

Arrogance

Lacking awareness (fear and the believe in an inherent I) gets together with the desire to be somebody special, and the aversion, not to be anybody special. That becomes arrogance. Arrogance is therefore not fundamentally different form lacking awareness and attachment, and contains per force, a tendency to anger and jealousy.

People who are arrogant experience inevitably aversion, if somebody questions their importance. If they meet an insult, they get angry. Very often they supress that unpleasant sensation.

If somebody calls them stupid, they get angry if they identify with it. Without arrogance, the words would not be a problem. A clinging to the I, is the starting point of arrogance.

Arrogance identifies with real and imagined qualities, which do not necessarily have to be your own. We can also identify with qualities of family members. For arrogance it does not matter if the quality is there or not. It is enough, if we believe that it is there. It can even be faults that we can be proud of.

A thief can be very proud that he is good at breaking in. A liar can be proud, that everybody believes his lies.

Same goes for faults of others, for ex. “my son beats everybody up that does not agree with him.”

Arrogance always finds something to cling to, even if it is the complete absence of qualities. “I am the worst of all”

Through that we also become somebody very special. If somebody points out, that there are others who are worse, we get angry immediately, a sure sign of arrogance.

7 ways of pride:

1. Arrogance believe that you are very superior to people who are equal. Leads to haughtiness and expresses itself in impertinent aggressive behaviour towards those who are equal. With small spiteful remarks, we try to put them down.

2. Condesenscion, Herablassung, Condesendence a feeling that you are very superior to the ones who are not as good as you. Is accompanied by an attitude of “I have to lower myself to put myself at your level” We are so convinced to be a lot better, that it seems a great favour to even answer them.

A snotty way of talking to them is a clear sign of us being convinced that we are so much better than them, often mixed with contempt for those who have less qualities than us.

3. Disdain, Überheblichkeit, Pretention we feel superior to those who are better than us. Looks down on others who have more skills, expertise, etc.

We do not want to see our faults, nor the qualities of the others. Somebody who knows everything better. If you are new in a group, you do not look for the qualities of the others, you take the lead.

If somebody can not express himself properly, one also takes away all other qualities, (people who do low jobs, have no diplomas, different nationalities, disabled, etc). A feeling of supremacy. It blocks our ability to learn, it is impossible to teach somebody like this.

4. Supremacy, Anmassung, Hauteur, a form of disdain, we take ourselves for just a little inferior to somebody who is way superior. We meet these people and think, “well, I do not have far to go, soon I will be better”

We see the qualities of the other, but do not see the huge difference between us and them. There is no disdain because it is not possible to ignore the qualities of the other.

5. Conceit, Einbildung, Vanité, one thinks that one has more qualities than are actually there. A lack of being connected to reality, that is present in all forms of pride. The difference here is, that one does not need others to compare. Just the view of oneself. We can be proud without the others. I can live totally alone on an island, and still think that I have enormous qualities, like I am very courageous, compassionate, patient, etc. There is no limit to that. As long as my imaginary qualities are not put to a test, I can continue to believe in it.

6. Pride that has gone totally wrong, völlig in die Irre gehender Stolz, l’orgueil qui va totalment dans le mauvais sense. We think to have qualities on a level, where we have absolutely none, or are proud about faults that we have. I think I am generous, but never give anything, I think I am compassionate, but am not interested in others.

I believe that I am open to criticism, but never ask for it, or get defensive if it comes, I think that I am great listener, but never listen.

Or to be proud about your success, even though you created a lot of negativities getting there. These people are very selfish, and look upon this as a quality. Hiding behind a BCH motivation.

Or very violent pacifists, constantly at war with the ones who have different opinions.

Such moments of pride befall us from time to time, when we are proud and happy to have tricked somebody in believing our lie, or used our intelligence to put somebody down, or humiliate them.

7. Smugness, egomania, Selbstgefälligkeit, Eitelkeit, la gloriole, la suffisance; in connection with the assumption that these 5 aggregates are the I. We identify with them, with our looks, and our mental abilities. We look at ourselves in the mirror, and do not see the reality of the body, of flesh, bones, organs, etc, but think: “wow, I am so beautiful”.

We find a lot of joy in our beautiful voice, our intelligence, show them off. We think of these things as having acquired them ourselves.

Then it becomes terrible, if our beauty fails, the memory lessens, the voice gets brittle. One will put a lot of effort into turning the wheel of time backward. Without success.

We have to be careful, not to identify with qualities that will fail us with time. It is so important, to find access to basic goodness and qualities of our mind, being human, and to put our self-worth on that, without pride.

if we recognize that these qualities do not belong to anybody, and are shared by all humans, then there is not need to be proud about them.

