

Valuable Knowledge

August 16, 2013

Close your eyes and be right here. Don't go off someplace else. Be right with the awareness of the breath coming in, the breath going out.

As for other thoughts, you can just watch them pass, watch them pass. Don't feel that you have to collect them, or that you're missing out on anything by not following them. This is one of those cases where less is more. If you focus just on one thing, the breath, and really get to know it well, you've learned something valuable. If you go on gathering up all your thoughts, you find that there's not much there.

It's like walking down the road and just picking up everything you find on the side of the road. You get home and you find you've got a basket full of junk, full of dirt, maybe one valuable thing in there at best. But you've been lugging the junk and the dirt around and you don't really have to. So just stay here with the breath, and you find that the mind is a lot lighter. When you get back home, you find you've brought something valuable with you.

You've learned about your own mind. You've watched its processes; you understand what the mind does.

It's like opening up a machine and looking inside and figuring out which gear runs which gear or which connection makes the thing work. When you understand your mind that way, then you begin to see when it's churning out bad stuff for you. You recognize, "Okay, this is not necessarily true or even if it's true it's not useful. Or maybe it's useful, but this may be not the right time."

You've got to have some control over these processes. But recognize, okay, everything that comes up is churned out through the process. You want to get control over the processes so they create good things for you and so that you can recognize them when they're good.

Now, to learn that kind of lesson, you've really placed yourself above all the things that you otherwise would gather up. You're in a much better position. This is where less is more. Think about one thing. Don't think about a lot of things: just this one thing right here. And the knowledge goes deep, it's broad, it covers everything.

The facts that you learn about the world outside: I know in my own case, thinking about all the classes I took in science and whatnot, now the science has all changed. The classes you've taken in history, now the history's all been revised. You pick up all those facts and you've just got a lot of stuff that eventually wears

out and is no good anymore.

It's like getting a lot of medicine that you keep for years and years and when you finally open the bottle, you discover it's expired. It's not good anymore.

So instead, focus on something that's always good: knowledge of the way your mind works. The way it works as a child is the same way it works as an adult. It picks up things and can create a lot of suffering out of them. That's what everybody does from childhood on up until death—unless you learn a better way, which is what we're doing right now, something that's really valuable. The knowledge you get here is really worth knowing.

So pay a lot of attention right here. As for all the other stuff, just let it go and you come out richer in the end.