

Investing Your Good Fortune

October 7, 2012

Okay, close your eyes, and make the effort to stay with the breath. Be happy to stay with the breath. That's an important part of right effort: that you're happy to do it. You realize that this is a good thing: It's good training for the mind, it's good for the body. You benefit, the people around you benefit. There are all kinds of reasons for why it's good to be with the meditation.

You want to remind yourself of that, because sometimes it gets discouraging. You try to stay with the breath but then a few breaths later you're off someplace else. You've got to come back, come back, come back. Well, keep on making the effort and be happy to make the effort. It's that willingness, it's that desire to make the effort: That's something you can depend on. That's your refuge.

We've talked about different kinds of refuge the Buddha taught. And right effort is one of them. Right effort isn't just a matter of making an effort to abandon unskillful things and develop skillful things. It's also being happy to do it. That's when you can really depend on yourself.

You've seen people work: When they're complaining about the work all the time—they're doing the work but they're complaining about it—you can't expect the work to come out well. It's when you're happy to do the work—you realize, that there are people who are going to benefit from this, this is going to serve a purpose, and you know how to make yourself happy to do the work—then the work's going to come out well. Then you can depend on yourself; you can depend on your work.

So as you're meditating, try to find ways to make yourself happy you're here, happy you're meditating, happy you're developing good qualities in the mind. After all, if you don't train the mind, what's the mind going to do? It's going to take whatever happiness you have and shred it to pieces. It's like a puppy that you haven't trained yet. It comes into the house and will find good things and shred them to pieces and make a mess all over the place. It's the same with the happiness you get if your mind isn't trained, "This isn't good enough. That isn't good enough." You find some ways to spoil whatever happiness you have, so that even when things outside are going well, you're not happy.

With a well-trained mind, it's just the other way around. Things outside may not be going well but the mind is still happy. They're going well, the mind is still happy. In other words, the mind learns how not to spoil the things around it, learns how not to spoil its happiness, its good fortune. You make good use of it.

After all, it's not just there for you to consume. You take what good fortune you have and you try to invest it. In other words, you invest it in greater good fortune and greater good. That

way, you're not just eating, eating, eating through your old good karma. You're also creating something good out of what you've got. The good karma increases, and that's where your happiness increases.

So when it takes work to meditate, don't be discouraged by it. Be happy that you're meditating. There are so many people out there in the world who have no opportunity to meditate at all. They're too hungry, they've got too much work, they've got too many responsibilities, they can't take any time off. But here you've got the opportunity. So make the most of it. And be happy that you've got the opportunity. That way, the meditation's going to come out a lot better, because you know how to encourage yourself to do it.