

Settling back into the moment

a meditator's inspirational guide



*A selection of verses from the book
The Experience of Insight by Joseph Goldstein*

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Please pass this book around should you feel that you do not need it anymore. As the Buddha taught, the gift of Truth excels all other gifts! May all have the chance to know the Dharma.

SETTLING BACK INTO THE MOMENT

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• Touching Peace in Our Lives •

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A word of thanks to Joseph Goldstein for his kind permission
to reprint excerpts from his book entitled *The Experience of Insight*.
Illustrations shown on the inside pages do not necessarily exemplify the words.

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PREFACE

This book belongs to a different genre; not a book in the sense of having a beginning and an end; where a reader reads from left to right for continuity.

It is a compilation of excerpts that ably stand alone in meaning whichever way your finger may flip open the pages; for these are words of timeless truths devoid of space and time; words that are meant for your reflection now and here; words that talk straight to your heart and mind; words that are very close to you, as close as your breath.

To the uninitiated, the words may conjure a seemingly new vista of neither looking backwards nor ahead. Keep on reading and be inspired. At least you are aware that sitting and looking at the moment can be such a big subject worth many words. Not a dull subject, huh?



To the initiated, let the words refresh and advise. By thus knowing what the road signs will be and what is expected from oneself in the journey, a yogi is better equipped to disentangle from a maze of wrong turnings and avoid going in circles.

As the saying goes, a journey begins with a single step. We might as well start right now by going through short sessions of meditation daily. After all, mountain climbers started off climbing walls. Mental culture or in this case, Insight meditation is not to be deemed practicable only at a retreat. If at a place where solitude and quietude is of greater magnitude, how could one adjust from home where latitude breeds lassitude?

It is often remarked that opportunity knocks but once. This is utterly not true in the context of insight meditation. Opportunity does not start at the doorstep of a retreat. As Joseph Goldstein puts it ". . . *situation of retreats did not happen by chance. It happened because there were strong forces of purity within each of us. . .*" If you have the opportunity to attend retreats why waste it. . .

Meditation teachers have always encouraged yogis to familiarize their minds with meditation prior to each actual retreat. For instance, one could practise a short session of meditation daily for a week or two (but of course, practising every-day is always called for). If a yogi enters a retreat without getting acquainted with the practice, he or she has to 'struggle' mentally for a few days before the mind settles down. By then, two or three days could have lapsed; a sheer loss for those (earning a living) who have to 'fight' for a week or less of holidays to embark on a retreat.



This does not mean to say that those with lots of time in their hands could say "What is two or three days?" Never heard of death giving priorities. Have you?

Reading this book now and perhaps ten years later will definitely yield a different perspective; a different depth of meaning.

Sketches in the book are not meant to exemplify the words; but are graphics to break the monotony of words.

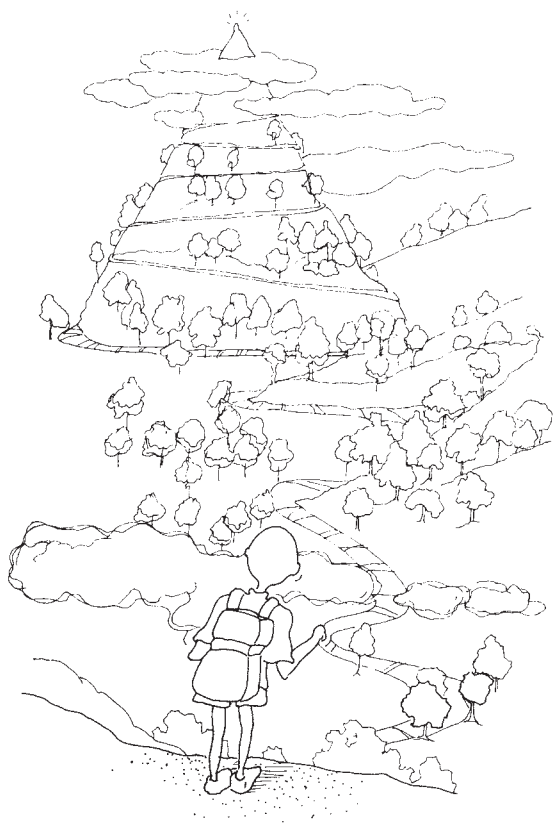
It is hoped that this compilation will guide many to realizing the fruit of the practice. If this compendium, speaks to a thousand in order to propel one to urgently allow the experience of insight to engulf him or her, the book would have achieved its noble purpose.

Readers are strongly encouraged to read Joseph Goldstein's "*Experience of Insight—a simple and direct guide to Buddhist Meditation*" (published by Shambala Publication, Inc.*) from whose book this compilation is attributed.

Maha sadhu to all the kind people who have helped to defray the cost of this reprint. Finally, may this book successfully arouse continuous effort and confidence in all meditators striving for the Path.

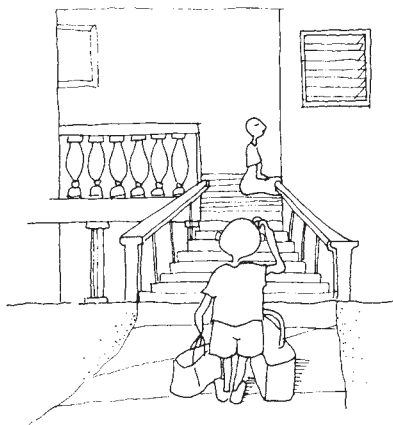
* Shambala Publication, Inc.
Horticultural Hall
300 Massachusetts Avenue
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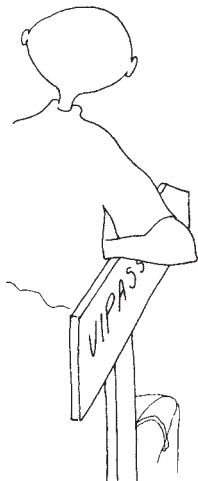
You may write locally to **Sukhi Hotu** for the above mentioned book and other titles.



We have all begun
a journey.
A journey into our minds.
A journey of
discovery and exploration
of who and what we are.
Taking the first step is difficult,
and in the first days of practice
there is often
restlessness,
or sleepiness,
some boredom,
laziness,
doubts,
and perhaps regret
about getting involved at all.

It's not an easy thing
that we have set
about to do,
this
*training and purification
of the mind.*



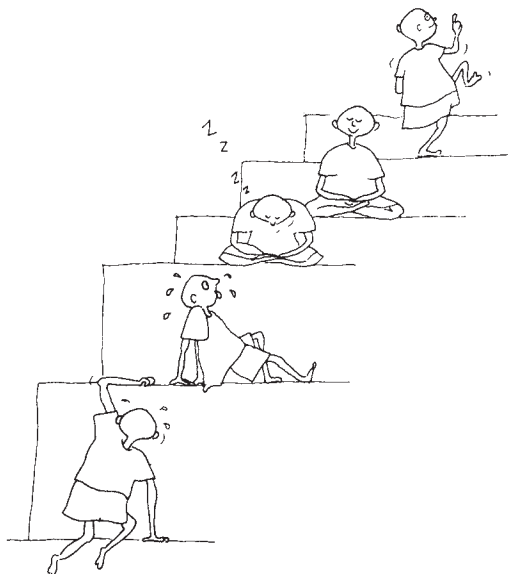


THERE'S NO ONE ELSE
WHO CAN DO IT FOR US.
WE EACH HAVE TO DO IT
FOR OURSELVES.

BE AWARE,
MOMENT TO MOMENT,
PAYING ATTENTION
TO WHAT'S HAPPENING
IN A TOTAL WAY.

THERE'S NOTHING
MYSTICAL ABOUT IT,
IT'S SO SIMPLE,
DIRECT AND
STRAIGHTFORWARD;
BUT IT TAKES DOING.

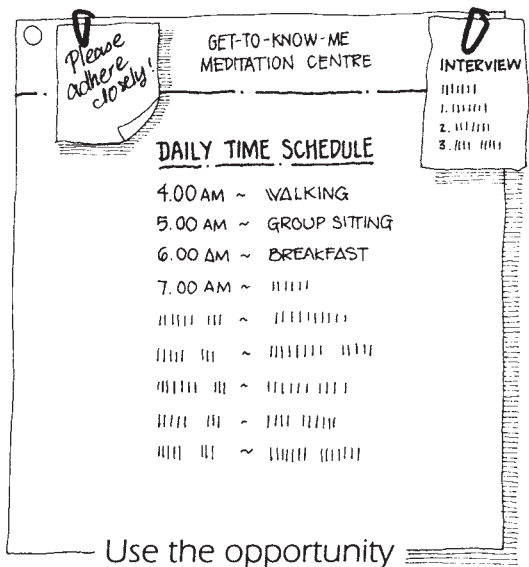
THAT'S WHAT MEDITATION IS ALL ABOUT.



The first step
is difficult for everyone.

The spiritual quest
we are embarking upon
is a rare and precious undertaking,
so be gentle yet persevering
through any beginning difficulties.





