

## *Trusting Yourself*

*March 4, 2018*

Close your eyes and watch your breath. Make up your mind you're going to stay right here, watching the breath coming in, watching the breath going out.

Remind yourself of why you're doing this. It's to get the mind under some control. You tell it to do something, you want it to do what you told it. You don't want your own mind to be a traitor to yourself. You make up your mind to do something good, you want to stick with that all the way through. If you suddenly find yourself following some other mood going off someplace else, it's a sign you can't trust your own mind. And if you can't trust your own mind, who can you trust? As the Buddha said, "The self is its own mainstay, for who else could be your mainstay?"

We look at the world around us, there's a lot of dishonesty going on, people playing all kinds of tricks on one another. You look for something outside that's solid and dependable, but you're not going to find it unless you've built something solid and dependable first in yourself.

As the Buddha once said, "It requires a person of integrity to see who has integrity and who doesn't have integrity." In other words, when you make up your mind you're going to stick with something and you learn the qualities of mind that enable you to do that, then you begin to recognize them in other people. You're in a better position to see who's trustworthy and who's not. If you're not trustworthy with your own self, it's hard to detect who outside is trustworthy or not.

So take some time right now to be true to yourself. Make a promise to yourself that you're going to stay right here. It's the same with the precepts. We think in general terms, that killing, stealing, illicit sex, lying and taking intoxicants are not good things—you harm yourself, you harm other people—but then all of a sudden a mood comes into the mind, and you break one of the precepts. You have to look at those moods. You can't trust them. They're not on your side. Ajaan Lee says, "Think of them as the germs going through your brain or the germs in the blood and germs in our intestines: Maybe they have ideas, and maybe their ideas somehow get into our brain." He's using that as a strategy for figuring out what inside is trustworthy and what's not.

The things that you want to do and are going to be good for you in the long term: Those things you can trust. But just because something comes appearing in the mind doesn't mean you have to identify with that thought and claim it as yours. You say, "Maybe this is just somebody else's thought that's come in, somebody who doesn't mean well to me or doesn't care." Because if you follow that kind of thought, you don't care about yourself either. So if you really care about yourself, you want to do things that would be for your long-term happiness.

As the Buddha said, a sign of wisdom is when you know that there's something you like to do but it's going to give long-term harm, you know how to stop yourself from doing it. Or something you don't like to do but it's going to give long-term benefits, you can talk yourself into wanting to do it. That's wisdom. That's the kind of wisdom you can trust. It's nothing abstract and nothing far away. It's right here, your wisdom in managing your own mind.

Because the mind is the source of all your actions, and your actions, of course, are what shape your life. So you want to make sure that the source is in good shape, the source is reliable. If the source is reliable, then what comes out of the source can be depended on as well. If it's not reliable, well, where are you going to find something reliable?

So start by being true to yourself inside, in observing the precepts and in training the mind to come to some stillness. That way, you'll be able to see who's worthy of trust and who's not, who's honest and who's dishonest, because you've learned to build honesty in something trustworthy within yourself.