

## *Boredom in the Practice*

*September 14, 2017*

Find a way of breathing that's really refreshing, because it's one thing to stay mindful throughout the day, but it's another thing to *want* to stay mindful throughout the day. If you're just forcing yourself, after a while the mind's going to rebel. It's like pushing an inflated ball underwater. As long as your grip is good, it's going to stay. But as soon as your grip gets loose, it pops up out of the water. It's there against its will. So you try to make the mind *want* to settle down. This is an important part of right effort: generating desire.

On the days when the meditation seems slow and you're getting bored, ask yourself, "Well, how can I be bored? This is my own mind that I'm watching here." The Buddha has all those analyses for how the mind is creating suffering for itself—and it's happening right here and you're getting bored? You want to look into that, look into more detail. If that issue bores you, then ask yourself, "Well, at least there's a way to breathe that makes the body refreshed. What is that?" If you're missing it, look into the matter: "Why am I missing this?" Take some interest in what's going on.

It's not just the fact that the breath is pleasant that's interesting. It's the fact that it has an impact on the body and will have an impact on the mind, and you want to be able to see those causal connections. They're here, they're playing themselves out all the time. And the question is: Why aren't you seeing them? Once you can see them, then you can take advantage of them.

Ajaan Fuang talked about being up in the northern part of Thailand during World War II. And he was able to get his mind into rapture for whole days, living in very straitened circumstances all alone on a mountain. And it's not like when you're all alone on a mountain the solitude is immediately desirable. Sometimes it can get really oppressive. But he said he realized he wasn't alone there: He had his breath; he had his mind to watch, to learn about. He found it really enthralling.

So your mind can be really enthralling, too. Your breath can be enthralling, too, if you pay attention, if you ask questions. In that way, the desire to practice will come on its own.