

Autonomous Good Karma

November 16, 2015

Okay, focus on your breath. You might say there are lots of other things in the world that need attention right now, but the primary thing for each of us is to attend to our own minds: make sure our minds are in good shape, so that as we engage in the world, we're not going to be adding more danger to the world, not be adding more of a mess to the world. After all, our actions are what shape the world, and where do our actions come from? They come from inside.

Other people's actions come from their minds. Try as we may to have a good influence on them, it doesn't always work. But we can influence our own minds, so focus there first. Get your own mind in shape, and then from there if you come out into the world and see something you can do, something you can help with, you're coming from a much better place.

All too often, people who meditate are accused of being irresponsible in the face of all the troubles of the world. Well, the world's going to have troubles on and on and on, there's no end to that. But you *can* put an end to your own contribution to the troubles, making the troubles worse. Instead you can change the situation so that you're coming from a good place inside. And gaining your strength from inside.

People often justify unskillful behavior by saying that somebody else said something unskillful or did something unskillful. But that's no excuse. You don't want your actions to be coming from their actions. You want your actions to be coming from your own well-considered intentions inside.

So when you read the news about horrible things that have happened, you want to read coming from a good place inside, so that you can respond in a more helpful way, in a more skillful way. It's not that there are just the big events in the news. There are everyday events all around us, dealing with people all around us.

It's all too easy: Someone says something nasty or looks at you in a bad way, and immediately that becomes justification for responding with the same sort of thing. What you've done is you've taken their karma and now you've made it your karma. And what kind of karma is it? If you're going to take someone else's karma, take the good stuff. What's even better, though, is to learn how to generate your own good karma inside and to nourish yourself with that.

You want to be a self-starter in this way. In this case, you're being as responsible as possible, in that you're a gift to the world in the fact that you're straightening out your own mind.