

Attention to Intention

June 6, 2017

Close your eyes. Watch your breath. As it comes in, keep with it all the way in; as it goes out, stay with the breath all the way out.

Make up your mind that you're going to stay right here, and then stick to your intention. Our lives are shaped by our intentions, so you want to make sure that if you have some good intentions, you stick with them. So this is giving you some practice.

Now it's going to require mindfulness, that you remember the intention; and alertness to watch what you're actually doing; and then ardency, to make sure you do it right. You put your whole heart into this.

After all, the training of the mind is essential for any kind of happiness. We see people in the world who have lots and lots of things, lots and lots of power, lots and lots of relationships, but they're not really happy. We see other people who are relatively poor but they can be happy. The difference lies in the mind.

And these are qualities that can be trained into the mind, which is what we do with this mindfulness, alertness, and ardency, realizing that this really does merit our whole attention, so we put our whole heart into it.

We're doing something good. We're training the mind to find a happiness that's totally blameless: It doesn't harm you, doesn't harm other people. Most of the happiness in the world is harmful in one way or another, especially if it comes from gain or status or praise: You gain, somebody else loses; somebody else gains, you lose. But with the happiness that comes from meditation, as with the happiness that comes from generosity and virtue, nobody loses. Everybody gains.

So here you are, with a happiness that spreads its happiness around. It's not just confined to you or a few people around you. It spreads its influence out into the world at large.

This is something really worth sticking with, something really worth training the mind in, giving it your full attention.