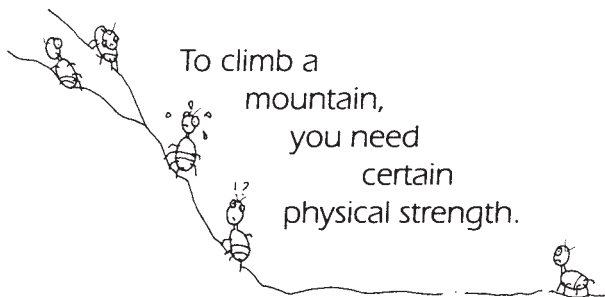
Use the opportunity
of
RETREATS
to the fullest:
don't waste time or
think you've done enough.

The highest kind of happiness
is
VIPASSANA HAPPINESS,
the happiness of insight,
seeing how things are working.
It is a very happy state
when one begins to appreciate
with a beginner's mind
every moment
as new,
as fresh.

So there is a great delight
in existence which comes from a
beginner's mind,
from a deconditioned mind,
a mind that is
experiencing directly
rather than thinking
about everything.

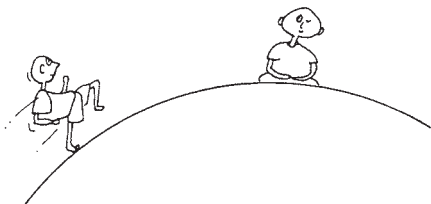


The first days of a retreat may seem difficult because concentration is not well-developed.



If you are not yet strong, in the beginning you will feel tired and uncomfortable. But as the body gets stronger, climbing becomes easier.

It is the same in meditation. As concentration is developed, it becomes less difficult to stay in the moment.



To practise and understand the Dhamma is a rare and precious thing.

Few people in the world are presented with this opportunity.



Most people are circling around, driven by ignorance and desire, unaware of the **possibility** of getting off this wheel of *samsara*, the wheel of greed and hatred.





The endless cycle of desire for sense pleasures keeps the mind in turbulence and confusion.

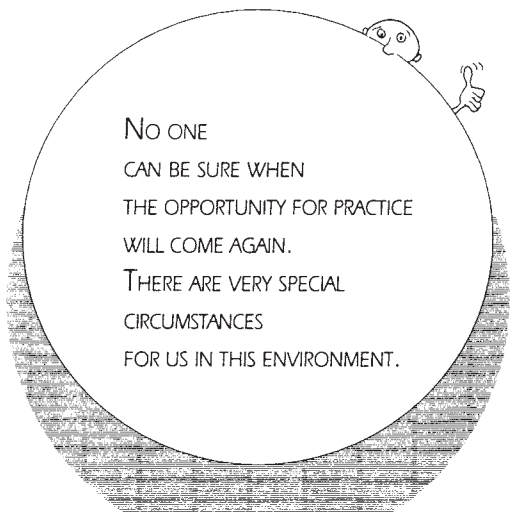
**When we learn
to let go,
the lighter the mind
becomes.**

Then there is no disturbance, no tension, and we begin to free ourselves from our storehouse of conditioning, from our bondage to sense desires.



THE
DEVELOPING OF INSIGHT
MEANS
EXPERIENCING THE FLOW
OF IMPERMANENCE
WITHIN OURSELVES
SO THAT WE BEGIN
TO LET GO,
NOT GRASPING
SO DESPERATELY AT
MIND-BODY PHENOMENA.





NO ONE
CAN BE SURE WHEN
THE OPPORTUNITY FOR PRACTICE
WILL COME AGAIN.
THERE ARE VERY SPECIAL
CIRCUMSTANCES
FOR US IN THIS ENVIRONMENT.

IT IS THE PERFECT PLACE TO
EXPLORE OURSELVES,
TO FIND OUT WHO WE ARE.

DON'T WASTE THE OPPORTUNITY





What we're doing
in coming to an understanding
of ourselves
is the
NOBLEST THING
that can be done.

It is
the eradication
from the mind
of greed,
of hatred and
of delusion.



It is.....



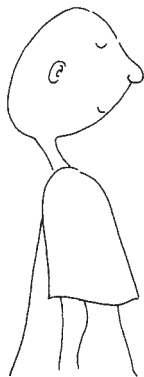


.....DIFFICULT AND RARE
and requires
great impeccability.



Impeccability means
cultivating qualities of mind
which bring about
totality and wakefulness
in every moment.





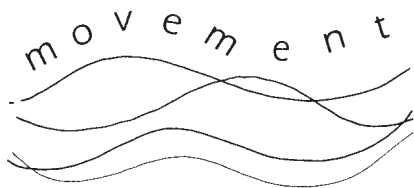
Do not control or
force our breath in any way.

Merely staying attentively
to the rising and falling
movement of the abdomen.



Just.....
keep your attention
on the
movement of the abdomen.

Not imagining,
not visualizing anything
but just
experiencing the sensation
of the



*IF THE HEART WANDERS
OR IS DISTRACTED,
BRING IT BACK
TO THE POINT GENTLY.....
AND EVEN
IF YOU DID NOTHING
DURING
THE WHOLE OF YOUR HOUR
BUT BRING
YOUR HEART BACK,
THOUGH
IT WENT AWAY
EVERY TIME
YOU BROUGHT IT BACK,
YOUR HOUR
WOULD BE
VERY WELL-EMPLOYED.*

~ St. Francis de Sales ~



Our rising and falling may
be . . .

sometimes **long**

sometimes short

sometimes clear

sometimes **NOT**

sometimes **deep**

sometimes shallow

No matter what,

remember,

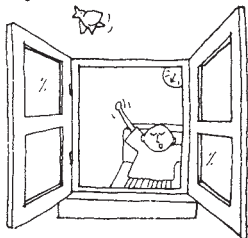
it is not a breathing exercise;

it is the beginning exercise

in mindfulness.

DAILY ACTIVITIES

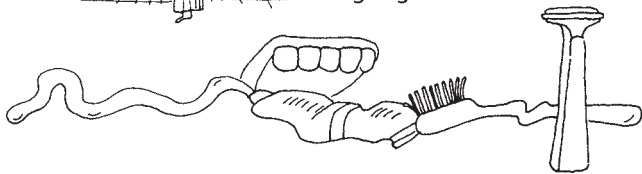
It is important to develop a steady penetrating awareness with regard to everything we do, from the time of waking up in the morning to the time of going to sleep.

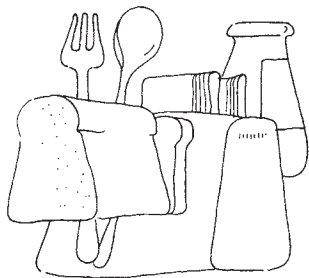


Just upon awakening be aware of "rising-falling", and from that first moment be mindful of the actions involved in getting up and washing,



beginning to walk, going to sit and then in standing again and going for food.





In lying down to sleep, be with the "rising-falling" until the last moment before sleep.

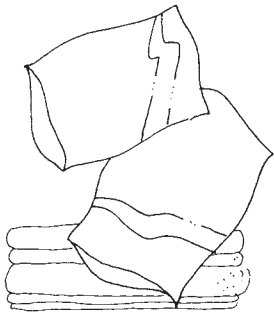
This kind of attention will be of great benefit in the meditation practice.

If there is the idea that the practice is only sitting and walking, and the rest of the time is not important, then in all those breaks we lose the momentum that has been building.

Cultivating a strong awareness in every action throughout the day helps the mind to remain concentrated and still.

It is this kind of determination and balance of mind out of which

enlightenment happens.



Seeing, seeing
intending, intending
moving, moving
touching, touching
lifting, lifting
opening, opening
putting, putting
closing, closing
feeling, feeling
chewing, chewing
tasting, tasting
swallowing, swallowing



Be aware of the whole sequence involved.

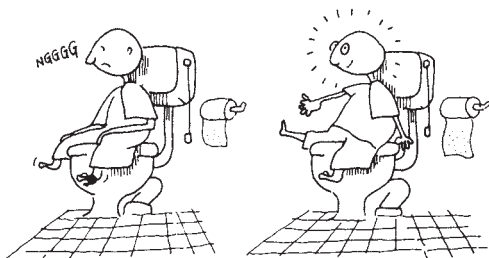
There is no one behind it, no one who is eating - merely sequence of intentions, movements, taste, touch sensations. *That's what we are.*

And being very mindful of the flow, we free ourselves from the concept of self.



There
are no circumstances at all
which we should consider
unworthy of awareness.

The
sudden deep intuition of truth
can happen in a moment,
when all
the factors of enlightenment
ripen and come together
in the right balance.



When I was in India, I lived on the second floor of an ashram.

I used to go up and down the steps many times a day, each time exploring the mechanism of climbing a step, how the knee has to work, how the weight shifts.

It's an interesting process.

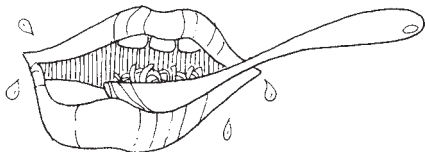
In all of the activities, there should be that kind of interest.

Seeing, exploring how things are happening.

Joseph Goldstein



Usually we eat very unmindfully.
Taste comes and goes very quickly.
While food is still in the mouth,
because of desire and greed for
continuing taste sensations,
the arm reaches for more
and generally we are unaware
of the whole process involved.



Finish

each mouthful before reaching
for another.

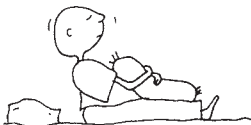
In this way we become sensitive
to our bodies and how much food
we need. It's very hard to overeat
when you eat mindfully.

