

BASIC BUDDHIST MEDITATION



NaturalAwareness.net

FOUR TRUTHS

- Dissatisfaction (suffering, difficulty, discomfort) arises.
- Dissatisfaction is caused by struggling (a.k.a. craving, attachment, reactive emotion).
- Dissatisfaction can be ended.
- The path to end dissatisfaction is bringing attention and skillful response to every aspect of experience: understanding, intention, speech, action, livelihood, effort, meditation, attention.

REACTIVE PATTERNS: THREE POISONS

The reactive patterns that create dissatisfaction are due to misperceiving the nature of our experience.

- We ignore how things are.
- We crave experiences we like.
- We reject experiences we don't like.

Through cultivating attention we come to know how things are, so we can discriminate between actions that lead to dissatisfaction and actions that relieve dissatisfaction.

ATTENTION: STABILITY & CLARITY

Buddhist meditation is the cultivation of attention. Attention is comprised of *stability* (shamatha) and *clarity* (vipashyana). Attention is a volitional physical and emotional energy mixed with experience as it arises.

- Stability comes from *returning* to the naturally breathing body, and *resting* in that experience.
- Clarity is the clear seeing that comes from *looking (listening, feeling)* deeply into our experience.

FOUR FOUNDATIONS OF AWARENESS

- Experience consists of *sensations* that evoke
- *Feelings* of like, dislike, indifference. which evolve into
- *Thoughts and emotions* and
- *Dualistic consciousness* that separates awareness (self) from experience (objects).

FIVE HINDRANCES TO STABLE & CLEAR ATTENTION

- *Busyness*: distraction, obsessive thinking, emotional drama. Relax and rest in the breathing body.
- *Dullness*: sinking, torpor, laziness. Look deeply into sensations and feelings as they arise.
- *Attachment*: craving certain experiences. Recognize attachment and return to the breathing body.
- *Aversion*: rejecting certain experiences. Recognize aversion and return to the breathing body.
- *Doubt*: circular thoughts and emotions that derail our cultivation of attention. Drop expectations about the results of practice, and return to the method: rest in sensations, feelings, thoughts and emotions as they arise.

PURPOSE, METHOD, EFFECTS, & RESULT OF PRACTICE

- *Purpose*: to dismantle the reactive patterns that create suffering for ourselves and others.
- *Method*: return to the natural breathing of the body, and rest in sensations, feelings, thoughts as they arise.
- *Effects*: vivid awareness of pleasant and unpleasant sensations, feelings, thoughts, and emotions.
- *Result*: stable and clear attention that enables us to discriminate what is skillful and what is not.

BRINGING ATTENTION TO EVERY ASPECT OF EXPERIENCE

We can end our suffering by knowing the nature of our experience and choosing between skillful and unskillful thoughts, words, and deeds. As Ken McLeod says, we need to *know how* to cultivate attention; we need to *build our capacity* in attention by practicing consistently; we need to be *willing* to open to experience as it arises.

With stable and clear attention, we have the possibility to take *responsibility* for our experience and actions.

May all be healthy, happy, at ease in their body, at home in the world.