Some say, "I am not an actor or a singer. Why should I develop this ability?" I believe everyone is an actor or actress in their life. They need to act well. To be an accountant, you have to know how to calculate. To be a teacher, you have to like children. To be a martial master, you must conquer fear. You should practice hard, then you can gain superior martial arts kung fu.

Anyone who wants to improve their communication ability? Raise your hand to let me see. Yes. Hearing you can become rich, you want to try. Put it down. You're all materialistic! OK. Find an article you like in whatever language and read it aloud before a mirror at home. Every home has a bathroom with a big mirror. Don't use a small mirror. You can see your face. Practice reading aloud like a fool; be relaxed and expressive. All actors and actresses train this way. Many practice calling others; when in fact, no one is there. The facial expression makes it seem someone is there. This is acting. You need to practice expressively reading aloud an article you like.

To make you more charismatic, I have taught you my secret -- develop your communication ability. Good communication is about speaking. So, practice 15 to 20 minutes daily in front of a mirror. Even twice a week will do. Only 15 to 20 minutes, if you can. If not, 15 minutes a week, OK? Let's meet the minimum requirement -- 15 minutes a week reading an article aloud while facing a mirror. But you have to finish reading one article, long or short. Better not read a long novel. Read a short article. This way, you form a good habit. Be persistent. Don't leave it half done. For a dozen minutes a week, read aloud an article while facing a mirror. Be as expressive as possible. Express feelings through facial expressions.

Anyone wants to develop wisdom? Only one? Do you all think you are very smart? Do you feel your classmates remember everything only listening once, but you have listened 3 times and can't retain? Anyone? I belong to this type. I raise my hand. Are there such young people? Yes. OK, you want to experience transformation. The causes of poor memory, judgment and logical thinking are many. The first is genetic. If your parents aren't smart, you may not be smart either. What to do? You are already born and can't choose your parents, right? You think, "My teacher is smart. I want him to be my dad." That's impossible. You are already born and can't reverse it.

I have a method to share with you. If you have a faith, then before the image of your god or Buddha, prostrate. I mean the normal kneeling down to kowtow. The best way is your forehead touching the floor with some force or sound. Gently knock your head on the floor. It actually activates our brain and develops wisdom. From a scientific perspective, it may increase blood and oxygen in the brain and activate it. When we kowtow, our head gently knocks the floor, making some sound. Don't smash your head and knock off your nose after Master teaches you. That is completely wrong. Master doesn't teach this way. Don't use such force. But you should hear the sound. If you prostrate on the carpet, there's no sound. If you force a sound, you will injure your head.

When your head gently knocks on the floor with some sound, your brain is gently shaken, which helps to develop your intelligence. This is my experience. Any gods or buddhas worshiped at home will do. Kowtow 36 times before the image of your god or Buddha, especially in the morning or evening. Knocking for 3 times before standing up. Knocking and standing up counts as one time. Either in the morning or evening, do it 36 times. The effect will manifest in 3 months. You will become wiser. Your brain starts being active, though you haven't changed your brain. Scientists say only 5 to 10% of our brain is used. A huge chunk is unused and hasn't exerted its energy. According to my experience, meditation makes us smarter and wiser.

When teachers or parents give you an assignment, is there anyone

who can't focus on it when alone? Say, at appointed times, you have to finish assignments, but you are too lazy to do them. You risk being scolded, right? You consider doing assignments an extra task. Good students take initiative with their assignments. They have a good habit of finishing their assignments well. Students with low grades do their assignments reluctantly. They feel upset doing assignments, but they have to do them, fearing being scolded by their teachers. They do their assignments listlessly. My friends, do you ever lose control of yourself? Can you always control yourself well? I guess you don't have this ability.

