

Only Don't Know

**Selected Teaching Letters of Zen Master Seung Sahn. Revised Ed.
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Here is the inimitable Zen Master Seung Sahn in action — in letters to students taken from the correspondence that is one of his primary modes of instruction. In his thirty years of teaching Zen in the West, he responded by mail to literally thousands of students' questions about Zen practice — and also about family, life, work, and relationships — applying wisdom, compassion, and his limitless energy to each interaction. Whether illuminating koans, consoling the bereaved, or advising would-be monks, Zen Master Seung Sahn always offers advice that cuts through preconceived notions and offers the truth for each situation, uncomplicated and beautiful.

An Extract from "Only Don't Know"

BY ZEN MASTER SEUNG SAHN

You talk about your family and your wedding.

You and Peter are already strong Zen students. But Zen mind is not Zen mind. That is, if you are attached to Zen mind, then you have a problem, and your way is very narrow. Throwing away Zen mind is correct Zen mind. Only keep the question, "What is the best way of helping other people?" If your wedding is only for you, then you are holding onto your idea, in the same way that your mother holds onto her idea. But if you keep the mind, "My wedding is only for all people", then this mind is already beyond time and space, life and death, good and bad, likes and dislikes.

Your parents want a justice-of-the-peace ceremony in late March. It doesn't matter whether this occurs before or after the Buddhist ceremony. What is most important? Moment to moment, how do you keep just-now mind? That is most important. If you keep just-now mind, then you can keep your correct situation, and help other people moment to moment. This is called great love, great compassion, and the great bodhisattva way.

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