

## *Medicine for the Mind*

*November 11, 2011*

Close your eyes and breathe comfortably all the way through the body.

As you practice the Dhamma, whether it's being generous or observing the precepts or meditating focusing on the breath, it's medicine, both for the body and for the mind.

Particularly with the breath: As you breathe in, you can soothe the different parts of the body wherever there's tension, wherever there's pain. You can breathe in a way that helps the energy lessen the pain, reduce the tension, help the blood and energy flow in the body go a lot better.

Our minds are scarred. Our minds are wounded by things that happen, things that happened to us from the outside and also from our own greed, aversion, and delusion: Those leave scars as well. So you have to find some way of putting some medicine on the scars.

Breathe in a way that's soothing, think about things that give rise to a sense of well-being in the mind. Think about how honorable it is to be generous and to be virtuous, how wise it is to be training the mind.

There are so many crazy ways people can look for happiness out there in the world and they're harmful, both for the people who are searching for happiness in that way and for the people around them.

Whereas this way of searching for happiness is not harmful at all. It's actually healing for you and for the people around you. When you can bring the mind more under control, it means that other people are less subject to your changes in mood. And you're suffering less as well.

So think of this as medicine for the mind. You need a good dose of Dhamma every day: breathing well, thinking about the Buddha, thinking about the Dhamma, the Sangha, about what's really important in life.

The world out there is telling you lots of other things are important that make you run after what little rewards they give you. But it's basically in their interests. It's not in your interest to go running around like that.

So you want to do something that really is for your own well-being. And looking for your well-being in this way doesn't create any divisions. If you look for well-being in terms of material gain, or in terms of status, or in terms of praise, when you gain those things it means that somebody else has to lose them, which creates divisions.

But if you gain in generosity, gain in virtue, gain in the sense of well-being that

comes as you train the mind, nobody loses at all. Everybody gains. So this a kind of search for happiness that leads to unity, leads to harmony, unlike the happiness that leads to divisions, as we see so much around us right now.

So you have to make your choice. This is the wise choice as you know: to search for a happiness that's harmless, a happiness that goes deep down inside, and cures all the illnesses of the mind. At the same time, some of the illnesses of the body get cured as well. But that's not the big issue. The big issue is the illnesses in the mind. Once those are cured, then there's no suffering. Even though the body may grow ill, may be in pain, even when it dies, if the mind has a state of inner well-being it's not going to be affected by these things.

So always keep this in mind, that this is the way you want to find happiness. At the same time, it's a way of healing all the scars from events from outside, all the scars from your own greed, aversion and delusion.

It's really genuine medicine for the mind. It really works. It's worked for 2,500 years and it's worked for more than that actually: with the many, many Buddhas there have been in the past, and it's the same medicine that's going to be prescribed by Buddhas in the future.

So make sure you make the most of it while you've got the opportunity.