As a human, why can't we carry out our plans? Do you know why? If you don't know, I will speak. We are in a world of yin and yang. It is the same for our brain. Do my young friends all know the basics about our brain and body? Our brain has left and right parts, like a walnut. In the middle, there are linking tubes. The 2 parts have different and opposite functions. Say, you want to play video games. The left brain wants to play. The right brain says, "No, I will be scolded if I don't do my homework." The 2 parts start to be in conflict. You still want to play. The right brain says, "No, I should do my homework." Often, evil thoughts overcome good ones. In the end, playing is too tempting. The wrong things tend to be more appealing. Why so? Our body is an opposing, contradictory unity of yin and yang. Chinese philosophy is about the unity of yin and yang, which is Natural Law. This is the Way.

What are yin and yang? In terms of gender, males are yang; females are yin. High mountains are yang; rivers are yin. The sun is yang; the moon is yin. For colors, white is yang; black is yin. Red is yang; green is yin. For the human body, the upper body is yang; the lower body is yin. The front of the body is yang; the back is yin. Also, the skin is yang; the organs are yin. If we know the concept, we can do fortunetelling. Again, the above is yang; the below is yin. Tough is yang; soft, like water, is yin. Bones are yang; hair is yin. Thus, what are yin and yang? They are opposing but uniting, as they have to cooperate. It's like only when parents come together can we be born. Almost everything has the unity of yin and yang.

When we do things or assignments, or carry out plans after school, we

may be distracted by fun stuff, so we can't finish our plans. To further define yin and yang: Good is yang; bad is yin. Positive is yang; negative is yin. In terms of Buddhism, Buddha is yang; a demon is yin. To elaborate, things that often attract us are not good things. Have you ever visited casinos? I have been to Las Vegas in the States. It is a city of gambling. That is the staple business there. The casinos look beautiful. Many people think their architecture and food are a luxury. I stayed there for 2 nights. A gambler was a VIP client at a hotel there. Because of his status, I could stay there for 2 nights. The hotels are luxurious.

The "owner" of the room where I stayed gambled while I slept. He left the casino at 5am. On that night, he lost \$200,000. In just one night, \$200,000 was lost. Some young friends say, "That is not much." People have lost a lot more than this. Losing \$2 million is normal. What you bet is what you may lose on the spot. \$2 million could be lost within an hour in a big casino. The casino is built so beautifully and luxuriously. I felt that hell was like a paradise and a demon was disguised as an angel. The more evil things are, the more tempting they are to humans. In Chinese philosophy, a saying goes: As virtue rises one foot, vice rises 10. Positive things don't appeal as much.

Say, an artist's performance after 10 years of practicing is wonderful and enjoyable. It is the result of training for one or 2 hours daily over 10 years. He has become a great artist, making others enjoy his music. It is an accumulation, day by day. It is a minute on stage worth 10 years behind it. Daily hard practice is really boring, but once he reaches a high level, his music will be enjoyable. It is the same for almost all professions, such as dancing. If you want to be an accountant or a lawyer, you need to spend 10 years to achieve it. In any formal professional training, there is not much fun. It isn't as appealing as games, gambling, doing drugs, dancing in clubs where kids shouldn't go.

Often, a demon is disguised as an angel, hell pretending to be Heaven. It is fake and harms people. When you behave positively, demons will try to drag you to an evil path, such as gambling, playing video games or watching porn. You are always tempted by evil; the more evil, the more attractive.

Those who pursue evil things when they are young will end up miserable. Many poor laborers have tattoos of dragons and phoenixes. They thought themselves heroes when they were young. That is wrong. This is a demonic path that attracts people.

Buddhism believes there are Six Realms within the world of ordinary people. The Six Realms are controlled by the king of hell. You are greedy. With greed, there will be sin. With sin, you will go to hell. If you do good deeds, you will leave this place. You will immigrate. Leaving hell or the realm of hungry ghosts, you will become a god or a buddha. You are totally away from the suffering in the hell. Before you leave this world, when you do a good deed, hungry ghosts will try to pull you back. They will say, "Gamble, play video games, watch movies every day." You will learn no skills at all. Hell will pull you back, preventing you from success and liberation. Since you keep committing crimes and doing wrong things, you will be in the hungry ghost realm and never liberated.

