

The Present Takes Care of the Future

August 1, 2013

Bring your mind into the present moment. As for anything in the past or in the future, you can let it go.

The present moment is what you have to take care of. The past can take care of itself. Or as in the phrase, "Let the dead bury their own dead." You don't have to bring issues of the past back in to mess up your present moment.

The present moment has all kinds of opportunities. If you allow them to happen then they can grow. But if you drag a lot of extraneous stuff in from the past or in from the future, that's going to allow less space here in the present moment, fewer opportunities.

So try to be clear and mindful and alert right here, right now, and you'll see that there are lots of opportunities for doing skillful things right now: for letting go of any unskillful thoughts, for developing skillful qualities. The opportunities are always here. Just make sure you don't obscure them or push them out of the way with thoughts that really are not relevant to what you're doing right now.

Right now you're training the mind. Anything else that doesn't have anything to do with training the mind, just let it go, let it go. You don't have to be responsible for it.

This is your only responsibility right now: just the breath coming in, the breath going out, making sure the mind stays here. If it leaves, make sure it comes right back. That's it. Those are your responsibilities.

Now, you can build on your responsibilities to figure out how to make the breath more comfortable so that it's easier to stay here and the mind is less likely to wander off. That kind of thinking is fine.

Once the mind settles down and really is firmly here, then you can let that kind of thinking go and just maintain your sense of solidity here in the present moment. This gives the mind a lot of strength. It develops your mindfulness, develops your alertness.

As for the future, you don't know what the future will bring. But you *do* know that if you have more mindfulness and alertness, you'll be able to handle the situation a lot more artfully, a lot more skillfully.

So take care of the present, and everything else will take care of itself.