Other aspects: Pride can protect us from the trifle affairs of this life, we do not get so upset anymore, we are very high up, the world down there. It gives us a certain stability, as we are only concentrated on ourselves, and find our self-confidence there. Can give us a deceptive security when dealing with others. When this gets shaky, then all this starts to shake.

Real proud people do not care about the opinion of others, the only thing that counts is my view. It is a armour that protects, but also limits. When it collapses, the person collapses.

Pride gives us a feeling of richness and fullness, but from time to time, doubts arise. They are seen as failure and very often then ignored. Pride rejects the inner work. It can not accept help, the ideas have to be my own, only then, they can be valid and good.

You cannot tell anything to a proud person, they like to surround themselves with people who look up to them, and are obeying. They never question themselves, a few qualities are enough for them to build the tower. They do not want to look deep, as there lurks the doubt and that creates fear.

The ability to see one's own weaknesses is lacking. Pride collapses, when we see our faults. And that is the best antidote to pride, to see and being able to admit one's own faults, dissolves the pride.

A proud person has contact to people who are his audience. They are only there to applaud and to tell him, how wonderful he is. If they stop doing that, then they do not belong to the inner circle anymore.

These contacts are divided into the ones who admire, the ones who can be useful for the future, and potential enemies, who can undermine their position.

For a proud person, there are two things of interest. To avoid defeat, criticism, and degradation, and to get victory, praise, fame and approval. These two interests direct his life. Of course, there are people who are bosses and people who are indeed better than me. Then there is the question, do I have to pay them respect, because at the moment he is better than me, or can I throw him already now in the category of the ones below me. As a proud person, I will see how I have to approach my seniors, and then overtake them. First, I have to become like them, then I can overtake them when the occasion arises.

A proud person has friends, but he is not open towards them, he will use them for his goals. If they are not useful any more, he will get rid of them, in order to be able to climb up higher. They become some cumbersome burden, because maybe they can not climb as fast as I can, they will not be so renowned, not as liked as I. Somebody like this cannot have real friends on the same level as he is.

A relationship with a flowing exchange is unknown to a proud person. One of the characteristics is loneliness.

If you can not find friends, you have to ask yourself if it could be a problem with pride.

There might be moments of longing for friends, but because of his denigrating behaviour, nobody wants to get into close relationship with him.

Together with pride is exaggeration. Small actions get blown up, actions of others get forgotten. Stories all have the same flavour of how wonderful I am.

This exaggeration can be an antidote to pride. We can exaggerate so much, that it becomes absurd, and then everything gets released into freeing laughter.

Pride is the biggest hindrance on the spiritual path. It closes the door for blessings and the help of the teachers. It closes the door to for other beings and compassion.

At first it is a pleasant feeling, makes us feel good about ourselves, but we can not make progress. It takes a long time until pride becomes so uncomfortable, that we want to get rid of it.

To work with pride means to come down from a cosy place into the unpleasant world of inadequacy and needs.

When pride collapses it is a painful awakening. We see our faults, and have to admit, that we are ordinary like everybody else. Maybe even worse. We fall from the god realms back unto the earth. But without that, nothing will change. Later on, we will feel better without the burden of the identification.

All of a sudden, we will find friends that we can laugh with, because we do not have to protect our self- image any more.

Pride is the last emotion that dissolves on the path to awakening. The reason, the remaining self concerned patterns will try for a long time to nourish themselves on the growing qualities.

To dissolve pride, when we have little qualities is already difficult, but when we have big ones, then it will not get easier, as it seems that we have real reason to be proud.

We can become very proud about how well the practice works, we do not get angry any more, can meditate for hours, are very disciplined, etc. A real good practitioner.

What helps is the devotion and to open up for the blessings. And to see that these qualities are not coming from my own doing, but are an expression of the natural existence, when I is not standing in the way any more.

3 keys, simplicity, devotion, friendship

Simplicity: means, to have the courage to be who we are. Not to hide. As long as I am always trying to be the best, things become very complicated.

At the moment, I am not giving my best without any agenda, but I want to go to the top. Criticism I reject without really listening, it is difficult to teach me something, well meant advice is meeting with defence. On the other hand, it is easy for me to see the faults in others:

To be simple means giving up this complicated self-defence, to have the courage not to be anybody special. Just normal, with all the natural qualities. To be simple, makes us flexible, we can also from time to time leave the place in the sun to others. I become very flexible, to serve or to lead, whatever the situation needs right now. I can be led, and I am ready to lead, but to step down, when needed. Even though I was very rigid before, now with this simplicity I can flow with the situation, I can go along with others.

