

Preparing the Mind to Work

January 12, 2015

When you focus on the breath, you find that the mind has a lot of other things it wants to do, too, and you have to learn how to let them go for the time being.

There will come a point where once the mind is still and solid, you can start looking at your thought processes and try to dig a little deeper into why you go running after certain things. But in the beginning stages, you have to learn how to back out of them as fast as you can.

It's like learning Thai boxing: The first thing they teach you is how to get out of a clench, how to back away from your opponent. You need to be able to pull yourself out of things before you can see them.

So if anything comes up in the mind, you just let it go, let it go. You say, "If it seems important, I'll deal with this later." But right now you've got to put yourself in a position where it can deal with things properly.

To make another comparison: It's like trying to teach kids but you haven't got your lesson plans in order and you haven't got your desk in order and you're not even properly dressed. If any kids come running into the room, you drive them out for the time being. You say, "Not yet!" When you get everything ready, then the kids are allowed into the room.

So try to develop this quality of mind and at the same time let things go from the time being. Part of the mind will say, "Wait a minute. This is interesting," or, "This is important," or, "That's entertaining," but you've got to realize you need a bigger skill than just being interested or entertained.

As for the importance of things, especially things you're going to think about with regard to the future: You really don't know what's going to happen in the future for sure, but you do know that whatever happens, especially if it's something surprising and unexpected, you're going to need a lot of mindfulness, you're going to need a lot of alertness, you're going to need a lot of discernment to figure out what the right thing is to do.

Well, those are the qualities you're developing right now. So take this time to clean things out inside. Get everything ready. Get the mind rested so that you can do your work. Some people just stop at that point of just letting go, letting go, letting go, thinking that's what it's all about. But that's not the case. That's just one preliminary step. You're letting go so that when you're ready to deal with these things, you can bring them back in on your terms.

When anger comes up, you can really look at it and not get sucked into it

because you know how to step out. Greed comes up, lust comes up, fear, jealousy:
You know how to step out of these things. That's how you can come to
understand them.