

## *Looking After Your Own Affairs*

*November 4, 2017*

Close your eyes and watch your breath. The breath is the beginning of all movement in the body, and of course the mind is what gives the orders. So the breath and the mind should be right together.

But all too often they're other places. The mind is in another place, thinking about other things, not paying too much attention to what it's doing. Which is a shame, because happiness doesn't come from things that other people do to you. It comes from things you do. So you want to be on top of what you're doing while you're doing it and the results that you're getting. That's how we develop skill in any area, and it's how we develop skill in our lives, being very clear about where we are and what we're doing right now.

So try to make the breath a comfortable place to be. You can change the rhythm; you can make it faster or slower; you can change the depth; you can change the texture; you can make it heavier or lighter, to see what feels good for the body and the mind right now. After all, if the mind doesn't feel comfortable in the present moment, it's going to go off and do something else, find its happiness someplace else.

When that happens, it's like the owner of a factory who doesn't look after the factory but instead just lets the factory run itself while he goes off on vacation. When he comes back, he shouldn't be surprised that things aren't going well because there's nobody really in charge. Or what is in charge are a lot of unconscious motives, ill thought-out motives.

So you want to be in charge. You want to be right there inspecting what's going on. This is how you make sure that your factory is creating good actions, good words, good thoughts—actions that actually lead to happiness rather than destroying it.

So it's good to be right here as much as you can. And it's restful for the mind as well. It does take effort to keep constant watch over your actions, but when you're doing it from a position of comfort, a position of strength, it becomes a very pleasant job.

You begin to realize that—unlike the message of the media, which keep telling you that things that other people are doing someplace else are the important things in the world—what's really important is what you're doing right now. Take that to heart, because if you don't look after your own affairs right here and right now, who's going to look after them?

So keep watch right here. Be especially careful about whatever movements of the mind tell you to do this or say that. Ask it, "Why are you saying that? What do you expect?" Because it's not as if there's just one "you" in there in the mind. There are lots of different you's, different members of this committee inside. And some of them will slip in with agendas that are not really in your own best interest: maybe a short-term happiness but nothing really long-term.

But wisdom comes from seeing that happiness comes from your actions and that there is such a thing as long-term as opposed to short-term. And of course, long-term is preferable.

So keep watch right here. Develop a sense of feeling at home right here, so that you're not tempted to wander away and leave your factory unattended.