Incorporate the eating meditation
into your daily practice so there is no gap in
the continuity of awareness.

There is no knowing
when the clouds of ignorance
will be dispelled.



It can happen
even in the
process of
lying down to sleep.



BE MINDFUL!

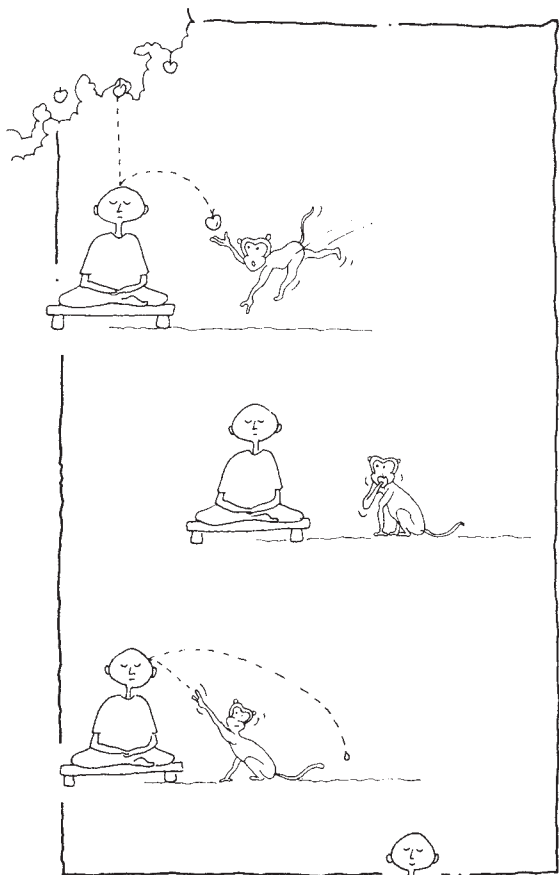


In every single moment,
be watchful,
awake to what's happening.





through
the continuity of
AWARENESS

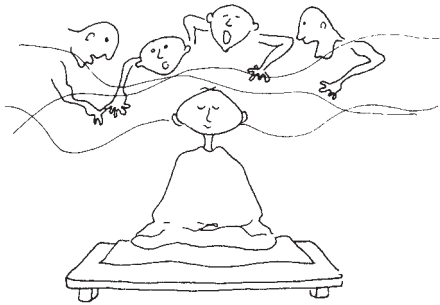


BARE ATTENTION



This is one quality of mind
which is the basis and
foundation of spiritual discovery.

Bare attention means
observing things as they are,
without choosing,
without comparing,
without evaluating,
without laying our projections
and expectations
on to what is happening:
cultivating instead a choiceless
and non-interfering
awareness.



An untrained mind is often reactive,
clinging to what is pleasant,
condemning what is unpleasant,
grasping what is liked,
pushing away what is disliked,
reacting with greed and hatred.

“A TIRING UNBALANCED MIND”

As bare attention is cultivated
more and more
we learn to experience
our thoughts and feelings,
situation and other people,
without the tension of attachment
or aversion.

***We begin to have
a full and total experiencing
of what it is
that's happening
with a restful and balanced mind.***


The awareness
of bare attention is *not* limited
to a certain time of sitting
in the morning and evening.

To think
that sitting meditation
is the time for awareness
and the rest of the day is not,
fragments our lives and
undermines a real growth of
understanding.

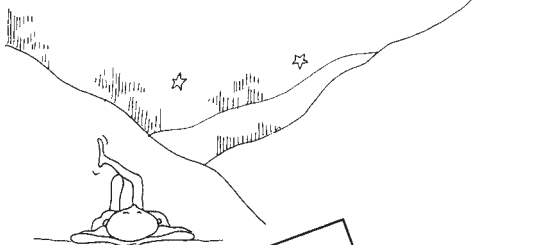
Mindfulness
is applicable and appropriate
in each moment,
whether we are

- ▲ *sitting,*
- ▲ *standing,*
- ▲ *lying down,*
- ▲ *talking or*
- ▲ *eating.*





WE SHOULD
CULTIVATE
THE STATE OF
BARE ATTENTION
ON ALL OBJECTS,
ON ALL STATES OF MIND,
IN ALL SITUATIONS.



EVERY MOMENT
SHOULD BE LIVED
COMPLETELY
AND
WHOLEHEARTEDLY.



In this period of training everything is slowed down so we have the chance to carefully examine what's happening.

When mindfulness is well-developed, you can do things quickly as well. But this is a time for training, There is no hurry.

Do everything slowly, with silence and awareness.



From the moment you get up, through everything done in the day, be very mindful, make it all meditation.



There is
GREAT VALUE in slowing
down all our activities.

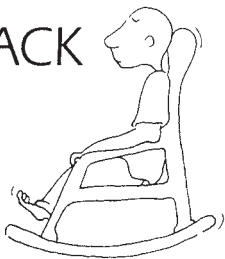
No hurry.

No place to go.

Nothing else to do.

But just a

SETTLING BACK
INTO THE
MOMENT.



HASTEN SLOWLY



Hasten in the sense of being continuous and unrelenting in our effort, but do so with poise and equanimity.

Persistent and full of effort yet very relaxed and balanced.

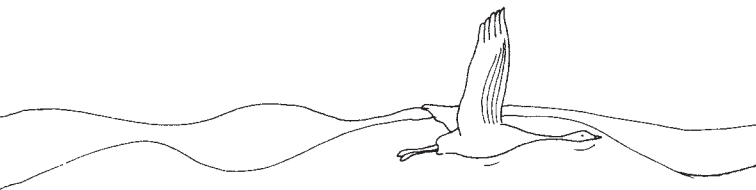


Emerging
from

darkness
of the cave

into the
light of freedom
and
peace

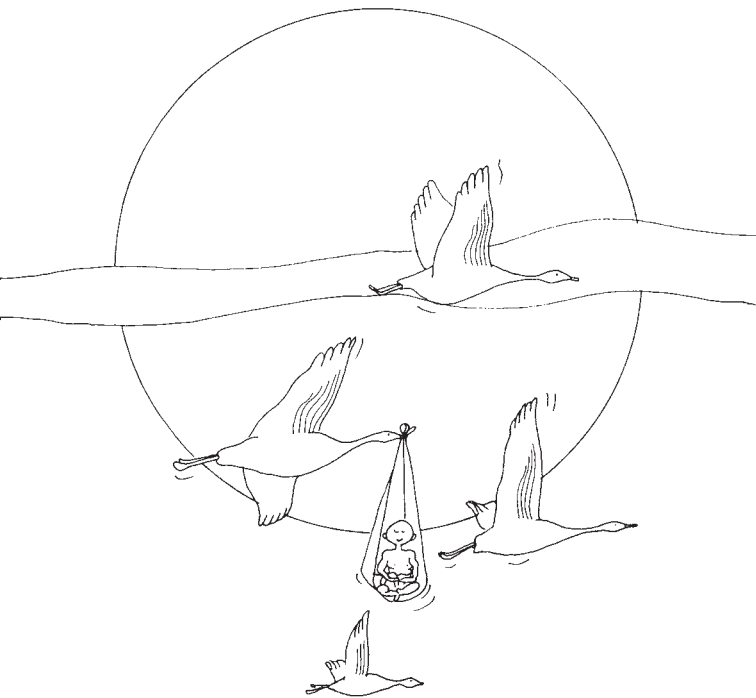
People progress in different
ways.



But no matter how, if we're
facing in the right direction,
all we have to do
is keep on walking.

If it takes a year,
or sixty years
or five lifetimes,
as long as we're heading
towards **LIGHT**,
that's all that matters.

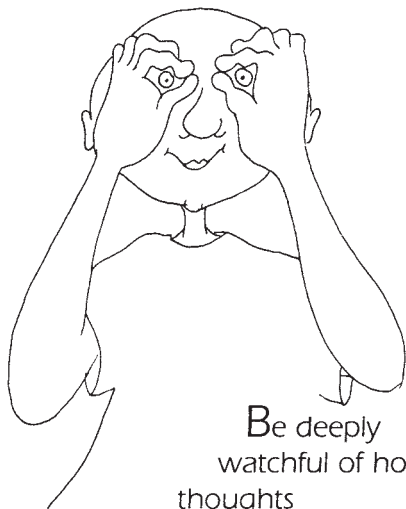






The whole development of awareness comes from experiencing things with **a silent mind,** not with our thoughts and concepts about them.





Be deeply
watchful of how
thoughts
arise out of nothing
and pass away into
nothing.

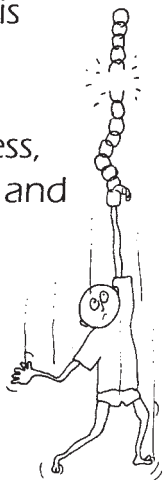
Or probe into pain, get on the
inside of it.

Exercise the mind in a fearless
way, not thinking about things but
with silent awareness.

At times during
the practice it may seem
as if nothing much is
happening except
a lot of pain,
restlessness,
agitation and
doubt.

But, in fact,
every moment of
awareness,
every moment of
mindfulness

helps to weaken the chain
of our
attachments.

