

## *Bow Down to Your Desire for Happiness*

*November 19, 2017*

Close your eyes and watch your breath. Make up your mind that for the sake of training your mind you're going to stay right here.

Because the mind does need to be trained. It's like a little puppy. If you don't train it, it can create all kinds of messes in your life, tearing up things that otherwise would be useful. So if you train it to have some restraint—what things should be taken, what things should not be taken, what things should be thought about, what thoughts you can put aside—then the mind becomes really useful and you can use it for really good purposes.

One of which is for the purpose of true happiness, a happiness that goes really deep, that's totally blameless. And is actually free: It depends on developing your own skills inside. You don't have to buy it from anybody or rent it from anybody. It's all based on your own inner resources: You've got the breath, you've got the sense of the body, you've got your awareness. These things are yours. Put them together so that they can grow.

In this way, we show respect for a really deep wish in our heart, which is a happiness that lasts and a happiness that doesn't harm anybody. This is something you should respect, which is one of the reasons why we bow down to the Buddha. We have a lot of respect for him because he shows us, one, that that happiness is real, and two, that we can get it. And it really is a worthwhile goal.

There's so much in life that tells us otherwise, that true happiness isn't really real and "Buy our goods instead, to make yourself happy." Those are the people who are trying to make you miserable inside so that they can take advantage of that misery. It's going to be especially bad now at this time of year: that season is starting. Now is the season to be greedy: That's what people want out of you. But is that what you want for your own sake? The answer of course is No, you want something better. So you want to have some respect for that desire for something better.

They may tell you that true happiness isn't possible, but the Buddha says that it is. This is why we bow down to him, to remind ourselves again and again and again of the example he set, that true happiness is something harmless and it's something that can be found inside, and we have it within our power to do it. So we want to keep those thoughts in mind.

Remember that meditation is one of the ways of doing it, along with virtue and generosity. These practices are how we find happiness within. It doesn't come from getting, it comes from giving. And then the what you get that comes from what you give has a lot more solid value than things that just come floating your way.

So bow down to your desire for true happiness. Bow down to your ability to find that. Show respect for the fact that you're a human being who has these capabilities. That'll help you

withstand a lot of the pressures that come from outside that think of you just as a member of the economy and nothing better. You have something higher in life, you have the goodness of the heart that doesn't want to be harmful. But you also have that thirst inside for a happiness that you can depend on, a happiness that's not going to turn on you.

The Buddha says that this is a desire worth maintaining, worth protecting. So bow down to your human capabilities. Bow down to your desire for the true happiness that can be found through human capabilities. By bowing down we mean: Give them priority, make them important. The rest of life can sort itself out as of lesser importance, but make sure that your desire for true happiness always comes first.