

## *One Thing Only*

*June 8, 2016*

Close your eyes and watch your breath.

Each time the breath comes in, know that it's coming in. Each time it goes out, know that it's going out.

That's all you have to do. It's nothing much, but the mind has trouble doing it because it's used to doing a lot of things all at once. Here we're trying to get it to do one thing so that it can stay under your control.

Otherwise, you don't see things clearly because you focus on too many things all at once. If you want to see something clearly, you have to focus on one thing. You have to look at it very steadily.

It's like the difference between running around a forest of trees and standing still in front of one tree. If you run around, you get a little bit of this tree and a little bit of that tree. If someone asks you about the trees, what you can tell them is mostly a blur. But if you stand and look at one tree, after a while you get to really know that tree very well and can describe it in detail.

Here we're trying to get to know the mind. It's hard to focus directly on the mind, so we focus on something that's right near the mind, which is the breath. The breath is your first experience of the body. If the breath weren't moving in the body, you wouldn't know the body at all.

So, stay right here with the breath. See if you can make this the one thing that you give your full attention to. This is what makes all the difference in meditation: having full attention.

If you're multi-tasking all the time, the tasks get broken up into little c and your awareness gets broken up into little bits. Maybe you can manage the tasks, but you don't know any one particular task really well. If the mind is something you just glance at every now and then, you're not really going to know your mind very well.

But it's important that you know your mind better than anything else in the world because your mind is what shapes your experience. Your mind is what makes the difference between whether you're going to suffer from anything that happens or if you're going to be able to *not* suffer. The skills of the mind are what make the difference. And you can develop those skills only when you get to know the mind really well.

So try to stay right here. Get some practice in being with one thing and one thing only. That way, the knowledge that results will be thorough knowledge, all-

around knowledge.

Try to make the breath comfortable so that this is a good place to stay and you can get to know yourself really well. When you know yourself, you know the most important thing in the world that's worth knowing.

Everything outside is just a shadow or a reflection of what's been going inside here all along. So when you search for happiness outside, you go running after shadows.

It's like trying to catch a light beam. The light beam comes out of the flashlight but you go out and try to catch the beam out there in the air. If you want to catch the light, if you want to put out the light, you turn it off right at the source. If you want to turn it on, you turn it on at the source. But if you try to catch the beam, your hand goes right through it, you can't catch it.

It's the same with the things in the world outside. They're very difficult to catch and lay hold of. You try to catch hold of wealth, to catch hold of relatives, to catch hold of loved ones, but everything just slips through your fingers.

But if you catch hold of the mind, you've got something that's right there.

So, focus on the breath so that you can get to know the mind. Get to know the breath really well. The more you really know the breath—the different ways the breath energy moves in the body—the better you get to know your own mind in all of its little nooks and crannies.

So, stay right here and watch this one thing only. You'll find that you learn a lot of really good and interesting and important things.