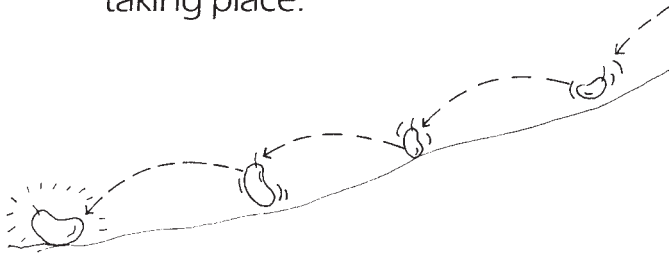


All we need
is to be facing
in the
direction of
freedom,
not going
backwards,
not going towards
more darkness.

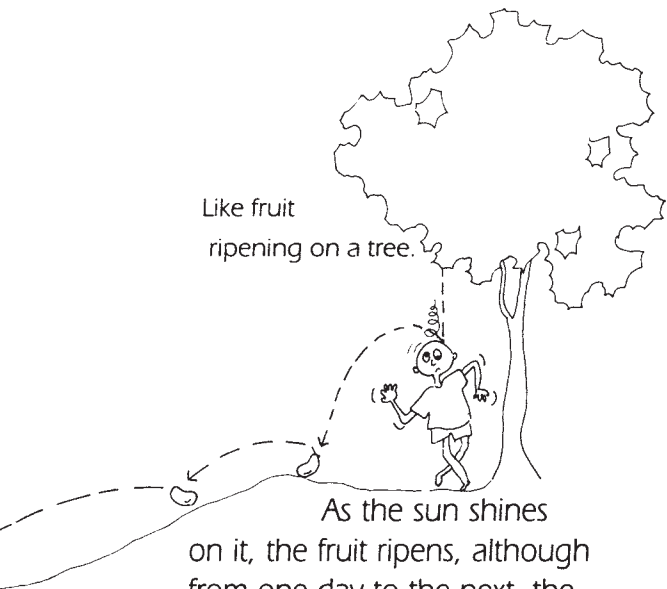


Be gentle with
yourself.
Be persevering.

Though it may not
be apparent to you,
there is a
great transformation
taking place.



Like fruit
ripening on a tree.



As the sun shines
on it, the fruit ripens, although
from one day to the next, the
process may be imperceptible.

In the same way, the
changes and ripening in
our mind are also going on.

Now remember.....



**The Buddha
only points
the way.**

We each have to walk
upon the way ourselves.
There is no one who can
enlighten another being.

The defilements of

greed,

hatred

and

delusion

exist within our own minds.

No one put them there.

No one can take them out.

We have to purify ourselves.

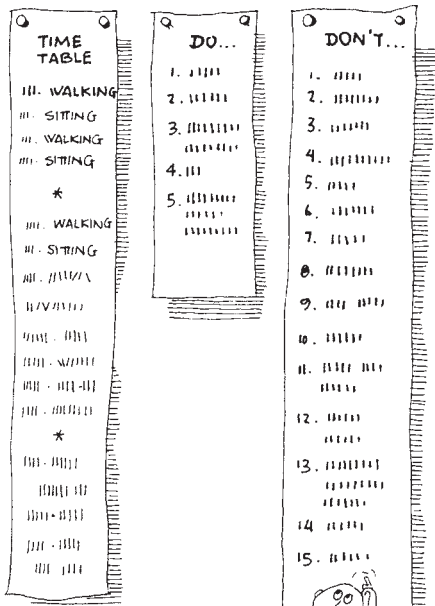




One of the
BIGGEST
OBSTACLES

on the path is the
doubting mind.

Until we see
through it,
doubt
incapacitates
the mind,
blocking our effort
for clarity.



Doubt

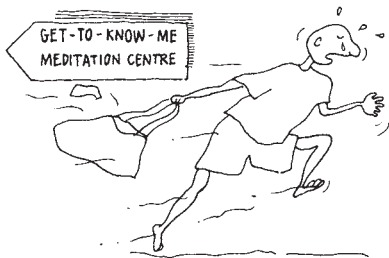
usually arises about
what one is doing
 and about
one's ability to do it.



PERHAPS SINCE YOU'VE
BEEN HERE,
THE THOUGHT HAS COME,



THIS IS
THE DOUBTING MIND,
A
VERY BIG
OBSTACLE
ON
THE PATH.



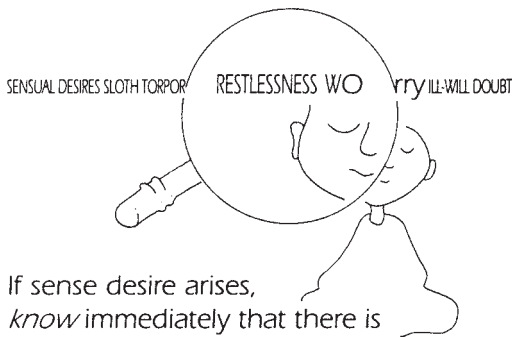
RECOGNITION

is the most powerful,
most effective way
of overcoming any

**o
b
s
t
a
c
l
e**



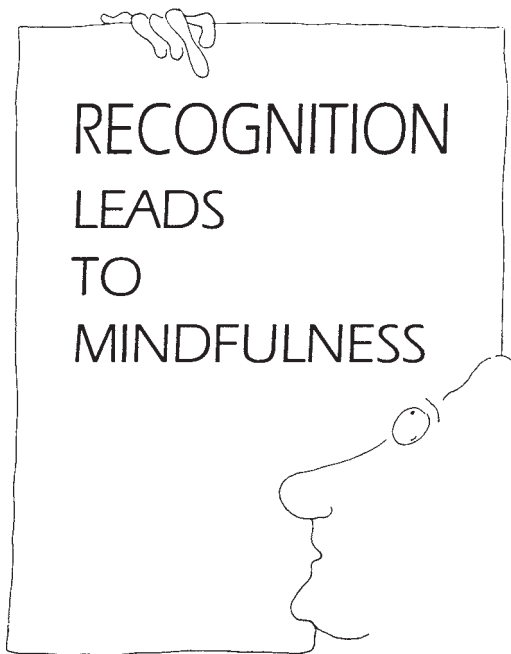
One of the ways to deal
with HINDRANCES
as they confront us on the Path
is to *recognize* them,
to see them clearly in each moment.



If sense desire arises,
know immediately that there is
desire in the mind.

Try recognizing immediately the
particular obstacle that has arisen -
be it anger, sloth, restlessness or
doubt.





Be **patient**
with everyone but above
all, with ourselves.



Let us not
be disheartened by our
own imperfections but
always rise up with fresh
courage.

There is no better means
of attainment to the
spiritual life than by
continually beginning again
and never thinking that
we have done enough.



PATIENCE

means
staying in a state of balance
regardless
of what is happening,
staying easy,
relaxed
and alert.



PATIENCE

.....

Do not be driven
to action by our
desires.

If we don't have
the ability to be
patient,
every desire
which comes
into our minds
compels us to action
and we stay bound
on the wheel of craving.

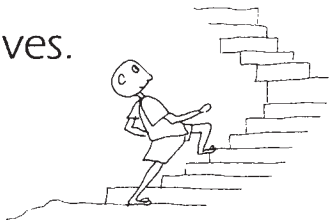


No one
is going to do it for us.

No one
can enlighten another
being.

The Buddha's enlightenment
solved his problem,
it didn't solve ours.....
except to point out
the way.

Each of us
have to walk the path
for
ourselves.



Do not
be discouraged by
wandering thoughts
or daydreams.

Each time there is
awareness
of the mind wandering,
gently bring it back.

No matter how many times
this happens,
if each time
the wandering mind
is brought back,
the

HOUR WILL BE WELL SPENT.





Thoughts
should not be treated
as obstacles or hindrances.

They are just
another object of mindfulness,
another object of meditation.

Don't let the mind become
lazy and drift along.

Make the effort

for a great deal of clarity
with respect to what's
happening in the moment.

To meditate upon thoughts
is simply to be aware as the
thoughts arise that the mind is
thinking, without getting involved in
the content:

not analyzing the thought
and why it came,
but merely to be aware that at the
particular moment "*thinking*" is
happening.

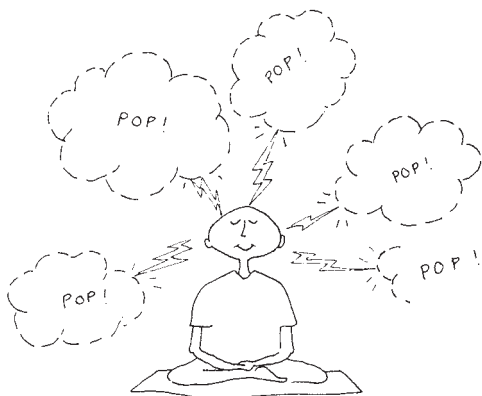
It is helpful to make a mental note
of "*thinking, thinking*" everytime a
thought arises.

Observe without judgement,
without reaction
to content,
without taking it
to be mine or I,
without identifying
with it.



Try to be aware
of the thought as soon as it arises,
rather than some minutes
afterward.

When they are noticed with
precision and balance they have
no power to disturb the mind.



In the sitting practice,
stillness of the body
is a great help
in achieving stillness
of mind.

As a way of making
the concentration strong,
at the beginning
of some sittings
make a resolution
not to change position
for that hour.



The
first few times
might be difficult,
but if the resolution
is *impeccable* (flawless)
you can sit
and observe
whatever comes.



