

Role of the teacher in RM

It may be helpful to read over some of our writing on the role of the RM teacher as I think this is related to the way we give dharma talks in our approach. I have also included some description from another teacher that fits with our approach.

The Meditation Teacher's Role - Sati Sangha

The meditation teacher's role is to assist you in becoming receptive to your meditation experience and to participate with you in its exploration. It is not to edit your journaling, give advice, judge your experience, assert direction or offer therapy. By listening to you talk about your experience, we are learning the particular language you use to describe inner states which often elude easy description. Support can be needed to help you go into unfamiliar territory, to question patterns and assumptions and to discover value in states which are often overlooked or disregarded. Modeling a type of gentle, curious, and flexible listening and inquiry helps you pick up ways of being around your own internal dialogues and narratives, while assisting you to continue this process on your own. We are not an authority on your experience. You may consider us as a friend and mentor with our knowledge base coming from our own study and training in this approach to meditation and our own meditation experience.

Working with a Teacher - PSS

Working with a teacher is important. We usually look to a teacher to give us directions and tell us what is the right way, and by inference, what is the wrong way, to meditate. This approach is more individualized; we learn how to meditate from looking into our meditative experiences and seeing what actually is going on. In this way we become better able to discern the positive qualities that are developing in our meditation and the obstacles that are blocking us. Working with a teacher stimulates this inquiry. We recommend an ongoing relationship with a teacher as the best way to learn and develop within this meditation approach.

Lodro Rinzler: <https://www.lodrorinzler.com/>

“The role of a meditation teacher is not the role of a fully enlightened Buddha. It is someone who is trying (really hard) to wake up and has been doing the practice long enough that they can share both from their wisdom and their mistakes. Whether it's going through a break up or experiencing tragedy, it's important a teacher speak from the scar of their experience, not the wound.

If you just broke up with your spouse, that's not the time to give a talk on heartbreak! It's too fresh! You'll only end up in a situation where you're asking students to hold space for you. When we are doing the healing work we need to do as humans, we can't teach others how to do it too. We're still learning.”

The discernment of an enlightened teacher, then, isn't to know everything; it's to know what they know and where they are speaking from—to use their embodied judgment to teach from the places that they can offer the most wisdom.

To be clear, this is not about asking teachers to try to somehow never be wounded, or to always avoid the places where they've been hurt before. And this is definitely not to say that people who have experienced trauma, trials, or great tribulation in their life should not be teachers. Not at all! When we have endured, and then healed, from a painful experience, we have the capacity to become excellent teachers of that heartache.