

Sitting with an Uncomfortable Mind

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An important part of the meditation is those first steps we take in spreading goodwill: goodwill for yourself, goodwill for other people.

You spread goodwill for yourself to remind yourself why you're here meditating. You want to find a happiness that's true, you want to find a happiness that's reliable.

So you have to look inside. And you have to deal with whatever issues come up when you're looking inside, because if you don't deal with them, nobody else can deal with them for you.

Maybe they can put a helmet on your head to calm the mind down. But as soon as the helmet goes off, then you're back to where you were before and you don't understand anything. Which is why you have to look inside and do it yourself so that you can understand what's going on: what's causing the stress and suffering in your mind and what you can do to put an end to it.

We also spread thoughts of goodwill to others. In fact, *all* others. That's so that we can learn how to trust ourselves in another way. We want to make sure our happiness doesn't harm anybody. We're not going to look for happiness in any way that's going to damage anybody else. If you have limits on your goodwill, it means there are limits on how far you can trust yourself, because the people for whom you can't feel goodwill are the ones that you could probably damage, you could probably mistreat very easily.

So it's important to get your motivation straight. We're looking for a harmless happiness, a happiness that doesn't harm ourselves, a happiness that doesn't harm anybody else. That's why we're here.

This helps to remind you, as you're meditating, that what you're doing here is not harming anybody. Even the times when it feels frustrating and you say, "Oh, maybe today's not a good day to meditate. I'd better do something else": Don't think that way. The fact that you're meditating means you're doing something good right there. At the very least, you're avoiding harm. And you have an opportunity to watch the mind that's not settled down.

Stay with the breath. It gives you a good comfortable place to stay so that you can watch these other things and realize, "I don't have to side with those, I don't have to identify with them." Just watch them till you can figure them out.

If you're not willing to sit with an uncomfortable mind you're never going to figure out your uncomfortable mind.

So find at least one little corner where you can be comfortable. And one way to do it is to start thinking thoughts of goodwill for yourself and for other people. Make that little corner a nice spot in the mind, a sweet spot in the mind. Then it's a lot easier to deal with whatever else comes up.