

Life is an Echo
Carol Valentine

Please put your hands together. Listen again to the words of the Golden Chain:

**"I will try to think pure and beautiful thoughts,
To say pure and beautiful words,
And to do pure and beautiful deeds,
knowing that on what I do now, depends
not only my happiness or unhappiness
but also that of others."**

Namo Amida Butsu

By now everyone probably knows of my love for YouTube. I find wonderful resources for Dharma talks on YouTube, both in Dharma messages presented by other speakers and videos which show aspects of Buddhism. Today's Dharma message is based on two videos I found which are entertaining and educational and share the Buddhist idea of interconnectedness, that Life is an Echo.

We know from listening to the words of the Buddha that we are all interconnected, that what we do affects not only ourselves but also many other people, perhaps people we don't even know. Being interconnected means that what we do sets the world in motion and brings back to us what we send out. That is why I call this talk "Life is an Echo." An echo comes back at us exactly as we send it out; it doesn't change the words, it doesn't add paragraphs, it doesn't change meaning; it simply duplicates what is sent out. I know it is a rather simplistic way to think of the way interconnectedness, or karma, works but it does make sense. If what we send out comes back to us in the same way, doesn't it make sense to send out good thoughts, to say gracious words and to act with others in mind, as if it was happening to you?

In this interconnected life of ours, what goes around comes around, just like an echo. When we act, we are actually telling the world what we want in return. Unlike an echo, however, we know that life doesn't come back at us immediately. In fact we may never know the impact. It may come many years later or we may never see it happen. But it does happen, we know that. The Buddha has told us that over 2,000 years ago and now science has proven that to be correct, that we are all interconnected.

I found the following video, as usual, on YouTube. It shows the concept of "Pay it Forward", of simply doing good. Sometimes it comes back to you in ways you never knew possible. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ovj5dzMxzmc>

"A simple act of kindness creates an endless ripple that comes back to you." That is truly interconnectedness.

A few years ago Wayne & I were on an East Coast tour which stopped in New York City. We were fortunate enough to get tickets to the Broadway production of the musical "Wicked." This musical is loosely based on the story of "The Wizard of Oz", with Glinda (the "Good Witch") and Elphaba (the "Wicked, but really just misunderstood" Witch). As I was enjoying the production I was moved to tears by a song call "For Good." The words of the song reflect the theme of "Life is an Echo", how other people can touch our lives and how we touch the lives of others, often while we are unaware of our affect.

Please enjoy this song from "Wicked" entitled "For Good."

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2fR4JotwwWo>

As we know, life is an echo. What we send out we also receive back from the world. The Buddha taught us that wonderful concept. What are you sending out? What do you want back? Love or Resentment? Friendship or Hatred? Are you searching for happiness or discontent? We all have choices to make as we move through this world. We affect people beyond ourselves and beyond our families. So do everything with good intentions. As we leave a handprint on the heart of those we touch, let's be sure the handprint is gentle and warm.

One more final thought . . . Selma. If you have watched the news at all this week, you have heard about the history of the march in Selma Alabama in 1965, 50 years ago, as part of the Selma Voting Rights Movement which led to the passage in the same year of the Federal Voting Rights Act. Because of Martin Luther King, the marches were peaceful and non-violent, even though the marchers were beaten, tear gassed, fired on by water hoses and attacked by K-9 dogs. It was the picture of the peaceful marchers being beaten with no provocation that captured the national conscience . . . finally. What do you think might have happened if the marchers had fought back, meeting violence with more violence. We'll never know but I suspect the national thoughts might have been different. The marchers sent out a message of peace and thousands of people joined them in peaceful protest. More examples of the echoes of life.

Please put your hands together for these words of the Buddha:

**Whatever words we utter should be chosen with care
for people will hear them and be influenced by them
for good or ill.**