

The President of the Corporation

June 3, 2017

Close your eyes and watch your breath. Keep watch over the breath and keep watch over the mind to make sure that it stays with the breath. In other words, you use the mind to train the mind, to watch the mind.

This means you've got to have a sense of priorities and decide which part of the mind should be in charge. Right now you want to put the part that's aligned with concentration, mindfulness, discernment, that's aligned with heedfulness and the desire to be skillful. You want that part of the mind to be in charge.

It's as if the mind is a corporation. Sometimes you have a person in charge who doesn't really see what's going on in the actual factory. They may have all kinds of good intentions, but the factory keeps creating shoddy goods. You've got to have the president of the corporation down on the factory floor, looking at what's going on there, what's creating all the stuff that's coming out in your thoughts, in your words, in your deeds. Is it up to standard? Are the workers doing what they should be doing? Or are they playing tricks on you? Are they cheating the company? As the president of the company, you have to have ears and eyes that are as big as the company. In other words, watch what you're doing all the time.

Sometimes you hear people say, "Why all this concern with minutiae? Why are you watching your individual words and deeds? Why don't you just open up to the vast emptiness around us?" Well, the emptiness around us is just a perception, where your actual words and deeds are what shows what's really going on in the mind. So you've got to be careful. If you're careful about this, then that care extends to the other things, noticing other ways in which you're creating unnecessary suffering for yourself.

This is the line of inquiry that really gets to the main issue: that we all want happiness but why is it that we create suffering? What is it that we're missing? Where are we ignorant? So keep probing around.

You could have a perception of emptiness or Oneness and still create a lot of suffering. So the question is, "What am I doing? What am I saying? What am I thinking that's adding to unnecessary suffering?" Follow that line of inquiry in. In other words, instead of the president of the company just dreaming up emptiness and Oneness, you actually get out there and you look at what's being produced by the factory—all these fabrications going on in the mind—and then you make changes. That way, you've got the right people in charge and they're in charge all the way down. They're genuinely in charge, not just in name but in deed.

So keep careful watch over what you say, you do and think, keep careful watch over what's going on in the mind in the present, because that's where all the genuine decisions are being made.