Without fortitude, without using your wisdom to discipline yourself, you will be pulled to do something you shouldn't do. Is it so evil? Say, is playing video games so evil? Yes, it is. Why can't we control ourselves? Even adults can't control the demons. This demon just doesn't want to let you go: "Please stay with us. We are all bad. You turn bad too. What's the fun when all are good people? If you become a good person, you will become a god or an immortal. You will leave my world and be out of my control." It will be afraid of losing you. Like entering a mafia, you can't leave it. If you leave it, its leader will punish you. Hungry ghosts are like this. They hold you tight.

Faced with doing assignments or playing video games, most people want to play games. Playing is fun and stress-free. If when you are young, you are always stress-free, you will be full of pressures in the future. I remind my young friends: If you don't read or learn positive knowledge so as to face pressures when young, your future pressure will be as big as the sky. As a boy, others will get married, have children and support a family; if you can't make any money, you will be unable to support anyone, and watch the girl you like marry another person. Because you can't support her. As a girl, no matter how beautiful you are, in the future, you will compete

with your knowledge and capability. Only relying on your pretty face means you are selling yourself. You will rely on your knowledge and wisdom to support yourself and your family. Then a girl doesn't have to rely on a man and can be the master of her own fate and realize her potential.

Our potential is limitless. You are still young; it is very easy and convenient to have transformations for you have lots of time, not unlimited though. How do we cultivate our abilities? At your age, form good habits. Form conscientious habits with regards to studying, learning, thinking and observing. Learn, think and observe conscientiously. I have addressed several qualities at one time.

Recently I saw a modern version of Sherlock Holmes told in half-hour episodes. Whenever Sherlock Holmes met a woman who accidentally dropped her purse, within 50 seconds Sherlock could guess the lady's occupation, income, mood, and if she had a partner, family and car. He got it within 50 seconds. The scent of her perfume or lotion indicated her occupation, such as doctor. This ability is gained through learning and observing every day. When her purse fell on the ground, with one glance, you saw a parking ticket. Why did a person who didn't drive much have a parking ticket? On the ticket, there was the seal and address of a graveyard for the poor. It was a low-status graveyard, but the woman's face, demeanor and pretty hands indicated she was wealthy. Why did she go to a poor graveyard and get a parking ticket? Sherlock immediately thought she was a surgeon who caused a person's death. Because she felt guilty, she went to the graveyard to honor the person. While honoring the deceased, she got emotional and forgot about time, so she was fined by the police. Therefore, she was very unhappy. Upon hearing Sherlock's observations, she thought he was a god. Sherlock said, "I am insane, so my father asked you to counsel me."

He wasn't crazy, but a genius. Where do these abilities or knowledge come from? They aren't from connecting with the Divine, but keen observations every day. With one glance, he is able to see your mood, fortitude, the endurance of your heart, your energy, and confidence level. Your lips, the shape of your nose, and your combed hair convey everything

about you. This is just an example. Sherlock's observations don't indicate godliness. He liked observing and reading. If you want to improve these skills, it is easy. Please watch Sherlock Holmes series. After 5 episodes, you almost become a professional detective. You can cooperate with the author to summarize knowledge gained from observing cases and humans for generations. There is a good deal in life. Do you know what it is? It is reading.

Who has written a book? No one, right? You have. What book have you written? How long is the book? A love letter? (I make up stories.) You make up stories. Then you are a liar! How old are you? You started by fabricating stories. I suggest you start learning to write articles. Observing and recording true stories is better than fabricating stories. Listening to stories is better than fabricating them. After hearing stories, record them; it is fun because they are real. *The Lord of the Rings* is an example of fiction. Fiction is a book set in an imaginary world. Sometimes fiction is made into a film. *Harry Potter*, in which the protagonist had a magic wand, is fiction. When you have reached a certain age, and collect enough life experiences, you can truly write. A true writer condenses his life experiences into one book. You use a week to read a person's entire life experience. What a deal!

