

## *Something Good to Hold on to*

*July 18, 2018*

Close your eyes and watch your breath. Try to keep your mind with the sensation of the breathing, all the way through the in-breath, all the way through the out-.

See if you can get some control over your mind. The mind is capable of creating all kinds of things, so you have to be careful what it's going to create. If something is worth thinking about, tell it to think about it. If it's something's not worth thinking about it, you want to be able to say No, it's a waste of your energy, a waste of your time. And sometimes it's worse than just a waste. It actually has a bad effect on the mind.

You notice this especially as the body gets weaker, when you're sick or you're getting older. You don't have the strength of body to depend on so much, and the thoughts in the mind really begin to take over. They say, "You've got to do this. You've got to do this. Hold on to that. Hold on to this. Worry about this. Worry about that." A lot of it is just garbage that the mind keeps creating, and then it sends you the garbage to feed on. So you have to be able to say, "No. We're not going to go and think about those things. We're going to think about things that are actually of use to us as we do good, as we put the mind in good shape." That way, even though as the body weakens, the mind doesn't have to weaken. You can keep your morale up, realizing that even though things may look bad outside, or things may even look bad inside your body, they don't have to be bad inside your mind.

The mind is not just the effect of things in the body or the effect of things outside. It's an instigator. It's the beginning point of lots of things. So have it create good things, things that will be of use, thoughts that will be of use to you: thoughts of kindness, thoughts of being restrained, thoughts of knowing where to focus your attention so that you don't have to suffer.

That way, your mind turns from just this unruly child into your friend, a reliable friend. That's what we need as we go through life, because who else are we going to depend on? In the beginning we depend on our parents, but then our parents begin to age and we find that we have to depend on ourselves. At first the body is dependable, but then after a while it starts to show its malfunctions. So what you've got left is just the mind. So try to get the mind in good shape from the very beginning, so that when the time comes that that's all you've got left to hold on to, you've got something good to hold on to, something that pulls you up rather than pulling you down.

And it starts with simple exercises like this: telling it to stay with the breath and then making sure it stays there. Try to make sure the breath is comfortable so that it's easier to stay here, more pleasant to stay here, so you get a sense that, Yes, the mind under control is something really good.

It's like animals that have been trained. When they haven't been trained, they just create lots of messes. When they've been trained, they can do work for you. You can live with them and be at peace. So you want to be able to make sure your mind is trained so that you can live with it and be at peace. Through its thoughts, the words, and the deeds that you do, you'll have something that pulls you up rather than dragging you down.