

Tune-in to the Present Moment

October 11, 2015

When we meditate, we're taking the potentials we have in the present moment and trying to make something good out of them.

For instance, you have the breath. The breath is always there. Let's make something special out of it. Focus on the breath continually and see if you can get the mind to settle down and stay with the breath.

And see if you can also get the breath to feel comfortable. Think about different ways of breathing and ask yourself, "Which way would feel good right now? Would long breathing feel good or short? Heavy or light, fast/slow, deep or shallow?" Try to see what feels good for the body right now. You're trying to tune-in to the present moment to see what you've got here, what the potentials are and what you can make of them.

We spend too much time tuning-in to other things. We tune-in to the radio, we tune-in to the TV, we tune-in to the Internet, and then we've got our phones, carrying these things all around with us all the time. We're not tuned-in to what's going on in our own bodies, in our own minds.

So we don't really see the truth, because you know what's out there on the Internet. There's all kinds of stuff: Black is white, white is black, right is wrong, red is yellow, yellow is red, it's all mixed up.

Whereas if you're right *here*, you can see, "This is the way things are. Is the breath comfortable, or is it not?" This is something only you can know. So tune-in to that. Try to make it as comfortable as you can. This way, you're making the most of what you've got here.

A lot of what we live with is the results of our own past actions. The Buddha says we carry those around with us. It's like a field that we've been planting seeds in, for who-knows-how-many years. Sometimes the seeds will sprout and they'll give us good plants, and other times they'll sprout and give us something else, something not-so-good because we've been planting all kinds of seeds. So you have to be prepared for times when your field is yielding nothing but bad crops.

If you know how to deal with these things in the present moment, how to turn these potentials into something good, it's like being a good cook. You know how to take food that may not be all that good but you can still make something good out of it. I know a story of a cook I knew once who was able to take shavings from asparagus out of a garbage pail and make a good cream of asparagus soup.

So figure out some ways that you can take the bad potentials coming your way,

even in the actions of other people or what's going on in your own body, and see if you can turn them into something good.

It starts here with the breath. If you can learn how to deal with the breath, you've got your own beachhead right here in the present moment. No matter what's coming in from the past, as long as the breath is good right now, you've got a place where you can stay with a sense of ease. You can deal with whatever else comes up and you can deal with it more skillfully than you could have before because you've got a place here you can feel secure.

So if you're concerned about how to make the most of the present moment, this is how you do it. You tune-in here. You tune-in to the present moment, right where the body and mind meet at the breath.

The messages you get there are a lot more reliable than things you get through the Internet or through TV or through the radio, whatever. Those things are made-up to appeal to you and not necessarily to appeal to your best interests.

Whereas what's going on right here right now: This is yours and you can make it into something that's really good, something that's of solid goodness, so that even when bad things are coming in from the past, you know how to turn them at least into tolerable experiences in the present and sometimes you make them a lot better. When you've got this skill here, that becomes a part of your field that's always there ready to sprout.

So learn how to develop the skill of staying with the breath in the present moment, having your mind grounded here and not running off after just whatever comes in. You find that your life comes from a much better place then, because it comes out of the decisions you make in the present moment, moment by moment by moment.

You can't do much about your past decisions, but you can make sure your present decisions are good. And this will also make you more likely to make good decisions in the future.

So focus right here, right now, because this is where all the important work is. This is the work that makes a difference in your life, and it gives you results you can really rely on.