Devotion: a form of heart opening, to trust somebodies who knows the path better than us, to allow to be led. The remedy for pride. When I admit that I need help, then pride diminishes. With the need to be led, and to receive help, allows us to see the qualities in others.

When pride dissolves, we still continue to develop qualities, and we notice that they can not come out of self-identification. We recognize that these qualities come out of Buddha Nature, and are grateful, that these outer helpers have shown us the path of our inner Buddha. It has nothing to do with blown up self-worth.

In the understanding that the qualities can flow better if we are not entangled in this self-identification, is something that frees us. We do not have to produce anything, in the measure that the identification dissolves, in that measure, our qualities appear. They are an expression of the nature of the mind, we do not have to do anything, just allow them to be there, with devotion.

Devotion is the humility not to stand in the way of goodness. I am whatever I need to be right now. Like in Shantidevas 2. chapter. To be a bridge, a boat, etc. To be exactly what beings need. This is humility, without a fixed opinion I serve and help, whenever I can. If we are simple and natural, we are also humble and modest. When we listen to the needs of the situation and follow BCH, then pride has no chance.

Friendship: friends meet on an equal level, can exchange on that level, and meet in a natural way. To meet others on the same human level, is a perfect remedy for pride. It means we show our own weaknesses, that I do have problems, and do not stand above everything.

5 steps, pause, antidotes, change perspective, release into it's nature, taking it as a path

1.) Pause: and refuse the cooperation with pride. We relax the tendency to boast, we do not give in to its temptations.

To be able to do that, first we have to be aware that there is pride in our thoughts and behaviour. Very often it is very seducing. Our face is beaming with self-confidence and wellbeing. The conversation flows effortlessly.

That is the moment to check for pride. We stop our exaggeration in the stories, stop to point out our qualities. A very clear decision to be "normal".

This decision is preceded by an understanding how devastating the effects of pride can become. Pausing gives us the possibility to go into a different direction. We find the joy to be somebody normal.

In order to work with pride, we have to notice, when we get artificial. We add, in order to show others how wonderful we are. We play a role. We relax into that and let the mask fall. Behind that are very often feelings of loneliness, insecurity, fear, neediness, and at all costs, others should not notice this.

We can learn to live with these very common feelings, without making a big deal out of them. Then we can meet people in an open and honest way. Superman and superwoman are fiction. We become normal human beings, and it is now that we can also develop compassion, and experience joy and lightness.

Basically proud people are quite stiff, even if they are great animators, and make everybody laugh.

2.) Use helpful antidotes: Here we welcome everything that will help us to get into a compassionate sensitive being.

Taking refuge, to connect with and put ourselves under the guidance of the awakened ones. We admit that we need help. Recognizing that, is already a step away from pride. Story with the princess Theresa in the forest

Tong Len, if I recognize that I need help, I can see that others do too. Then an open connection can be created, coming from our open heart. **Not about you**

Tong Len is never practiced out of pride, it develops its strength in modesty. In Tong Len, I am not the great BS, who liberates all beings from their suffering, but a human, with all his

problems and weaknesses, that recognizes that others go through the same. He is now ready to share his problems and difficulties, and to support others with love and joy.

More important than applying methods is to see hidden pride. It hides behind artificial humility, low self-esteem, fear of failing, stage-fright.

I am aware, of the separating, emotionally protecting, and very self-centred attitude, that always accompanies pride. We admit to ourselves and to others that there is pride, do not hide anymore, and try to understand the deeper level of it.

We train in serving others, to act in a kind way, giving them small gifts. We learn to value others in a deep way.

A good antidote: **awareness of own shortcomings**, to see that we have no reason to be proud, and all our so called good qualities are totally worldly. We are not able to liberate ourselves, forget about others, from Samsara.

How many of our qualities help us in a crisis, getting older, sickness, pandemic, fear, loneliness, having relationship problems?

Real qualities are not of our own making, but an expression of the nature of your mind. And also learned from others, or genetically inherited from our parents.

These real qualities manifest, when we let go, not when we are self-concerned.

It also helps to see that we are replaceable. What will our friends remember when we are gone or dead? Our achievements or our humanness?

We need the sting of healthy shame, to find a new and open attitude.

If the body is the source for pride, good to contemplate its nature, and to see how the attractiveness will fall apart.

We will develop the courage to show our fears and weaknesses, we admit to ourselves our longing to be loved and appreciated, to see how we depend on others. Learn how to accept criticism, do not avoid difficult situations any more and develop a healthy self-worth, trusting our qualities that are actually there.

