

Feed Yourself from Within

April 4, 2013

Close your eyes and watch your breath. Take a couple of good long deep in-and-out breaths so that you feel like you're ventilating the whole body.

After all, the breath is the energy of life. It stands to reason that if the breath feels good, then it's going to be good for your body and it's going to be good for your mind, for the life of the mind and the body together.

In fact, the breath is where the mind and the body meet. So when you're with the breath, you're right here in the present moment and at a really good place to watch both what's going on in the body and what's going on in the mind.

And you can feed the body and the mind with the breath. This is an important principle. You're not just watching. The mind needs food, the body needs food, and the food of the body isn't just the stuff we stick in the mouth. The energy of the breath also feeds the body. As for the mind, it feeds on all kinds of things, all kinds of ideas and intentions. So give it some good intentions to feed on: an intention to stay right here, an intention to train the mind to develop good qualities.

Then you give it something comfortable to stay with, because if the mind doesn't have a comfortable place to stay, it's going to go running off someplace else. It's going to forget the training.

So each time you stay with the breath, you're feeding the mind, developing good qualities in the mind, good strengths. This is health food for the mind.

The kind of food that comes from feeding on sights, sounds, smells, tastes, tactile sensations, stuff you see on the Internet, stuff you see on TV, stuff you see on your cellphone: That's junk food for the mind. It gives you a little bit of flavor but nothing of real substance. It certainly doesn't develop the strengths that the mind needs to depend on itself. It makes the mind more dependent on things outside, turning it into a mind that's really weak.

A strong mind is one that can depend on itself for its own food. The good quality of its intentions: That's an important food right there.

So try feeding the mind as you meditate. You'll find that when you come out, you're not so hungry for the old kinds of food you used to go running after. The mind is in a much better place, much more able to stand on its own two feet and to produce its own food from within.