

# *The Perfection of Truth*

*September 4, 2016*

Close your eyes and watch your breath. Make up your mind you're going to stay here, all the way through the in-breath, all the way through the out-. And try to make the breath comfortable so that it's a nice place to stay.

Then do your best to maintain your original intention. This is a quality called truth. You make up your mind to do something good and you stick with it. That's truth.

Often we think of truth as being just a quality of words, but it's also a quality of the character. You see that something is good and even though it's difficult, you decide, "I want to do that. I want to accomplish that." Then you stick with that original intention. You don't become a traitor to yourself.

All too often we're actually true to our worst intentions and become traitors to our best. We decide to do something bad, and for some reason it's really easy to stick with that all the way through. That kind of truthfulness is not what we want.

We want a truthfulness that sticks with what you know is good, what you know will be for your benefit or the benefit of the people around you. And we're talking about true benefit here, long-term benefit. No matter what the obstacles are, you stick with your original intention.

That's what gives power to the intention. Now, there is merit in the original intention, but for it to become powerful, you have to be true to it as well. When you've been true to it, then even just speaking about what you've done will have power, too.

It's like training your children. If you tell them to do one thing but you do something else, your words don't have any meaning. But if you're true to your words and your words are true to you, then you have power and your words have power as well.

It's the same way with your own mind. If you make up your mind to do something good but then you don't do it, your mind begins to know, "Okay, this is just a bunch of lies. I don't have to pay any attention." It gets easier and easier for the mind to slip away from its good intentions.

So you have to show yourself that when you make up your mind to do something good, you're going to stick with it. You stick with it all the way through. That's teaching a lesson to your mind: that it's the good things in life that we're true to. Those are the things that have power in our lives, that make life something really worthwhile, something of benefit to ourselves and other people.

We may have nice thoughts, but when you're not true to your nice thoughts they don't actually become real. They're just ideas floating in, floating out. But when you see something that's really good and you stick with it, then it grows. And your mind changes as a result. It becomes a mind that's more and more true. Your character becomes more and more true.

This is where the quality of truthfulness is really important. When you make up your mind to do something good, you can trust yourself you'll do it. That makes it easier for you to overcome obstacles. If you've given into obstacles in the past, it becomes a habit. But if you learn how to overcome your obstacles, that becomes a habit, too. Make that the habit of your mind, that habit of truthfulness. This way it becomes a perfection that we develop in our character.

Wherever we go, whatever we do, we know that we can trust ourselves, that once we see something is right, we're going to stick with it. When we see something is wrong, we're going to let it go.

You don't have to be true to Mara but try to be true to the Buddha by being true to his teachings, making them real in your thoughts and your words and your deeds. The Dhamma itself is already true. The question is: How true are we? Can we make ourselves true? The answer inside should be, "Yes, we can do it." Stick with that answer.