We become flexible in our roles sometimes at the top, sometimes below or at the bottom. Joy develops, to see others more important than ourselves, to let them be the centre of attention, and we experience a feeling of us, instead of me and them.

What will be helpful, to see the qualities in our parents, teachers, relatives, friends, co-workers, with putting emphasis on the equanimity of us all, concerning buddhanature.

Specific Buddhist practices for pride: prostrations, refuge, praises, Bodhichitta contemplations, Tong Len, Guru Yoga, Chöd. Actually, all dharma practice, done in an honest way, lead to dissolution of pride.

3.) Exchanging proud view into experience of equanimity: we continue to see that all beings are equally important and valuable. All want happiness and nobody wants to suffer. Our mind functions in the same way and so do our bodies. We have the same emotions, the same problems and challenges, joys, with small differences that come from cultures and backgrounds.

We do not need to deny our qualities, but we put them at the service of others. Instead of thinking, how will it help me, we think, how can it help the situation. A radical change. Without making too much fuzz, to contribute to the wellbeing of this world. A good remedy for pride. But pay attention, it can creep in again through the backdoor. I am not here to become the most compassionate saviour of the world, but just to give my best in all simplicity.

Pride can not be dissolved just by changing behaviour, but it is the first step, and is necessary.

Again and again, we call upon the spirit of serving, devotion and compassion, and distance ourselves from our proud thoughts. Change will start to happen, when we do not take ourselves so seriously any more, and we can laugh about our shortcomings and mistakes. We become more and more natural, and we can connect with others in a simple way.

What better gift can you make?

Thoughts of pride can arise by helping a dharma group, thinking, wow, they are really lucky to have me.

If we think like this, we totally forget, how much guidance we have received from many people in order to be where we are. If we become aware how much support and care we got, then gratitude comes up. Then a natural wish to share arises. Understanding how dependant we are on people and nature.

Another way would be to develop divine pride. Based on the basic qualities of the mind, totally free of any clinging to a seeming self-existent self. This vajra pride is indestructible, and not exposed to any emotional fluctuations. There is no faltering and hesitation, it is total self-confidence, free from any belief in an autonomous, self-existent permanent, separate I. An unshakable confidence in our natural self. A dimension that is the same for all of us. Without a centre, a possessor, free, flowing being, without a middle. That is why there is no fear.

The centre, if you want to call it like that, is Bodhichitta without any splitting of the reality into I and others. It expresses itself in spontaneous action for the benefit of the whole situation.

4.) Liberating pride into it's true nature: Look deep into arrogance, directly seeing the proud I-thoughts. But how to look into an emotion? We need mindfulness to be aware of the emotion, in this case, arrogance. In this experience of arrogance there seems to be a centre, where the emotion seems to be, very compact and solid and concrete. Exactly into that I you have to look. **This feeling could be localized in the body, in the heart, head, belly, or it seems to be in a mental space, or in the centre of the thoughts, that are not localized. We just go into where we feel it the most, and see what happens.**

5. Taking pride as a path: this is possible when pride has been liberated into its nature. From then on, we can on purpose manipulate ourselves into situations where arrogance gets stimulated. Where a lot of people can see my skills, or when my shortcomings are totally not noticeable. The moment arrogance arises, we look deep into it. This is probably something that we will have to do for the rest of our lives. It will not help to avoid situations where we are at our best, and our arrogance gets nourished. Like this, arrogance will never be dissolved. It is better to work directly with it than to avoid it, and that goes for all negative emotions.

We let arrogance consciously arise, in order to, every time see its empty, dreamlike nature, where the self-concern dissolves. The more moments of arrogance, the better we get at it. What takes the breeding ground away, is to see the nature of the subject, the I that is proud.

When we see that this I does not really exist, that this thinker, this observer is empty, meaning, does not have an essence that could be called I, then we know, that all the qualities that pride does identify with, does not belong to anybody. They are spontaneously there and active, and do not have an essence either. This realization will cut the root of pride.

Pride is very difficult to dissolve, and might be active, until up to the 8th Bodhisattva level. That is why we should not neglect it.

We have to be careful, not to become dogmatic, closed minded, and to think that we belong to an elite that owns all the wisdom. If we do that, then the practice is mixed with arrogance and jealousy, and has nothing to do with real dharma.

To see this, one has to become aware to one's own pride, and with openness and awareness get at it. That is the real discipline, by which our practice gets deeper, day by day. If we do not notice our arrogance, we get more and more tense and get angry very easily when in contact with others. This anger can even be directed against the teacher or the practice itself.