

## *Maintaining a Sense of Direction*

*June 7, 2014*

The mind needs a good solid place to stay. Otherwise, it gets blown around by all the winds of the world. So try to hold on to your breath, regardless of whatever else comes up in the mind.

You stay right here with the breath: the sensation of the breath coming in, going out. Wherever you notice it in the body, wherever it seems clearest: Try to keep your attention right there. Sounds come up, thoughts come up, but you don't let them blow you away.

Because if you're going to be blown away by simple things like this, how about when material gain comes to blow you away? Or material loss, status, loss of status, praise, criticism, pleasure and pain come: How are you not going to be blown away by those?

When you're blown away, you get spun around and when you come down you have no idea where you're going to come down and you have no idea which way is north or south—in other words, what's the right thing to do and what's not the right thing to do—because you let your head get turned and blown in this direction or that.

If you stay right here, though, you have a good sense of where your directions are and what's really important in life. What's really important is that you maintain skillful intentions.

If something good comes, you learn to make use of it. If something bad comes, you learn how to make use of it.

Like a good cook who knows how to make a good dish out of anything. In Thailand they take basically rotten fish and they turn it into fish sauce.

Things that are bad can be turned into something good. In other words, you deal with pain or you deal with loss and you can fix it in your mind into something good, i.e., lessons about learning how to let go, learning what's important, what's not important, learning about where true happiness lies, what you can trust, what you can't trust.

These are all good lessons to learn. They're not easy lessons but if you've got a good solid foundation in the mind, it makes it a lot easier. The mind is a lot more likely to accept them.

So it's important that we keep working away, working away at this solid center. Whether it comes naturally or not, that's not the issue. What matters is that it's something really worth mastering because it makes such a huge difference

in our lives.