

Turning Karma into Destiny

A Telecourse with Sally Kempton
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Practices for Clearing Negative Karmic Threads, and for Creating Positive Karmic Conditions

From the **Tao te Ching**

Those skillful in the ancient Tao
Are subtly ingenious and profoundly intuitive
They are so deep that they cannot be recognized.
So careful, as if wading in a stream in winter
So hesitant, as if respecting all sides in the community
So reserved, as if acting as a guest.
So yielding, as if ice about to melt.
So candid, as if acting with simplicity.
So open, as if acting as a valley.
So integrated, as if acting as muddy water.
Who can harmonize with muddy water
And gradually arrive at clarity?
Who can move with stability, and gradually bring endurance to life?
(From The Tao of Power—Translation by R.D. Wing)

----- **Aspiration Prayer**

**It's enormously helpful to make this prayer at the beginning of meditation, or before starting any important activity. Or even an unimportant activity.
Aspiration is a significant power, which can draw you towards the goals you aspire to, especially when these are spiritual or evolutionary goals.**

May what I'm about to do give beneficial results. May this action give me the power to be of true benefit to others. May it help me overcome difficulties and delusions. May it clear away obstacles. May it bring me love and draw me towards enlightenment.

Traditional Methods for Clearing Obstructive Karma

- 1) **Acquiring Merit**—Performing helpful actions, serving others, spiritual practice, generosity, and keeping your thoughts positive.
 - Giving away food and clothing to the needy, making donations to charity or to those who are doing work for the benefit of others is a time-honored practice for acquiring merit. In the East, it's customary to give away money or food on your birthday.
 - Transforming negative thoughts about yourself and other people into kind and loving thoughts.
 - Noticing negative mental habits and letting them go

- Mentally offering your actions as service, or with the thought that they might be of benefit.
- 2) **Confession** (See the Homework for this week). To confess is to own your own negative actions, traits and mental habit patterns. This can be done with another person, a person whom you trust to hold a loving, sacred, and confidential container. Or, it can be done alone. You can confess out loud to the universe. Or you can invoke the presence of enlightened beings—Christ, Buddha, Kuan Yin or another—and have the feeling that you are confessing in their presence.

Confession is not the same as guilt-tripping yourself. Guilt will tend to lock you into past actions, and actually makes it more difficult to let go of old patterns. Confession brings them out and allows you to let go. Whatever you feel is in your way, that you are ashamed or guilty about, including things that have been done to you, can be confessed. If it is something that goes against your values, let yourself feel remorse. Acknowledge your actions with the thought, “I’m not trying to hide from this. I’m not trying to deny it. I’m not making excuses. This is what happened, this is what I did, said or thought.”

Once you have done this, you can ask forgiveness, using the formula, “I’m sorry, please forgive me, I love you, thank you. Or simply imagine that the universe and the enlightened beings of the universe receive your confession, and allow you to unburden the karmic weight of it.

Feel that once you have confessed, the karmic threads are released—it’s done.

3) **Making Offerings and Asking Forgiveness**

We do this when we feel that there are obstructions in our lives that seem to come from nowhere, or when we feel the need for help or protection from invisible forces.

First, it’s important to recognize that the inner and outer worlds are a whole, and that there are subtle forces and connections between ourselves and many subtle energies in the world. Karmic debts and obligations are one of the main reasons why things are not flowing smoothly in life. We don’t always understand the debts we may have incurred from the past—either in this life, or another. When there are obstructions in our life, when we feel stymied or frustrated, it can be helpful to invoke subtle forces, and mentally ask forgiveness and/or make mental offerings.

This is not a superstitious practice, and we shouldn’t do it in a superstitious way. Essentially it is recognition of the mystery surrounding our destiny, and of the power of positive intentions in the mind. So, if you’ve never done anything like this, I suggest that you experiment with it, and notice the inner and outer effect.

There are two kinds of mental offerings we can make.

One is the offering of asking forgiveness. The other is the mental offering in which we ask for protection from the helpful forces of the universe.

In neither case do we need to know specifically who these might be, although when we have an inner relationship with a teacher, saint, or enlightened being, or a sense

of connection to God or to a deity energy, we can offer and ask for protection from that being.

- **Offerings to obstructive forces or to those in your past to whom you have debt.**

If there is someone specific whom you feel indebted to, invoke that person as we did in the Cord Cutting practice. Otherwise, simply make the offering in a general way.

- Begin by saying, silently or out loud, ‘If there is any being in this universe whom I have offended, I ask forgiveness. I’m sorry. Please forgive me. May all obstructions be removed through this act of asking forgiveness. Thank you.’ You may also do this in a short form “I’m sorry. Please forgive me. I offer you love. Thank you.” (This is the formula from the Hawaiian Healing practice of Ho’oponopono. **Again, it is not necessary to know whom you are asking for forgiveness from. The mere act of asking will help clear the karmas.**)
- **Alternatively, or in addition, imagine that you have a basket of flowers and a basket of jewels close by (or, you can imagine food or something else that is valuable and beautiful)**
- **Offerings to Protective Forces—**
 - **The protective forces are the benign and helpful energies in the universe. You can invoke the protection of the Absolute, of Christ, of Buddha, of any enlightened teacher or saint, past or present. Also recognize that there are unnamed, unknown loving energies in the universe that are literally waiting to shower blessings on you. Very often, we neglect to tune into them, either because we don’t believe in these subtle energies, or aren’t aware that help is available, or because we believe that we should be able to take care of things ourselves.**
 - **Here’s how to do it:**
 - **Begin by invoking the protective power of an individual energy, or simply asking that the protective energies of the universe be present with you.**
 - **Now, imagine that you are offering flowers and jewels made of light to these forces. Feel that they are received. You might also think of something beautiful, or a beautiful place, and mentally offer that.**
 - **Then, ask for help or protection. Say something like, “Please help me to clear the obstructions in this situation or in my life.” Or, “Please help me to _____ in such a way that it will be of benefit to others.”**
 - **Notice the effect on your inner state.**

4) Offering your Actions

The Aspiration Prayer above is a great way to turn your actions into offerings. Essentially, what offering your actions in this way will do is remove the stickiness of motivation that creates attachment to the results of your actions. When you offer actions in this way, you are really asking that the good effects be shared by others. You purify your motivations in a very immediate way. And it is the clarity of our motivation that allows the karmic knots to release. When you're doing this kind of offering, be sure to notice the resistances that arise. And also notice the effect on your inner state of offering your actions as service.