

## *Unshaken Awareness*

*June 2, 2016*

Close your eyes and watch your breath. Watch the breath all the way in, all the way out.

As for other things outside, you don't have to react. Just let them pass, let them pass.

When the Buddha was giving meditation lessons to his son, the first thing he said was, "Make your mind like earth. Things hit the Earth but the Earth doesn't react. They throw disgusting things on the Earth and the Earth doesn't shrink away."

Patience, endurance: These are important qualities that you need to develop in order to meditate. This doesn't mean you're always going to be putting up with bad things, but the ability to not to react to bad things enables you to see what's going on, both outside and inside, a lot more clearly.

If you're too quick to react, too quick to get upset, then all you know is your reaction. You don't really know what was going on. And you don't really know your reaction thoroughly. You're *in* it. You're not stepping back from it.

So remind yourself there's a part of the mind that can take *anything* and still be aware, still be aware. Try to stay with that sense of awareness that's not affected by things.

That way, you can see clearly what's skillful and what's not, where the mind is helping itself, where the mind is harming itself. You can do the work that needs to be done.

Staying with the breath gives you a sense of well-being so that it's easier to slip into that state of awareness. So try to be with the breath as much as you can.

As for other things, they can just go past. Because they do: They come and they go, they come and they go. Yet your awareness is still there. As for the reactions, you let them go, too, because your awareness is what's going to be your real refuge. That's something that outlasts everything. So learn to latch onto that and it'll see you through a lot of difficulties.

So, foster this awareness of the breath. If you're going to identify with anything, identify with this. As for other things that come in, look at them as just clouds coming past, strange things happening in the mind. The more you can step back from them, the more you can see them clearly for what they are—and where their hooks are that draw you in. But you don't have to be drawn in. Let them just be right there. When you see them, you're less likely to get hooked by them.

You maintain this sense of awareness, this sense of well-being that's not shaken by anything. In this way, you find it a lot easier to live with yourself, to live in the world, live with other people. It also puts you in a position where you can develop skillful qualities even more in the mind because you see clearly what's going on.