

A Single Plan

June 8, 2015

Close your eyes and watch your breath. Watch it all the way in and all the way out. Try to notice when it gets too long.

Try to be very sensitive to how the breathing feels. The more sensitive you are to this, the less you'll be interested in wandering off someplace else.

When we practice concentration, there's a set of values that go along with it. The part of the mind that says, "Whatever comes up in the mind I've got to check it out": You've got to put that part of the mind aside. You've got to decide that some things are more important than others. Right now the breath is the most important thing because it's what's going to allow you to get the mind into concentration. When the mind is concentrated, it can see things a lot more clearly.

There are other thoughts that may be disturbing you right now, but they're not going to take you to concentration. Just put them aside, put them aside. The noises outside: You just let them be. You don't have to get involved with them. They're there as part of their nature, but you don't have to put a running commentary on them.

You want to have a running commentary instead on how the mind is doing with the breath. That's something that's worth talking to yourself about. When you meditate, it's not that you don't think at all. You actually do have to think and you have to plan, and then you stick with your plan. But make it a single plan, a plan to be right here.

Let the breath feel good in the body. When the breath feels good, your awareness can start spreading through the body. Otherwise, if there are parts of the body that are tense and tight, your awareness won't want to go in there. As a result, it gets shunted off to some little, tiny corner. You get ignorant of what's going on in the body and also ignorant of what's going on in the mind. The mind gets smaller and smaller as well.

So try to expand the range of comfortable breath energy in the body, and then you can expand your awareness as well so that you can feel at home here. This is your place. Nobody else can be in here. Your sense of what it's like to be inside your body to feel your breath right now: Nobody else can feel that. That's the area where suffering happens but that's also the area where suffering can be cured.

So you want to establish yourself here so you can become familiar with the suffering and also familiar with the tools you'll need to put an end to that suffering. So you want to be right here as much as you can.

That's the value you want to hold in mind: "This is your important place right now." As for other issues in the world right now, you can just let them go, let them go. You can deal with them when you have to. But right now you don't have to. In fact it's better that you *not*, because first you've got to strengthen your mind to deal with those things.

So take the time to settle in here. Settle in here with a sense of belonging, with a sense of well-being. This is your place. You can make it your home.