Even
if you find
the mind
getting restless
or reactive
or tense
or filled with aversion
towards pain,
there's value in making
the resolution
and
FULFILLING
it.



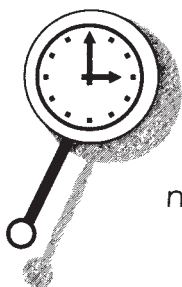
Both the
concentration
and **effort** factors
are greatly strengthened,
and
after the first few sittings
you will find that
it becomes easier
to stay still.





Unless
we make the effort
to persevere
nothing happens.

EFFORT
is the root
of all
achievements,
the foundation
of all
attainments.



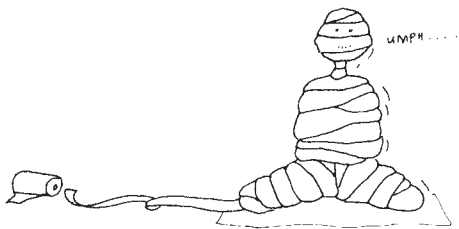
Make
resolution
to spend
an hour
with complete
non-movement.

This kind of resolution
strengthens the mind in
several ways -

*the
effort and energy factors
become very strong,
and
the stillness of body also
strengthens
the concentration
and mindfulness.*



By
making the resolution
not to move
for an hour,
we cannot avoid
becoming aware
of all the moments
of unpleasantness
and
our conditioned reactions
to them.



Restlessness and agitation?

Be mindful of it.
Look at it,
examine what that mind
is all about,
pay close attention
to the quality of restlessness.

If ever you are sitting,
make it the object of
awareness.
Sit and watch,
"restless, restless".



Observe

without identifying with it.



To be *aware*.
Aware of how things
are happening.
To be *wakeful*
and
balanced.
To be *mindful*.
Not clinging.
Not condemning.
Not identifying
with things
as being I or self.
Moment to moment
freeing the mind
from
defilements.



MEDITATION

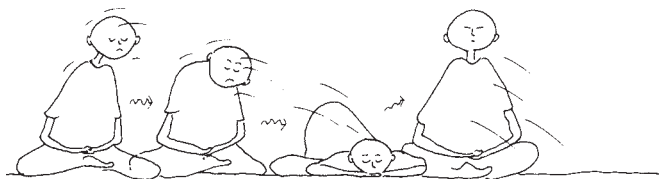


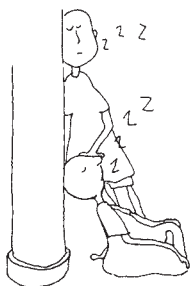
If
late in the evening
you
do not feel sleepy
**continue
the
practice.**



Sleep
when you feel
really tired.

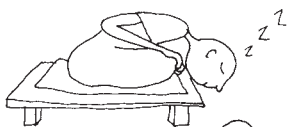
Not just
out of habit
at a certain hour.





We should
never
fall into the trap
of our
conditioning,

thinking that
if we don't get
seven
or eight hours
of sleep,
we're going to be
exhausted.



THAT IS SIMPLY AN OLD HABIT PATTERN.



Make the effort
to overcome
sloth and torpor.

If
everytime
drowsiness
comes into
the mind,
we think,
"oh well, I'll take a ^{little} nap",
it makes
the factor stronger.

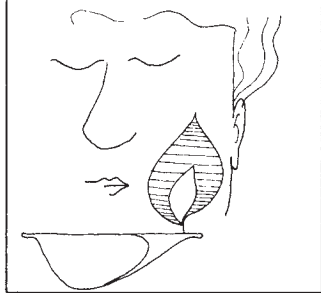
Be
resolute and energetic
in dealing with it.



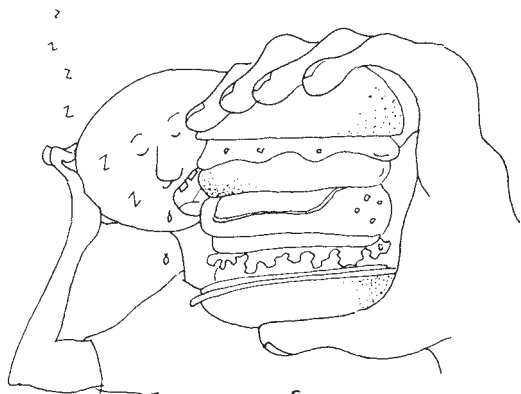
STAY SENSITIVE
to your changing needs
and
if you're not feeling tired
or
sleepy

continue

the practice
through the night.



There is a strong correlation
between the degree



of
desire
we experience
and
over-indulgence
in food and sleep.



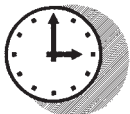
MODERATION
in
eating and sleeping
weakens
the factor of desire
and
brings

**GREATERT
CLARITY**



When

we can



settle back
into the moment
realizing that

past and future



are simply
thoughts

in the present

then we are



freeing ourselves

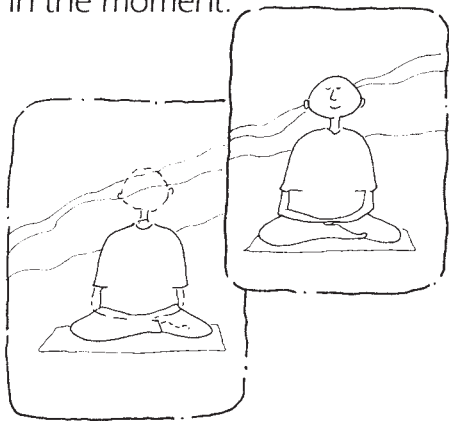
from

the bondage of

"time".



There is
NOTHING to hold onto,
NOTHING to grasp at,
because it is all changing
in the moment.



PAIN



Generally our body reacts to every little discomfort or unpleasant feeling with a slight change in position.

We are usually unmindful of that whole process:

feeling a little discomfort,
then a slight shift
of posture.





When there are strong
painful feelings in the body
the tendency is such that
the mind and body tense
in reaction to pain.

This is an expression of
aversion,
dislike,
avoidance
and it creates
an unbalanced state of mind.

When

we find ourselves
tensing because of pain,
examine the quality
of unpleasantness carefully,
the quality of painfulness.

Become

MINDFUL

of that feeling
and the mind
will naturally come
to a state of balance.



When
the mind is silent,
relaxed and attentive,
pain is experienced
not as a solid mass
but as a *flow*,
arising and vanishing
moment to moment.

Sit with a relaxed
and calm mind,
observing
the flow of sensations,
without aversion,
without expectation.

COURAGE



It takes courage to sit with pain, without avoiding or masking it; just to sit and face it totally and overcome one's fear.

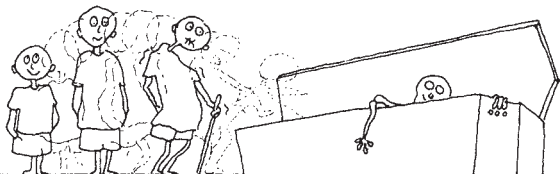
It takes courage to probe and by that probing discover the deepest elements of the mind and body.

It can be quite unsettling at first because many of our comfortable habits get overturned.

It takes a lot of courage to let go of everything that we've been holding onto for security.

To let go, to experience the flow of impermanence.





It takes courage to face and confront the basic and inherent security of this mind-body process.

To confront the fact that in very instant what we are is continually dissolving, vanishing; that there is no place to take a stand at all.

It takes courage to die.

To experience the death of the concept of self; to experience that death while we are living takes the courage and fearlessness of an **impeccable warrior.**

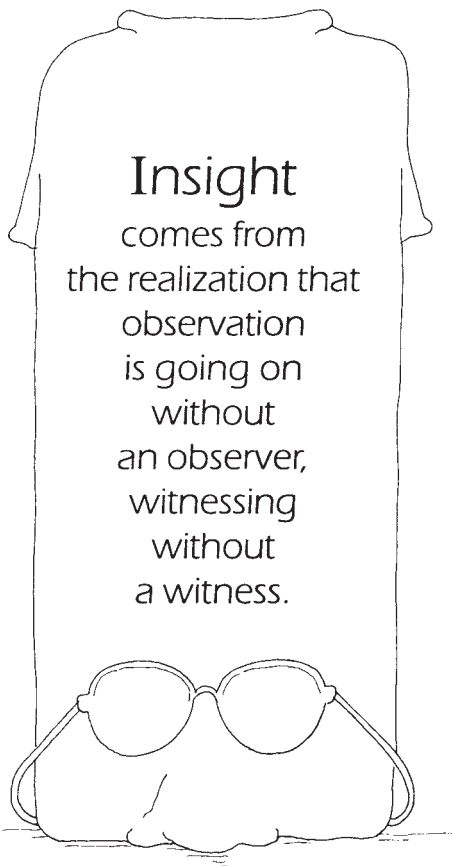
PAIN

is a good object
of meditation.



Concentration
becomes strong whenever
there's a strong pain in the body.
The mind stays on it easily,
without wandering very much.

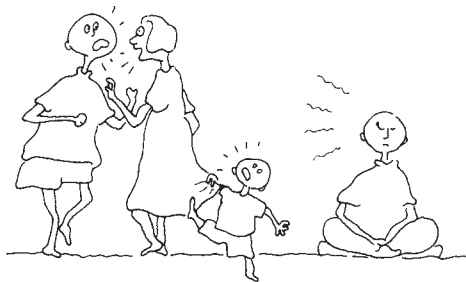




Insight

comes from
the realization that
observation
is going on
without
an observer,
witnessing
without
a witness.

