

Intentions in Line with Results

July 31, 2018

Close your eyes and take a couple of good long deep in-and-out breaths. Notice where you feel the breathing in the body: Focus your attention right there, all the way through the in-breath, all the way through the out-.

Make a promise to yourself that you're going to try to stay here. If it so happens that you leave, you just come right back. But you've got to stick with it.

Because the goodness we want in the world comes from our own actions, and if our actions are not consistently good then the goodness we hope to get is not going to be consistent, either. It'll come and go, go up and down. So try to develop some consistency in your thoughts and your words and your deeds, primarily by learning how to put some consistency in your mind.

We've come here because we want happiness in life. We see that being generous, being virtuous, meditating are things that lead to happiness because they train the mind. But think about that happiness you want and then ask yourself: Are the causes in line with the results that you want? If they're not, well, go back and look in your mind again. What's still lacking in the mind?

Are you lacking in mindfulness? In other words, do you make up your mind to remember something and then forget when you really need it?

Are you lacking in alertness? Are you not really watching what's going on? This is a big one for a lot of us because there are so many back corners and hidden rooms in the mind. It's one of the reasons why you have to meditate: to get your awareness all-around so that you can open up some of these hidden rooms and see what's going on in the mind. After all, if the mind is shaping your life, you want to make sure that it's doing a good job. If there are any inconsistencies, you can ask yourself, "Who's been usurping the power in here? Who's been making the decisions and not letting the people at the top know?" You've got to look into your mind.

Or you may be lacking in ardency, in other words, the desire to really do this well. Sometimes we believe in the power of our actions and sometimes we don't. Sometimes we say, "I really hope that my actions give results," other times you do something and you say, "Well, I hope this doesn't give results." You try to convince yourself that the law of karma is something you can turn on and off. But actions always give results, and the results are in line with the quality of the action, and particularly the quality of the intention behind the action.

So if you want good results, you have to make sure that the intentions are good. If you want those good results to be consistently good, then you have to make sure your intentions are consistently good. Remind yourself that you have the choice: You don't have to act on every

intention that comes in the mind. Even though some of the unskillful ones based on greed, aversion, and delusion seem awfully strong, they don't have to overwhelm the mind.

The mind can strengthen itself in its conviction that its actions really do matter; in its persistence, really sticking with doing what's good; mindfulness, remembering what's good so that you can apply it; this will bring the mind to concentration; and then the discernment: All these things are strengths of mind that enable you to do consistently the right thing.

In that way, the happiness that you want—the happiness we all want—will be consistent as well. The results have to come from causes, and the causes are there in your mind. So make sure they're in good order and that nothing else comes in to overthrow them.