9-16-2018 EBMC half-day for committed practitioners

Fabulous Fake Buddha Quotes vs. Real

See [www.fakebuddhaquotes.com](http://www.fakebuddhaquotes.com) Bodhipaksa’s book is coming out soon: *I Can’t Believe It’s Not Buddha! – What Fake Buddha Quotes Can Teach Us about Buddhism*

For lots of real quotes, go to www.accesstoinsight.org

Fake Buddha Quotes

Teach this triple truth to all: A generous heart, kind speech, and a life of service and compassion are the things that renew humanity.

Source: Marianne Marquez’s [*Why the Buddha Smiled*](http://www.thebuddhasmiled.com/)

Commentary: The language of “renewing humanity” is just way off, and “life of service and compassion” is too contemporary for this to be a canonical quotation.

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What is the difference between “I like you” [and] “I love you”? Beautifully answered by Buddha. Buddha’s answer was so simple. When you like a flower, you just pluck it. But when you love a flower, you water it daily. One who understand this, understands life…  
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It would be true to say that loving kindness and compassion is all of our practice.

Commentary: Loving kindness (metta) and compassion (karuna) are two of the four Brahmaviharas.

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You can search throughout the entire universe for someone who is more deserving of your love and affection than you are yourself, and that person is not to be found anywhere. You yourself, as much as anybody in the entire universe deserve your love and affection.

Commentary: I think Jake (who sent Bodhipaksa the quote) was right to sense that something was “off” about this. In the Buddha’s teachings, that one has lovingkindness for oneself is taken as read, and the emphasis is on extending our concern to others. The first signs of this quote that I found in print are in two books that were published at about the same in early 2001: John Amodeo’s The Authentic Heart, which is “An Eightfold Path to Midlife Love,” and Laura Doyle’s The Surrendered Wife: A Practical Guide for Finding Intimacy, Passion, and Peace with a Man.

I’m getting a little off-topic here, but I learned that The Surrendered Wife “is a step-by-step guide that teaches women how to give up unnecessary control and responsibility, resist the temptation to criticize, belittle, or dismiss their husbands, and to trust their husbands in every aspect of marriage — from sexual to financial.” I’d buy my wife a copy, but she’d probably hit me with it.

Anyway, given that these books were published more or less simultaneously, it seemed reasonable to assume that there was an original precursor. With a little digging around I found that Sharon Salzberg included essentially the same quote in an article in a magazine called “Woman of Power.” My only source for this is Google Books, which doesn’t show me the entire quote, or an exact date for the edition the article appeared in, but it was likely the early 1980s.

The original would seem to be in the Udana of the Pali canon, where we read, in B[hikkhu Thanissaro’s translation](http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/kn/ud/ud.5.01.than.html),

Searching all directions  
with one’s awareness,  
one finds no one dearer  
than oneself.  
In the same way, others  
are dear to themselves.  
So one should not hurt others  
if one loves oneself.

So the purpose of the original is to emphasize having lovingkindness towards others, not towards ourselves. The import of the Salzberg version has been reversed, to suggest that because others deserve love, so too do we. We of course should have lovingkindness towards ourselves, so there’s no argument with the message — it’s just that that’s not what the quotation says.

The altered quotation is interesting, though, because it points to a need for self-metta that seems to be predominantly or largely a western problem. When Sharon Salzberg asked the Dalai Lama a question about self-hatred he was totally baffled. It had never crossed his mind before that someone might hate themselves! So I can see the reason for why this quote has been altered.

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If you are quiet enough, you will hear the flow of the universe. You will feel its rhythm. Go with this flow. Happiness lies ahead. Meditation is key.

Commentary: [Source is unknown] The Buddha did not use metaphors like “the flow of the universe.” He didn’t tell us to go with the flow. He did however talk about streams and rivers in a metaphorical way. Here’s a lovely [example](http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/kn/snp/snp.3.11.than.html):

Know from the rivers  
in clefts and in crevices:  
those in small channels flow noisily,  
the great flow silent.  
Whatever’s not full makes noise.  
Whatever is full is quiet.

[This next one](http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/kn/snp/snp.5.01.irel.html) is less appealing to our modern sensibilities:

*Whatever streams are in the world, it is mindfulness that obstructs them and restricts them, and by wisdom they are cut off.*

The “streams” here are the currents of craving that flow in the mind. It’s as if we’re swept along by these streams:

*The misguided man in whom the thirty-six currents of craving strongly rush toward pleasurable objects, is swept away by the flood of his passionate thoughts.*

That one’s from the Dhammapada, [verse 339](http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/kn/dhp/dhp.24.budd.html#dhp-339).

The 36 streams are three types of craving (for experiences to happen, to continue, and to end) combined with the six sense-channels through which the cravings flow (mind being the sixth sense).

Accordingly, the first level of realization is the “stream-winner” (sota-panna), who has broken through the fetters of 1) belief in a separate and permanent self, 2) of doubt in the attainment of awakening, and 3) of using spiritual practices as a way to avoid realization.

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Someone asked the Buddha, “Are you a god? A teacher? A healer?” The Buddha said no to all of these. The person asked, “Then what are you?” The Buddha answered: “I am awake.”

Commentary: The fake quote refers to the (real) Dona Sutta in which… The Buddha not only denies that he is a divine being, but he says in effect that he is indefinable. He’s not even definable as a human being.

The āsavas are the basis of our clinging and of, therefore, our self-view, which is just one particular form of clinging. The Buddha has no clinging, because the āsavas have been destroyed. Therefore the Buddha does not identify anything (body, mind, etc.) as being “his self.” The Buddha lacks any theory of or idea about his own self, and lives without reference to a self. He doesn’t define himself. In fact it’s because he’s a Buddha that he doesn’t define himself. And so, the Buddha is essentially undefinable. Those of us who are not Buddhas can certainly try to pigeonhole him into one of the categories we use, but these categories don’t match up with how the Buddha sees himself, which is certainly not in terms of any of those categories, or indeed in terms of any category we could imagine. The Buddha’s view of himself is — and I step out of traditional language here — a direct perception of an indefinable “flow” or “process.” This process is not perceived as being separate from the world, or as being part of a “oneness” with the world.