TALKING



distracts our attention
and dissipates our energy.

It is of no wonder
we don't
often get a good look
at what's happening
in our minds.

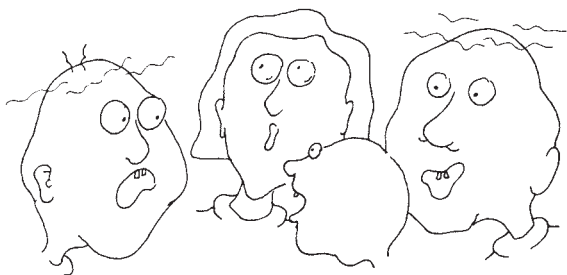




It's beautiful and peaceful
to stay in a place
of silence of mind.
But that takes a lot of mindfulness
because we're conditioned
to a lot of talk.

A lot of talking creates
a spiralling downward.

We become restless;
we start talking.
Then it becomes
even more difficult
to concentrate
and the mind becomes
yet more restless.





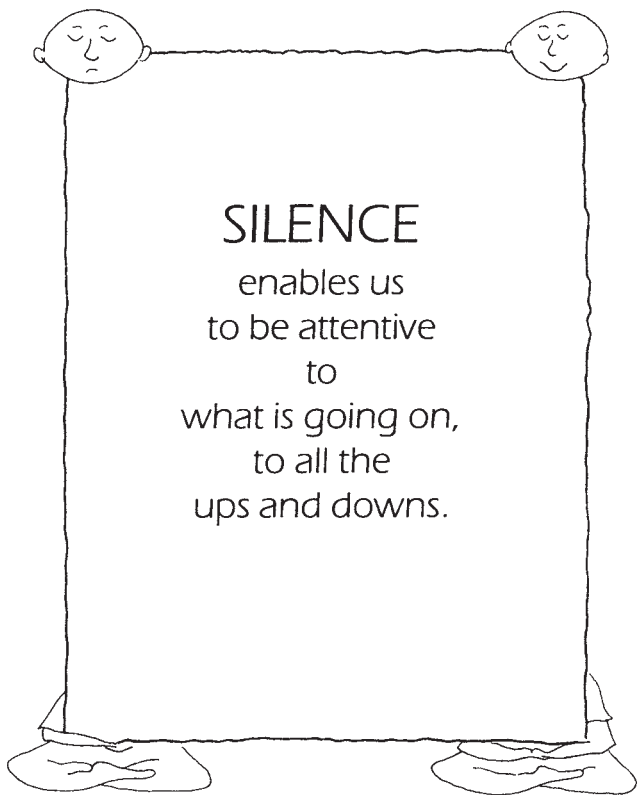
Always
renew the effort to maintain
SILENCE.

Silence is an energy giver.
It creates a clarity in which
all the aspects
of the mind
are clearly seen.

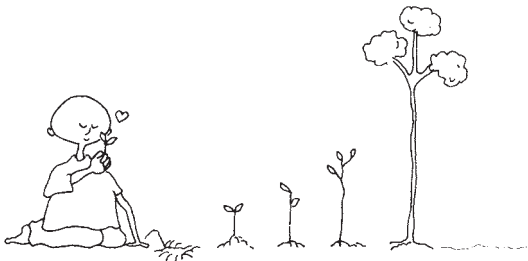


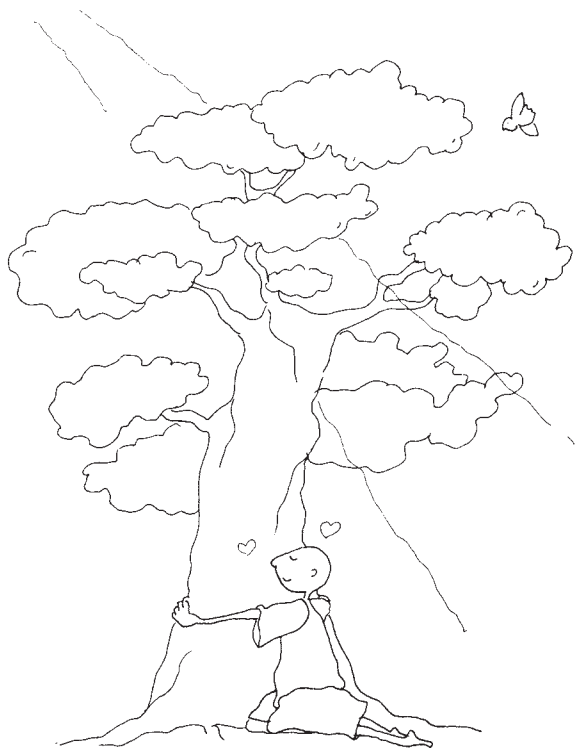
BY
KEEPING
SILENCE
THE
WHOLE RANGE
OF
MENTAL
AND
PHYSICAL ACTIVITY
WILL
BECOME
EXTREMELY CLEAR

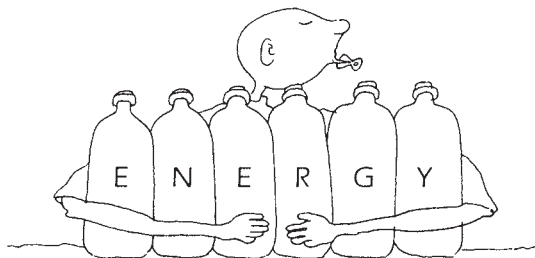




It is
in silence and work
that
TRANSFORMATION
is brought
to
completion.





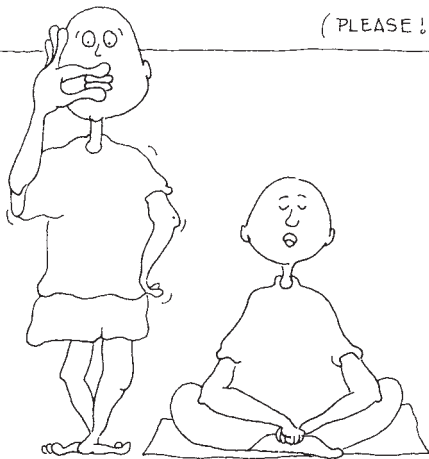


... that is
conserved by not talking
can be used
for the development of
AWARENESS
and
MINDFULNESS



SILENCE

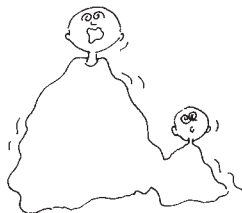
(PLEASE !)



KEEPING
SILENCE
AND
SLOWING DOWN
HELPS
NOT ONLY OURSELVES
BUT
EVERYONE
AROUND
US



. . . . in seeing
someone else
being mindful,
we ourselves
become more
awake.



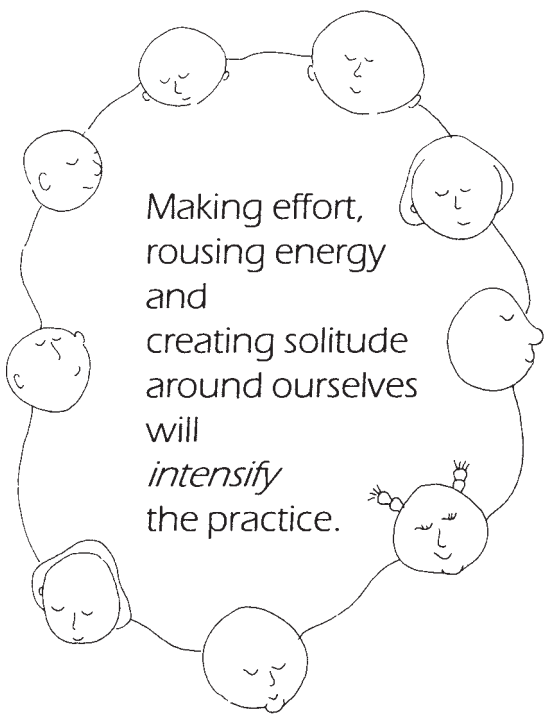
When we see
someone else
speeding along,
it awakens that in
us.

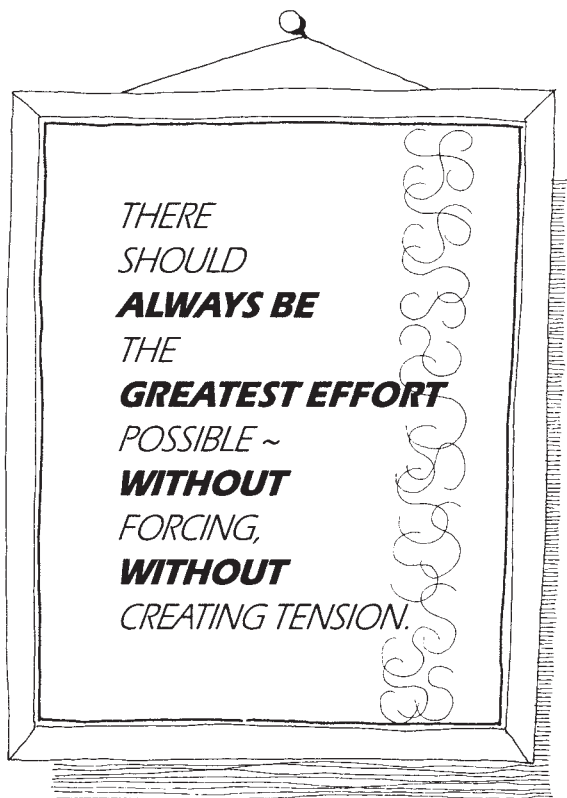


BE AWARE
OF THE VALUE AND HELP
YOU ARE TO OTHERS.

