

What Do You Really Want?

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You want your mind to settle down. It runs around all the time and gets worn out, so it needs a place to rest, a place where it can get its bearings.

Have a sense of what really is important and what's not. So many times things that are pressing, things that demand your attention, really don't deserve your attention. They just demand it. If you play along with them, your energy gets wasted. We only have a limited amount of time and a limited amount of energy in this life, so you want to make sure that it's used well.

You need to have a clear idea of what's worthwhile, what's not worthwhile, what you want out of your life. Of course, a lot of other people have lots of ideas about what they want out of *you*. So you have to be able to separate yourself out for a while and ask yourself, "Is that what I really want for me?"

That's what the Buddha had to do. His father and mother had everything all planned for him, all set up, and they thought they'd done a really good job. But the Buddha said, "No, that's not what I want. I want true peace of mind. I don't want just wealth and power. I want true peace of mind." Here he had wealth and power offered to him. A lot of us don't even have that and yet we let our time get frittered away with who-knows-what.

So it's good to stop and take stock of what's really important in life. Get some time by yourself, let the mind settle down, and then you can ask it, "What do you really want out of life?" Sit with the question for a while and see what happens. See what comes up as something really important for you.

The Buddha came up with the best answer. He said, "I want to learn how not to create suffering for myself and for other people." If that sounds like a good answer to you, then this is the practice: being generous, being virtuous, and training the mind in good qualities, the qualities that enable it to see deeper inside.

But you want to make sure that you're not wasting your time with other things. So ask yourself, "These activities I'm engaged in: Which ones are important and which ones are not?" Don't wait until the doctor says you only have a couple of months left to live before you have this conversation with yourself. Have it now. And have it with yourself while the mind is quiet. Give it some time to settle down first and then have the conversation. You may be surprised at some of the answers. But once you've decided what's important, then you stick with it: Don't be a traitor to your knowledge of what's really good in life,

what's really worthwhile in life.

As Ajaan Fuang once said, "Nobody paid us money to be born. Nobody hired us to be born. We're here on our own." And the question is, "What do you want to do with this?" Some people might give a very selfish answer. But a wise answer is the Buddha's answer: "I want to learn how to stop causing suffering."