

Paying Attention Inside

April 30, 2016

Focus on your breath. Watch it all the way in, all the way out.

When the mind starts thinking about other things, say, “Nope. I’m going to stay right here with the breath.”

Because the mind thinking about other things is a mind looking for trouble. And here we’re looking for some peace.

As the Buddha said, there is no happiness aside from peace. People will argue with that and say, “There’s lots of happiness in things that are not very peaceful.” But the question is, “Is it genuine happiness, and where is the happiness in those things found?”

It’s found in the fact that the mind can stay with them for a little bit. Otherwise the mind is constantly pushed off, pushed off every place that it focuses. There’s no happiness in being pushed off. Here, though, is a place where it can stay.

When you stay with the breath, you can stay for a long time. As long as you’re alive, the breath will be right here. And you find that the longer you can stay, the greater the sense of well-being.

Our lives, especially in the modern world, are being pulled in all directions. Our attention is being pulled in all directions. It’s as if they’re shouting things at you and blaring things at you, not giving you any time to think and be your own person.

So here you get to close your eyes and be your own person. The mind gets to be its own self. It doesn’t have to take on any other responsibilities right now. It can minimize the input with which it’s bombarded.

In that way, it gets to know itself a lot better.

Our problem is that we spend too much time paying attention outside and not enough paying attention inside. Actually, inside is where all the important things in our life come from. The choices you make that shape your life: They come from right here inside. If you’re not careful about how they’re made, you don’t know what kind of life you’re going to have.

So you want to be right here, have a sense of well-being right here, so that you can make those choices with a sense of well-being, not with a sense that you’re being constantly pushed into something.

So spend some time right here. Breathe in, breathe out, in a way that feels refreshing, that feels soothing, that feels comfortable—whatever the body needs

right now, whatever the mind needs right now. Give it some good breathing.

That way, you'll be able to find the peace that comes when you're not constantly being pulled into paying attention outside.

And from that peace comes a deep and lasting happiness.