

Straightened-out Inside

July 2, 2016

Close your eyes and watch your breath. Try to see if you can stay with the breath all the way in, all the way out. And then with the next breath and then the next.

You have to make up your mind to do this. Otherwise, the mind's just going to wander around, because that's what it's been doing since who-knows-when. Something comes up, and you move on to something new and then something new comes up and you move on to that and move around, like a person hopping from train to train. Who knows where you're going to end up if you keep train-hopping like this?

You want to stay right here because you want to understand: What's doing the hopping? What's doing the running around? What is the mind looking for?

It's looking for some well-being, but it's not finding it, so it keeps looking and looking and looking. It's time to turn around and look inside, to see what kind of sense of well-being you can create simply by being here with the breath.

Allow the breath to be as comfortable as possible. You can experiment for a while with longer breathing or shorter breathing, deeper, more shallow, to see what feels good. Then try to maintain a rhythm that feels good.

See if the mind will begin to soften up a little bit and settle down into the present moment, without being tensed up and ready to jump all the time.

There are potentials for happiness right here in the present moment if you look for them. But you have to look inside. If you look outside, all you're going to see are other people's issues and the issues that you create outside. There's no end to that. And there's no real satisfaction. But if you look inside.... The Buddha says, and all of his noble disciples have said as well, that when you look inside and look really carefully and are really skillful in how you look, you find that there is a point of satisfaction inside where the mind feels truly at home, where things are at peace. So keep looking in there.

The breath is a good place to start, because of all the things we sense in the world, the breath is closest to the mind, closest to our awareness. So keep settled in right here.

Once you have something solid here inside, then issues outside become a lot less important. It's because you were hungry and looking for pleasure outside that you kept going out, going out, going out. Now it's time to come back in. When you find that there's genuine satisfaction inside, the things outside don't weigh on

the mind nearly as much, because you don't give them much weight anymore.

So keep focused in here. Try to be established in here. And once things are straightened out inside, then the world outside will get straightened out as well. But it has to start here.