A RETREAT
IS A
BEAUTIFUL BALANCE;
WORKING
ON OURSELVES
IN SILENCE AND SOLITUDE,
YET BEING IN THE
SUPPORTIVE ATMOSPHERE
OF A GROUP.







ENERGY

has to be aroused
by each one of us
to walk upon
the path of purification.

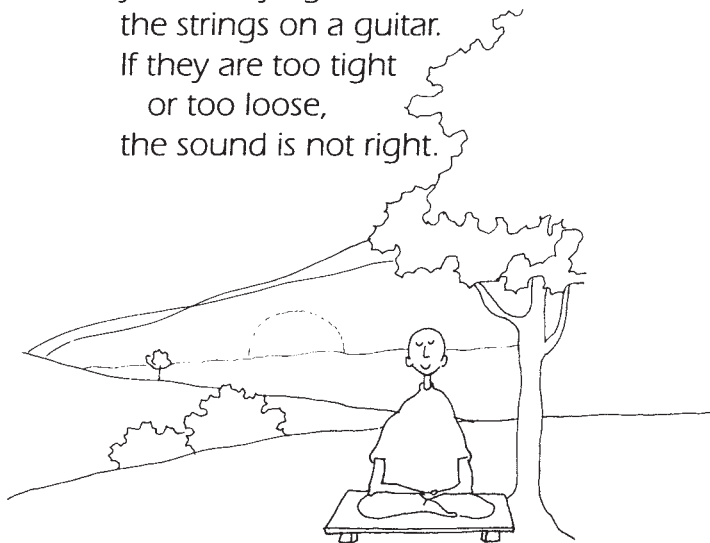
ENERGY

is a power factor;
when it is
cultivated and developed,
it overcomes
sloth, torpor and
laziness of mind.

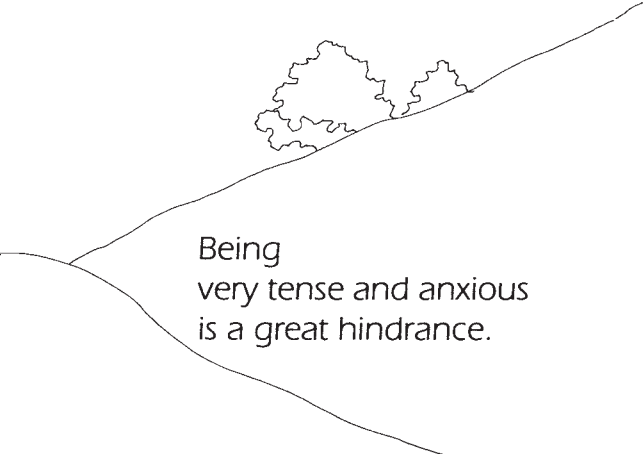
Energy

has to be balanced
with tranquillity.

It is as if
you are trying to tune
the strings on a guitar.
If they are too tight
or too loose,
the sound is not right.

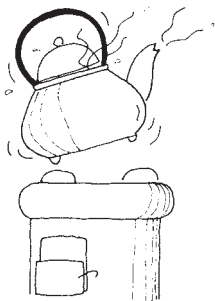
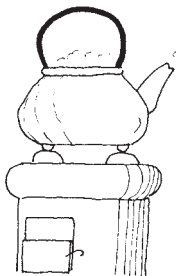


Even so
in our practice too,
we have to be
persistent and persevering
but with a
relaxed and balanced mind,
making the effort
without forcing.



Being
very tense and anxious
is a great hindrance.

If we put a kettle on the stove
and every
few minutes
take the lid off,
it will take
a longer time
for the water to boil.

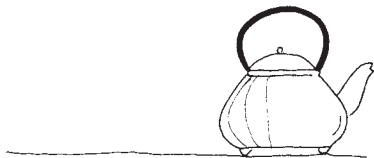


The water
will heat up
quickly if we
just leave
it as it is.

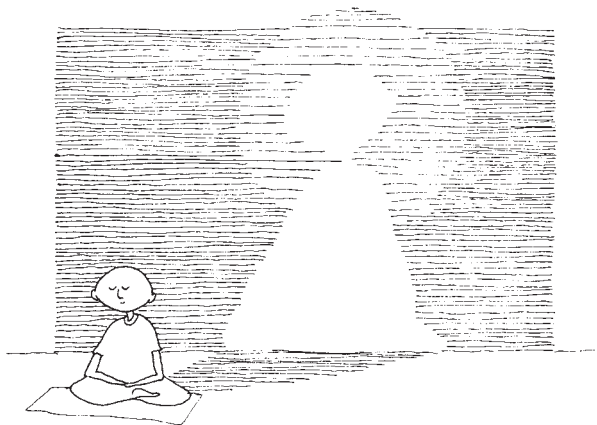
Even so

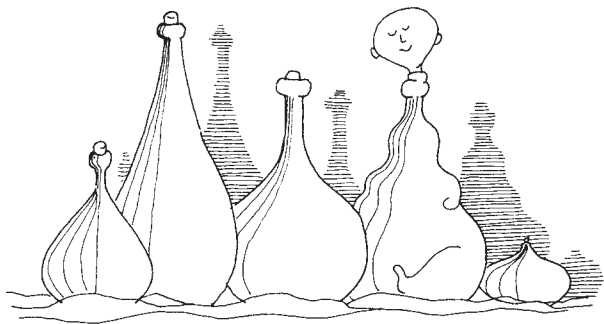


..... by
being continuous
in our practice,
each moment
builds on
the one before,
and
in a short time
the mind
will develop
an acute strength
and penetrating power.



Be gentle with yourself.
Be persevering.
Though it may not be apparent
to you,
there is a great
transformation taking place.

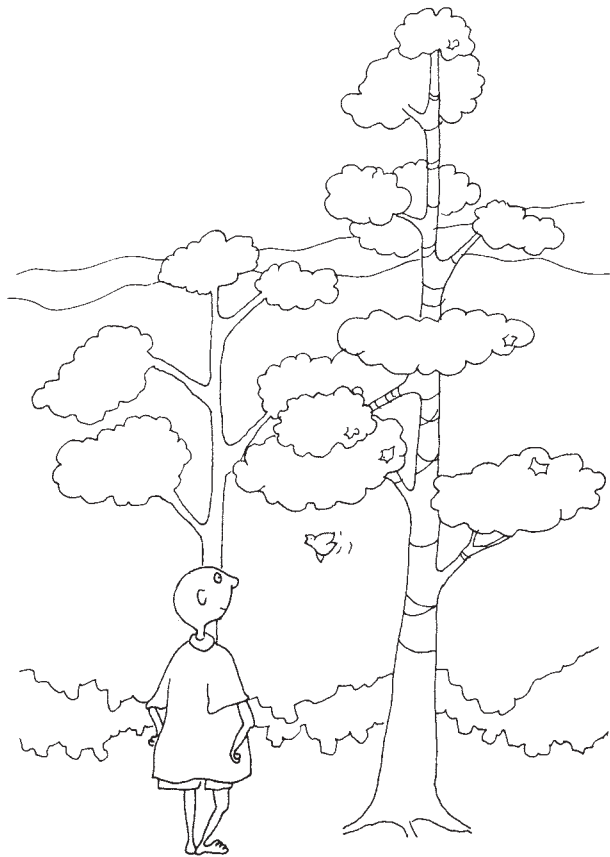




The mind can become very malleable.

If you work a piece of clay in making pottery, it becomes soft and easily shaped.

When the awareness and concentration are developed, the mind also has that kind of workability and flexibility.



Question:

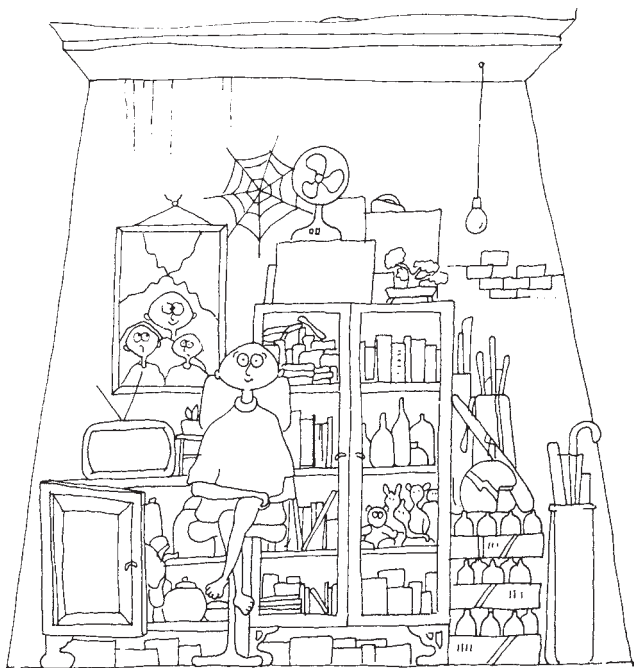
What should I do when I get uptight from trying too hard?

