

## *Cutting Off External Pleasures*

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One of the reasons we practice restraint is that the mind is ordinarily looking for pleasure outside, so it doesn't pay attention to the sources of pleasure inside. It figures that as long as it can find something outside, why does it need to put all that work into developing inside skills?

But when you cut off the roads that lead outside, that's when you begin to realize you've really got to work on the inside. You've really got to develop these skills. Otherwise, the mind just gets very dry and moody because it's not getting the pleasures that it wanted and that it used to find.

So we cut off these roads to force you to look for the breath for some pleasure, look to the way you think for some skillful pleasure. That way you're forced to develop your inner skills.

These are good skills to have, because the time will come when you can't see outside, you can't hear what people are saying. What are you going to do? If you've got your inner skills, you depend on them.

So now while you're healthy and strong, use that strength to work on your inner skills: how you shape your experience inside through the breath, through the way you think, the way you talk to yourself.

All these things can be developed as skills that lead to a sense of genuine well-being inside. So instead of looking for your pleasure outside, you look for it inside.

This is why we try to have some restraint over our words, restraint over the way we look and listen. That opens the doors inside for the well-being you can create if you put in the time and the energy to develop these skills within.