

LETTING BE

When we begin sitting, it is always good to start with the practice question: "What is going on right now?"---becoming aware of state of mind, state of body, as well as sensory input from the environment.

As a basic theme for our sitting: No matter what we bring in the door, no matter how we may be feeling, either physically or emotionally---to simply sit here and let it be.

To remember that no matter what may be happening with us, that it doesn't have to be seen as an obstacle or an enemy, as something to fix, or change, or get rid of. In fact, from a practice point of view, whatever it is, it's our path.

So the theme is to simply let it be. This is not a passive or pseudo detachment; we still need the discipline to stay present, to remain still, and especially, to choose in each moment not to spin off, and to be precise in our self-observation. But I'm talking about an attitude of mind that's just willing to look---to really just ask: "What is this?"---to whatever arises. To simply want to know, to be with, to reside in, the truth of the moment.

When we sit, struggling is always optional. "Suffering" also, in a way, is optional. That is, we don't have to suffer our suffering! We can just observe it, experience it, then let it be.

I'm not talking about calling it illusion and pretending to let it go---that wouldn't be real. I'm talking about a certain lightness of heart that is possible to bring to our sitting---a certain sense of spaciousness---a willingness to cease all of our hard hearted judgments about ourselves. Basically, ceasing resistance to what is. And, over time, a willingness to be with, and perhaps even enjoy on some level, our repeating patterns, our little human drama, the whole passing show.

Sometimes we may have anxiety. The practice is to feel it, hear the thoughts, and just let it be there.

Sometimes we may be tired or sleepy. The practice is to really feel that, and then to just let it be there.

Sometimes we may feel resistance, or feel discouraged in our sitting. The practice here is---what? Again, it's to truly feel and experience that resistance or discouragement, and then to simply let it be there.

Whatever self-beliefs arise, such as: "I'm just too tired", or "This is too painful", or "I can't do this", or "I'll never be good at this"; if we can just notice them for what they are, and then just let them be---instead of believing in them as the truth---we can begin to soften around our judgemental mind, and come to see that these negative self-beliefs are not the deepest truths about ourselves.

We can then begin to relax into our sitting---essentially, relax into our life.

And perhaps even get a glimpse of the profound yet simple truth that all we really need to learn is the willingness to just be.