

The Right Attitudes

January 9, 2014

Close your eyes and think thoughts of goodwill.

This is the basic motivation for the practice. We think of all the different ways we could be looking for happiness in our lives, and meditation offers a happiness that doesn't harm anybody.

There are so many ways of finding happiness in the world that either harm you, or harm the people around you, or harm people who you may not see directly but you have an impact on their lives. This is why there's so much trouble and turmoil in the world: people looking for happiness and not really caring whether it harms anyone else or not.

That kind of happiness, of course, doesn't last. The happiness that lasts is the happiness that causes no harm. And that's what we're looking inside for.

So remind yourself, "May I be happy. May all beings be happy," as a way of setting your intention straight, to remind yourself when you're looking for happiness: Who's going to be impacted by this?

You want to act in ways and speak in ways and think in ways that don't really cause any harm. Now, this doesn't mean you have to go around doing things that people are going to like all the time. People's likes and dislikes can't be taken as any kind of gauge.

But you know when you've harmed somebody, so you make up your mind you don't want to cause that harm. You have to look inside for whatever satisfaction, whatever happiness you want in life. That's where real happiness lies.

There *are* other pleasures in the world, but don't take those as your main course. They may be the dessert, but the real main course is the good happiness that you're providing for yourself inside as you meditate: getting the mind to settle down; giving it some peace of mind.

This requires both having an object to focus on, like the breath, and also being able to talk yourself out of the concerns that would pull you away, realizing that for the time being at least you don't have to think about them.

All too often a thought comes into the mind and says, "Think about me! Think about me! Think about me!" You have to just learn how to say No. As you do, you begin to realize after a while that the thought itself didn't say that: It was your own attitude that anything that comes into the mind has to be examined and taken apart and dealt with and thought through. Well, a lot of things don't require thinking through. You can see them immediately and you can realize, "This is not

worth getting involved in.” And you can drop them.

So meditation involves the techniques of meditation and it also involves the right attitudes. The techniques can be explained in just a few sentences, but getting the right attitudes together is what takes time.

You find there are many, many layers of misunderstandings in the mind. And you have to take them apart layer by layer.

Start with this simple intention, “May all beings be happy.” Now, you’re not expecting that all beings will be happy, but you want to make sure that at least from your quarter there’s no danger for any beings at all. You’re setting your intentions straight.

And that’s really all you can be responsible for.