

## *Straightened Intentions*

*June 16, 2015*

Close your eyes, and notice where you feel the breathing in the body. Try to notice where it's comfortable. Focus there.

The mind needs a good foundation to stay in the present moment, and a sense of ease is one of the best foundations there is. If you're focused on a pain, it is possible to be right here right now, but the mind is on edge and part of it wants the pain to go away, or else it will run away. Whereas if there's a sense of ease, you want it to stay, and in making the ease stay, the mind stays.

Some people complain they can't find a comfortable breath anywhere in the body. If that's the case, just stop breathing for a bit, hold your breath, and you'll find that breathing is a lot more comfortable than holding your breath.

You might ask yourself if you're trying to force the breath too much. In that case, step back a bit and say, "It's going to come in, it's going to go out, it's going to do it on its own. I don't have to force it. There may be some of the sensations that I feel are blockages but are actually a different kind of breath." Think about that for a minute and see if that changes the flow of breathing in the body.

What you need is something to keep you anchored here in the present moment, because you want to be able to watch your intentions, and you want to watch your intentions because your intentions are shaping your life, and this where they're being made. If you're not present at the very first steps, you don't know where they're going to lead. You're not paying attention. You're off someplace else and you've left the workers in the brain to do the work for you, to make the decisions for you without a lot of awareness or attention on your part. They're likely to just go through their old habitual ways of doing things. You want to be fully here, fully present.

When an intention comes up to do or say or think something, you want to know what that intention is. It's a teaching that the Buddha teaches his son Rahula: to look at his his intentions before he does or says or thinks anything. I've heard a lot of people say, "Gee, that's an awful lot of attention to something like that," because they have so many other things they have to pay attention to. Well, it turns out that the other things you're paying attention to are often the results of your own past actions. It's much better to start at the very beginning to make sure that the new intentions coming out are well-formed.

So try to stay right here. Find ways of making the mind happy to be right here, so that it has the energy and the inclination to want to look into what's going on in the mind and straightening that out. Once you've straightened out the mind, everything else gets straightened out further down the line.

So start right here. Establish yourself right here, because this is where all the important things to know can be known.