

Seeing the Mind Create Stress

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When you meditate, you get to watch your mind. You focus on the breath, but you can't help but seeing the mind.

In the beginning, it's difficult because you see the mind wandering all over the place. You tell it to stay put and it's like a little puppy that hasn't been trained. It comes running right after you and then running away. But you have to be very firm with it and keep bringing it back, bringing it back, bringing it back. And after a while it gets a little bit more tame.

But even then you can see that the mind has a huge potential for creating a lot of stress. We don't like to see this but if we don't see it, then there's no way we're going to be able to cure the problem. So just accept that fact: The mind creates a lot, a lot of stress for itself. Even though everything we do is for the sake of happiness, still we can create a lot of pain.

So try to give the mind a sense of well-being here with the breath so that the normal happiness that it goes running out after things outside doesn't have quite so much appeal. There's not that hunger to go running around. Allow the mind to settle in and then you'll be able to see that when you leave here you're creating a lot of trouble for the most part.

Now, there are times when you do have to think and you do have to plan. But most of our thinking is like a radio that's kept on all day, all day, all day. It's like going to someone's house where they have the TV on all day, all day. Whether they're listening or not, it's there in the background and it's seeping into their minds. The same with all this thinking that goes on in the mind: So much of it is just background noise and yet it does have a big impact on the mind.

You want to be able to see that. And to see that you have to get the mind really, really still. That's when you see that the suffering it causes itself can be cured. You don't have to do those things.

This is why the Buddha's teachings are not pessimistic. He talks about suffering and stress, but that's not the end of the story. The end of the story is the end of suffering, the end of stress. It's something we can all do if we put our minds to it.

This is how we get started: getting the mind to settle down. Once it's settled down, then you can see when it's moving. If it's not settled down it's always moving around so you have no idea which movements cause which experiences of stress. But when things are very still in the mind, you can begin to see connections.

