

Resourcefulness

January 4, 2018

Ajaan Mun used to remind his monks that they had everything they needed to train the mind. That all you need is a human body, all you need is some mindfulness and some resourcefulness.

And it's good to think about that, too. Oftentimes when meditation gets dry, we need to give ourselves pep talks, to remind ourselves that we do have resources we can draw on. Don't overlook the things that are right in front of you. You've got the breath; you've got your mindfulness. You can put those together.

Then if they don't stay together, figure out what you can do to change – either your state of mind or your breath. Sometimes the stories you're telling yourself are just getting in the way, so put them aside. Say, "What have I got right here, right now?" You've got an opportunity right here, right now.

When the Buddha says to be present in the present moment, it's not because it's a wonderful place. It's the place where the work can be done. We don't know how much longer we'll have this opportunity but we have it right now. So take advantage of what you've got right now. Don't cast it away, don't throw it away. Look into the possibilities that are here.

As for the voices in the mind that say, "I can't do this, I can't do that," learn to question them. For some reason, the negative voices seem to have more reality than the positive voices. But you look at the Buddha's voice. Even though he talked about suffering, the main message he had was that there is an end to suffering. It can be done. Think of all the discouragement he had: people trying to keep him from going out and finding the truth. But he didn't let that dissuade him. I'm sure that when he went into the forest, he carried a lot of attitudes that he had to sort through and get rid of before he was able to find the truth.

We have to do the same ourselves. Sort through the attitudes that are getting in the way and hold on to the attitudes that say that there's hope, there's a possibility. It is possible to train the mind, it is possible to find a responsible happiness inside. And you've got what it takes.