Let me tell you another story of ancient war and knowledge. In the Warring States Period, about 2,300 years ago, General Sun led an army of 600,000. His army was as big as a city. He wanted to trick his enemy into believing he had only 60,000 soldiers. How did he do that? First, he had most horse hooves wrapped in cloth to leave less hoof prints. Second, with so many soldiers, typically fires would have been lit to cook over. But they didn't cook; they ate dry food. Only a few people cooked fresh food. Say, 60 people used one stove to cook. The enemy scouts counted the stoves to learn how many soldiers there were. Judging by the hoof prints and stoves, they made a guess and reported to their commander. General Sun's enemy estimated that Sun had about 60,000 soldiers. The enemy wasn't fearful since their army was about 300,000 soldiers. He thought General Sun would lose, having only 60,000 soldiers. The enemy was fooled. He thought he would beat General Sun easily, no need to think much. But when the enemy soldiers arrived at the battlefield, they fell into a trap. Sun's 600,000 soldiers

ambushed from different locations and destroyed the enemy.

Detailed knowledge comes from reading, observing and thinking every day. So, I hope children cultivate and form good habits, develop a positive mind, and choose a career they enjoy. Then you can learn how to take good care of yourself. Do you really want to pursue your life goal? If so, you should put time and effort into it, then you can succeed. Do not let demons take you away from Buddha's or God's hands. Do not let them control you. I hope you are always positive and capable, and have Buddha-nature and compassion. Whatever is demonic will pull you down; it's more stimulating, fun and charming than Buddha-nature.

From today on, you need to have this mindset and concept: Start learning to control yourself and also learning this method. Do not be pulled down by demonic nature. Carry out your plan. Do well in the essential everyday things. If you want to be more successful and remarkable, put time into excelling at what is important. You will be remarkable. Though I had little schooling, I practiced a lot. Other peers were playing. There were no video games or Internet. But my peers would gather to fight, drink or smoke. Whatever was bad or adventurous, they wanted to try it. Young kids started chasing girls. When I was 13, my friend started having girlfriends. At 35, he still hadn't married. No girl wanted to marry him. Everyone knew he was a player. What girl wanted to marry him? They got to know him and ran away.

When I was putting all my effort into practicing, I lacked self-confidence, as others thought I was strange. "Why is he cultivating?" They suspected I was insane. Indeed, I was "crazy." If I weren't "crazy," it would be hard for me to persist. I have kept on practicing, and discovered my brain became smarter. Do you want your future life to be wonderful? (Yes.) If you do, raise your hand. Whatever you do, you want it to be wonderful. Put down your hands. Do you want to be better than your father? (Yes.) If you do, raise your hand. Today, we have some principals here. It doesn't matter. If you want to surpass your teachers and principal, please raise your hand. If you dare not, you lack promise. Raise your hand. Put them down. Even if you raise your hand timidly, I feel you are a hero.

How will you act? It depends on you. I have told you my true experience. I haven't faked it; it is very real. Try my method; it must be effective. I hope our children will create wonderful lives in the future. You have come to learn with me once. Enough. It is enough to make your life wonderful. I don't encourage you to come here 8 or 10 times. I think it is unnecessary to come 3 times. You should go back to do what you have learned and then come back in 10 years. I want to see a remarkable you come back. You should think about what you should do, and whether you want to do it. After thinking, you act; and your transformation is guaranteed.

A great commander has no weak or foolish soldiers. Though I may not be the greatest "commander", I tell you my experience with my true heart. Some day in the future, you will say happily, "Master, I was inspired by a teaching of yours. I am doing very well now." I hope I hear those words.

Are your legs sore? If not, they are artificial ones. (Sore.) They are sore. Wonderful! Only by experiencing soreness and pain can you learn. Soreness and pain have limits. I won't jabber or speak any "nonsense."

Thank you, all.