

## *Informed About Your World*

*May 4, 2013*

Close your eyes and watch your breath.

Watch it all the way in, all the way out. You've got to stay right here if you want to see anything. All too often we live our life in sound bites and film bites, little bits and pieces of things. We're jumping around all over the place and we don't get to see anything continuously. But how can you hope to understand anything unless you stick with it and stay with it over time?

Like your mind: What is your mind doing? What are the results of what it's doing? You want to stay right close to the mind so that you can watch this, but all too often we're jumping off someplace else. So take this time to be here and *stay* here to watch what's happening.

As the Buddha said, the basic insight that he gained on the night on his awakening was understanding causality: in other words what causes what, and particularly what causes stress in the mind and what can be done to lead to the end of that stress. To see those connections, he had to stay there very continually. Then he came back and he told us what he saw, but for that knowledge to have the same impact on our minds, we have to see it for ourselves. In other words, we have to stay with our breath continually.

The breath is great for training the mind because it's the closest thing you have to the mind that's a physical phenomenon. Your primary sensation of the body is through the breath. And it's like a mirror for the mind. When greed comes up, there's going to be an impact on the breath. When anger comes up, it's going to have an effect on the breath. When fear... all kinds of these strong emotions, when they come up, are going to have an influence on the way you breathe, on the breath energy throughout the body. So if you're right here, you'll know quickly that something has happened. The telltale signs will be here.

So try to get familiar with this area and make this your default mode, the place where the mind goes when it's not engaged in other responsibilities. You come right back here because you're a lot more likely to see really interesting things here, really important things here.

They've got us thinking that we've got to be hooked into the news cycle in order to be informed about the world. But your world is shaped primarily by what you're doing right now, so you want to make sure that you're doing it really skillfully. Your life will be affected by other people's actions, that's for sure, but the really important actions are the ones you're doing.

As the Buddha said, you don't go to heaven or to hell because of other people's actions. Even within this lifetime, people can mistreat you but if your mind is well trained you don't suffer. People can treat you well but if your mind *isn't* trained, you'll suffer.

It's the training of the mind that makes all the difference. So try to focus your attention here and keep it here as continuously as you can.