

Result Oriented Practice

December 19, 2016

Focus on your breath and let the breath be comfortable. Try to figure out what kind of breathing would feel good right now. This is one of the reasons why we bring the mind to stillness: for a sense of well-being. The mind needs a sense of well-being in order to gather its strength.

We're not doing it just for the sake of the present moment. We're also doing it for the sake of what's going to come in the future. After all, if we wanted just to rest, we could go to sleep, but that wouldn't be developing good qualities in the mind.

The good qualities—mindfulness, remembering to keep something in mind; alertness, watching what you're doing; and the quality of ardency, where you want to do it really well—are the qualities that actually strengthen the mind. These are the qualities that you can carry with you from the meditation.

So it's not just that the one present moment is a wonderful moment or a good place to stay. It's a place where you can gather your strength for the work that needs to be done.

As the Buddha said, there are lots of uses for concentration, and having a pleasant place to stay is only one of them. We're also trying to develop mindfulness and alertness, we're trying to see the mind's defilements and be able to do something about them. In order to see them, you have to be still, because they move in very subtle ways, like that old story about the snake being a very subtle creature. If your mind isn't subtle, you're not going to see how the defilements move. And how is it going to get subtle? It has to be still.

So remember, we're doing this for the sake of the present moment *and* for the sake of the future—for the good benefits, the good results that are going to come. As the Buddha said, we're all on a path of one kind or another. Let's make sure we're on the right path. In other words, all our actions have consequences. They lead someplace. If you just dither around, go here a little bit, go there a little bit, the actions don't amount to anything really good. Their results can actually pull you down.

So you want to make sure you're on a good path and you stick with it. That's when the results are going to be what you want.