

Preparing for the Future

July 8, 2013

Try to gather all your awareness right here. As for your thoughts about this person, that person, this thing, that thing: Just let them go. Thoughts of running around in the kitchen, running around with the work in the morning: Put all those thoughts and concerns aside. Now is the time for the mind to look after itself, take care of itself.

We use the mind all the time: looking after the body, looking after all our other affairs. It's very rare that we get a chance to let the mind look after itself. So take a few minutes right now: You don't have any other responsibilities right now, any other cares or concerns. The future doesn't exist right now; the past doesn't exist right now. Remember that's all in your thoughts. What really exists is just right here. So learn how to settle into what's right here. Look after your awareness right here.

In fact, if you look after what's right here, right now, that takes care of the future, too. All too often we're concerned about, "This is going to happen. That could happen. I've got to prepare." But what you *do* know about the future is very little. There are a lot of things you don't know. You don't even know how much longer you're going to be around to see the future. But you do know that whatever comes up, you're going to mindfulness and you're going to need alertness. You're going to need all the skills we develop as we meditate. So this is your best protection for the future: looking after these qualities of the mind right here, right now.

At the same time, the mind gets a chance to heal its wounds. Whatever has been wounding it from the past, you don't have to keep wounding it more and more. Because eventually that's what it really is: the wounds that we give to our own minds. They're the important ones. The things that other people do to us have an effect, but that effect can pass. It's the fact that we keep taking these old weapons and picking them up and then stabbing ourselves with them: That's something we learn how to stop doing. When we stop doing that, then the mind gets a chance to heal its wounds. You're a lot stronger to face whatever's going to come up now and on into the future.

So what you're doing right here, right now, is focusing on the breath. That's the most important thing you need to do, to prepare not only for the present but also for the future.