

Effort and Relaxation

Sometimes you need to put a lot of effort into practice and sometimes you need to take it easy, so both are important. Beginners need to put in effort, in the middle you relax a bit, and at the end you are perfectly relaxed. But again, if you are too attached to relaxation, then you become tight. So do not be attached to relaxation, either.

It is just like when you first learn to drive a car. When you first learn to drive a car, you are very, very conscientious. You have to be, otherwise you will not know what to do. Once you have learned how to drive, you can be relaxed and drive naturally. But if you are too relaxed while driving a car, that can be a problem too. That is why the meditation instructions are: “Let go and relax, and straighten up and be alert.” So, it has both qualities. The same two notions can be found in the three classic Mahamudra instructions, which are: No distraction, no meditation, let go and relax. Relax but do not be attached to relaxation. It is like that.

—From a teaching given at Vajra Vidya Thrangu House, Oxford, United Kingdom, 2000. Translated by Ari Goldfield.