



Living With a Rebel Within, by Dzogchen Ponlop

Your true mind is a mind of joy, free from all suffering. That is who you really are. That is the true nature of your mind and the mind of everyone. But your mind doesn't just sit there being perfect, doing nothing. It's at play all the time, creating your world.Â

If this is true, then why isn't your life, and the whole world, perfect? Why aren't you happy all the time? How could you be laughing one minute and in despair the next? And why would "awakened" people argue, fight, lie, cheat, steal, and go to war? The reason is that, even though the awakened state is the true nature of the mind, most of us don't see it. Why? Something is in the way. Something is blocking our view of it. Sure, we see bits of it here and there. But the moment we see it, something else pops into our mind -- "What time is it? Is it time for lunch? Oh, look, a butterfly!" -- and our insight is gone.

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This busy mind is who you think you are. It is easier to see, like the face of the person standing right in front of you. For example, the thought you're thinking right now is more obvious to you than your awareness of that thought. When you get angry, you pay more attention to what you're angry about than to the actual source of your anger, where your anger is coming from. In other words, you notice what your mind is doing, but you don't see the mind itself. You identify yourself with the contents of this busy mind -- your thoughts, emotions, ideas -- and end up thinking that all of this stuff is "me" and "how I am."

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When you do that, it's like being asleep and dreaming and believing that your dream images are true. [...]

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On the one hand, we're used to our sleep and content with its dreams; on the other hand, our wakeful self is always shaking us up and turning on the lights, so to speak. This wakeful self, the true mind that is awake, wants out of the confines of sleep, out of illusion-like reality. While we're locked away in our dream, it sees the potential for freedom. So it provokes, arouses, prods and instigates until we're inspired to take action. You could say we are living with a rebel within.

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--Dzogchen Ponlop, from "Rebel Buddha"