

Resistance to Latent Germs

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When you focus on your breath and strengthen the mind, you're creating an internal resistance to outside germs and inside germs.

Outside germs, of course, are things outside that tend to stir up the mind, give rise to greed, aversion, and delusion. But the fact that the mind can be stirred up by these things shows that it has some of those germs inside itself already. Without those germs, nothing outside could come in and make you feel greedy or angry. So it's on these internal germs that we're working, building up our resistance to them.

Every time the mind wanders off and you say, "Nope," you're strengthening your resistance. Every time you think of something that you want to say which is not really necessary, and you stop yourself, you're strengthening your resistance as well. Here at the monastery there's some social interaction, but there doesn't have to be all that much, just enough to let everybody know we're on friendly terms and we're working together.

But a large part of the work has to be done by yourself, inside yourself. So when you *are* working together, try to keep things as quiet as possible so that each person has the quiet surroundings to do his or her internal work. That's our gift to one another here.

These internal germs are a lot worse than the things outside. If you've got them under control, then things outside can be pretty bad but they'd not be bad enough that you would start acting on them. It's when you start acting on things and doing things and saying things and thinking things that are detrimental to yourself, to other people, that's when the mind is sick. It's been taken over by these germs.

So you've got to learn how to maintain some resistance. That means working inside as much as you can, staying with your breath as you go through the day.

Here is your opportunity. You don't have to worry about the bottom line. The bottom line here is not the same as the bottom line outside. The bottom line outside of course is, "Where's the money?" The bottom line here is, "Where's your mind right now? What are you doing to train your mind right now? How is your training going along? Are you actually on top of it or are you just letting it slide?"

The opportunity to practice doesn't come all the time, but it is here with us right now. So let's make the most of it.