

#1. Gen-la Kelsang Dekyong has been a loved and respected Dharma teacher for over 20 years and her teachings always touch the hearts of listeners. In her presentation she asked very humorous questions about finding the perfect new house, job, mate, or city. When we find the perfect house, job, mate or city, did we not notice the people who were giving up those very same things because they were not happy with them?

Her message was very powerful, yet delivered in such a gentle way. Her talk focused on the first 3 paragraphs of a new book written by Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, called Modern Buddhism. The book describes how the modern world has witnessed remarkable technological progress, yet there hasn't been a corresponding increase in happiness. There are so many books written on Buddhist philosophy, describing how to achieve contentment and peace of mind. So what this tells us is happiness does not lie in knowledge. Happiness and suffering are states that are created by the mind, and do not exist outside of the mind. To be truly happy we must learn to control our own mind. If we can establish happiness in ourselves, we will always have it regardless of where we are and the circumstances we find ourselves in. With practice we can create a sense of well being that is not dependant on any external conditions. We can't leave happiness up to chance, we must do something about it and work towards developing compassion and wisdom, which only comes from the practice of sitting. True happiness can not be found, but it can be developed, by loving others without an ulterior motive, and developing acceptance of all beings and most especially ourselves.

She also asked another important question. How do we transform difficult people? By loving them. If we only knew how much suffering they have, we would be more kind and compassionate. Listen with a mind of love and compassion. And may we all be examples to others by our way of being. With practice, we can view all difficult people and situations as teachers.

It was a great evening, and I for one left with a warm heart and a smile on my face. DP

#2. Gen-la Kelsang Dekyong opened her presentation with a short Black and White meditation. Under her guidance, we breathed out negativities in the form of black smoke and breathed in white light that dissolved in our hearts.

Gen-la Dekyong's voice was soft and gentle. She talked about the problems of modern life, such as how we may not like the people we work with and then change jobs only to find that

the same people are there too, only with different names and faces. Or how we think that our spouses are perfect when we marry them, but then we find their faults and may think about changing them too. We might also have a back that hurts.

In reality, our minds cause our suffering, not the circumstances of our lives. The way to decrease our suffering, right now, is to apply Buddhist principles of kindness and compassion.

To help us in this endeavour, she recommended a free ebook - Modern Buddhism – The Path of Compassion and Wisdom written by Geshe Kelsang Gyatso. It is available at:  
[www.emodernbuddhism.com](http://www.emodernbuddhism.com)

She suggested that we could read this book even on the C-train in the morning to gain useful tips and have a happier day in the workplace.

At the end of the evening, she complimented the audience for our attention, saying how difficult it is in our world to really listen, often with the sound of music or television in the background.

I left the theatre feeling peaceful and happy and with appreciation for the kindness I felt even in Gen-la Dekyong's voice.

In Calgary, Gen Kelsang Dema, the resident teacher, offers courses and publications at the Akshobya Kadampa Buddhist Centre located at 2120 Kensington Road N.W. SG