

Right Mindfulness

August 24, 2016

Close your eyes and watch your breath.

Remember to stay here. Each time you breathe in, remind yourself, “This is where you want to be: right here, right now.”

It’s in this way you learn how to depend on your mindfulness. Mindfulness is the ability to keep something in mind, and right mindfulness tells you the right things to do. This is why your mindfulness has to be trained.

As the Buddha said, when you develop mindfulness you’re making yourself a refuge at the same time you’re making mindfulness a refuge.

But it has to be right mindfulness. After all, you can keep all kinds of things in mind. All kinds of lessons you may have learned—sometimes right, sometimes wrong—can get jumbled up together in the mind. If your memory of what’s right and wrong gets jumbled, then you don’t really have anything inside that you can depend on.

This is why in the beginning we have to depend on the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Sangha—the Buddha’s teachings about what’s right to do and what’s wrong to do, what’s skillful and what’s unskillful. As you put those teachings into practice, you begin to notice that what he said was true. You observe the precepts and life is a lot better. You meditate, life is a lot better.

So you learn those lessons. Then those are the lessons you keep in mind to apply in the future. In this way, you become more and more your own refuge as your mindfulness develops and becomes more and more right.

So remember: For mindfulness to be right, it has to depend on right understanding. The understanding comes both from outside but also more particularly from the qualities you develop inside. That’s when it really becomes your own. Your own mindfulness then becomes your own refuge. *You* are your own refuge.

So work on making sure that you take the right lessons from what you do and say and think. That’s the only way we learn in this world.

We can learn lots of information. You can turn on the Internet and get all kinds of information, but you don’t know if it’s true or not.

What you know is true is if you’ve acted in a certain way and you’ve gotten certain results—and you were present both for the action and for the results. That way you can see clearly.

So right mindfulness makes your knowledge better and right knowledge makes

your mindfulness better: the two work together. And when you've got both, okay, that's when you really can depend on yourself, you can go anywhere you want. Because you've got all you need in order to make sure that you don't act in ways that are going to destroy your own happiness.