

Grandmaster JinBodhi's Q&A

The Way to Get Along With People

(Hello, Master. At my workplace, I am honest and humble, but often get taken advantage of. If there is a conflict, what should I do?)

The fellow practitioner who raised this question believes she is honest and often gets taken advantage of. So I asked, "Are you forced to work more?" She replied, "No." I asked, "Then what do you lose?" She said, "Mentally, I lose." Say, someone makes a joke at her expense, and she can't retaliate in kind. "So, what did you lose? Have you worked more but been paid less?" If not, then not much lost.

If a cultivator wants to become enlightened, what does one become enlightened about? Real afflictions in life. These issues here are not real afflictions. At the workplace, I think truly honest people are down-to-earth, loyal, diligent and hardworking. They are honest people. I like to employ such people. Smooth-talking cheaters are dishonest or at least slightly bad and not to be trusted with important jobs. Today they may have fooled me, but eventually I will find it out. So, they have no future.

Let me define honest people. Those who lose at fighting or arguing but don't work conscientiously identify themselves as honest. In fact, they are just honest bad people. You are honest but irresponsible. Such coworkers are problematic, right?

An irresponsible person is not an honest person. They want to be bad but can't even get themselves to be bad. They want to be bad but aren't wicked enough. As for work, they know they should work conscientiously, but just don't do it. Seeing others earn money, they get angry. They are not honest at all. They are a bit slow-witted and dishonest. They are unhappy being taken advantage of.

What do we do if we are in conflict with others?

We often get in conflict with others as there are disagreements. How you react to conflict depends on the significance and consequences of the issue. If consequences are huge, e.g. someone is blowing up a bridge with dynamite, many people will be harmed. You should get involved and intervene, right? If the bomber were your classmate or colleague, you might be afraid of offending him. So, you stay out of it. Then, honestly, you are a bad person. You will go to hell for not intervening.

There will always be conflicts. Learning meditation and Buddhadharma or having some compassion will not free the world of conflicts. That is impossible. We are still living in the human world under the laws of Nature. There are surely disagreements among humans, which brings about conflict.

When conflicts arise, we need to resolve them well instead of telling others not to lose their temper over anything and not to get agitated. Then, are you a responsible person? Imagine your child fell into water, could you sit there gracefully, ignoring it? If you are steady and unmoved by the 8 worldly winds, are you a true father? Thus, when you have to react fiercely, do so. When you need to be serene, just be serene. When you need to be responsible, be responsible. Intervene and act as needed. It all depends on the situation and severity of events.