

## *The Bottom Line*

*July 1, 2017*

Close your eyes and watch your breath. Try to stay with the breath all the way in, all the way out. If your mind wanders off, bring it right back. If it wanders off again, bring it back again.

It's like training a puppy. You've got to show it that you mean business. So you have to be firm, but at the same time you have to give rewards. In this case, the reward is trying to see what kind of breathing feels really good inside—the kind of breathing that's refreshing; energizing when you need energy; relaxing when you're tense. But the purpose of the reward is to make the mind behave. So if the mind is not behaving, you just keep bringing it back, bringing it back, bringing it back.

This principle of training the mind is the basis of all we do, it's the purpose of everything we do here. When we have ordinations, when we have Kathin, when we have donations, when we observe the precepts, when we have rains retreats, whatever: It's all for the purpose of training the mind, one way or another.

Generosity trains the mind so that you learn to be more mindful of the needs of others, more attentive to the needs of others, realizing that your happiness spreads around and is not diminished when you're being generous. In fact, it grows more.

Virtue is to remind you that you have to keep the mind under control. There are certain things you may want to do but will be harmful, so you have to tell yourself No.

And of course, meditation trains the mind directly. It's all for the purpose of this.

So always keep that in the back of your mind as you go through the activities of the day. "This is related in one way or another to the training of the mind": That's the bottom line here at the monastery, which is different from the bottom line out there in the world. Out in the world, everything is about money. Happiness is equated with money out there. Here happiness is equated with training the mind.

Which is why we have a different kind of economy here, we have what's called the economy of gifts. Nobody charges for anything, which means that we're like a large family. Everybody shares. Those who have knowledge share knowledge; those who have wealth, share wealth; those who have energy share their energy without thinking of the price. We think instead about how good this is going to be in training the mind.

So keep that in mind as you go through the activities of the day: It's all aimed at the stillness of a trained mind, it's all aimed at the harmony of a trained mind. Try to maintain that harmony throughout the day in all of your activities.