Answer:

When you feel too much tension or forcing in the practice, go outside and look at the trees, look at the sky. It's so beautiful, so expansive.

Go outside and
walk around a bit
in a more
relaxed way,
but still
with *awareness*
of what you are doing.
In a short time,
the place itself
will cool the mind.

The Buddha
often recommended
being with nature
because of its tranquillity to the mind.

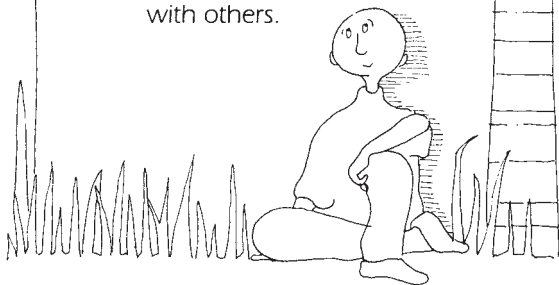


Often in forgetfulness of our destiny, we become over-involved in collecting things, in attachments and possessions, in wanting to become someone special.

We get involved in many of the activities of LITTLE MIND, taking our ambitions, our desires, ourselves, very seriously. We lose the perspective of BIG MIND, we lose the

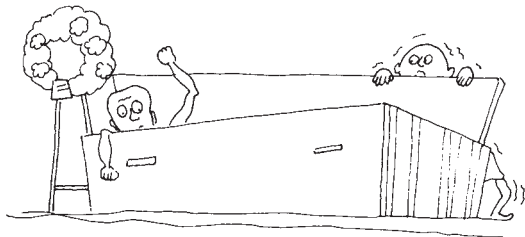
perspective of death.

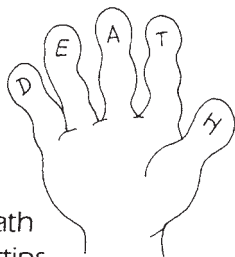
We
are going to die alone.
It's necessary to come
to terms with our basic
aloneness,
to become comfortable
with it.
The mind can become
strong and peaceful
in that understanding
making possible
a beautiful communion
with others.





If we take
death as our adviser
we live
each moment
with the
power and fullness
we would give
to our last endeavour
on earth.





When
we keep death
at our fingertips
we become less involved,
less compulsive
about the satisfaction
or gratification
of various desires
in the moment.

When
not so clouded
by desires and fantasies,
we're less inclined
to hold onto things
and more open
to love and generosity.



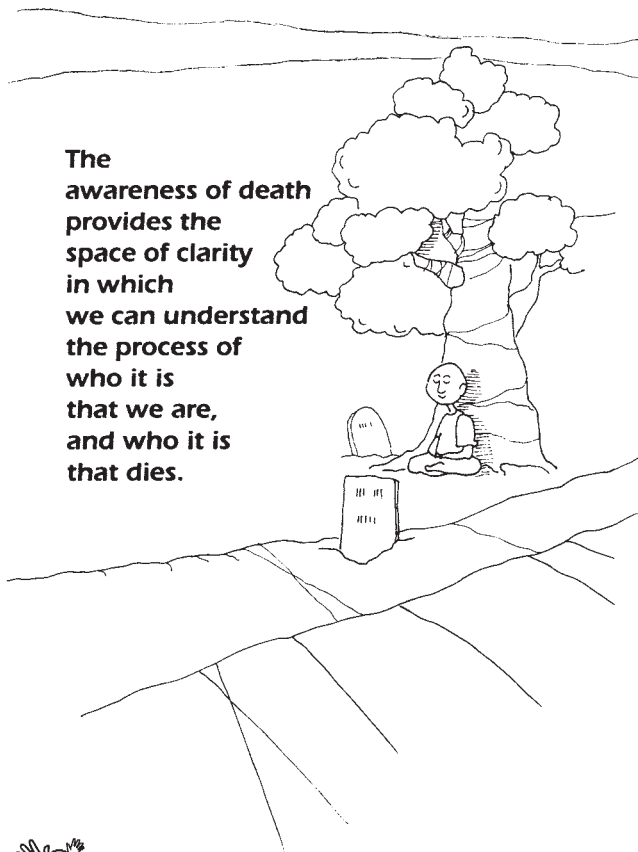


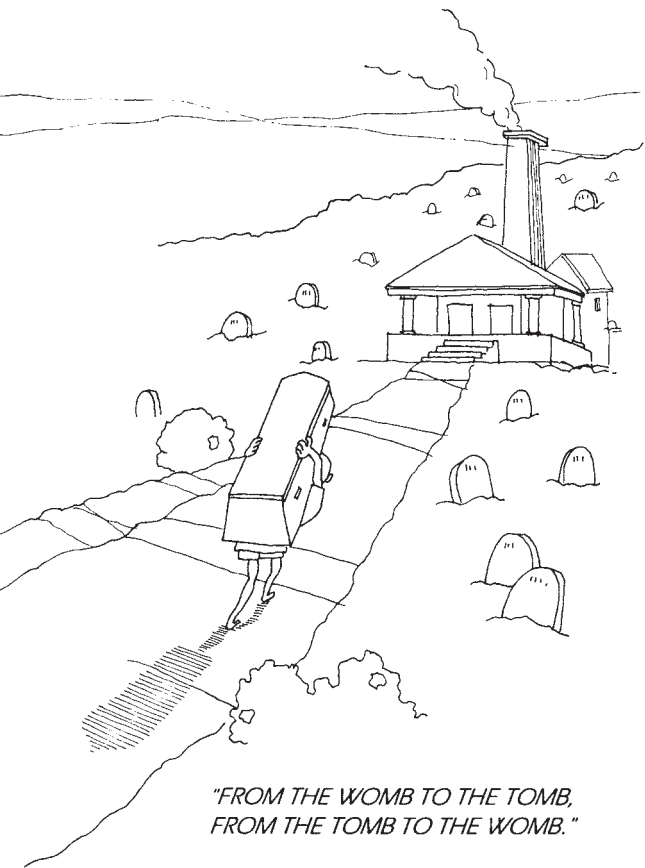
*No man,
though
he sees
others dying
all around him,
believes
he himself
will die.*



~ bhagavad-gita

**The
awareness of death
provides the
space of clarity
in which
we can understand
the process of
who it is
that we are,
and who it is
that dies.**





"IDEAL"

The biggest obstacles to settling back are attachments to self-images and concepts of who we are and how we want to be.

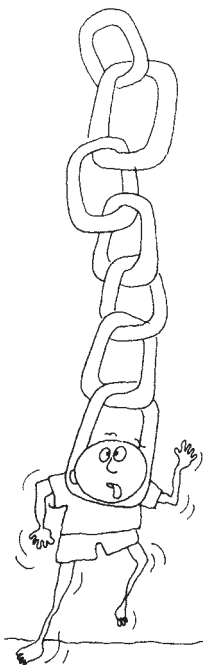
They complicate unnecessarily the very simple experience of what it is that's happening.

Often people on the spiritual path get trapped by an image.

An image of what they think it means to be a yogi or a meditator or a spiritual person, creating for themselves that struggle of trying to live up to a certain preconceived way of action or behaviour.



Attachment to view
is a
GREAT BONDAGE.



It keeps us
from seeing
how things are;
it filters reality
through
the coloured glasses
of our own particular
conditioning.

Views about oneself,
about practice,
about the
teachings of the
Buddha.

A FAMOUS PARABLE

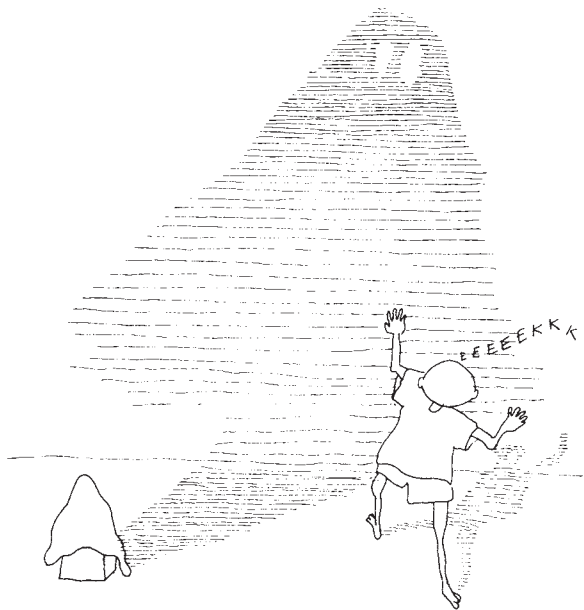
In the cave is a row of people, chained in such a way that they can only face the back wall.

Behind the row of people is a fire and a procession of figures walking by engaged in all the activities of life.

The procession of figures casts shadows on the back wall of the cave. The people who are chained can see only the changing view of shadows, and because that is all they have ever seen, they take these shadows to be ultimate reality.

Sometimes a person who is bound in this way, through great effort, manages to loosen the chains and turn around. He or she sees the fire and the procession and begins to understand that the shadows are not the reality, but a mere reflection on the wall. Perhaps with further effort that person is able to cut the chain completely and emerge into the sunlight, into freedom.



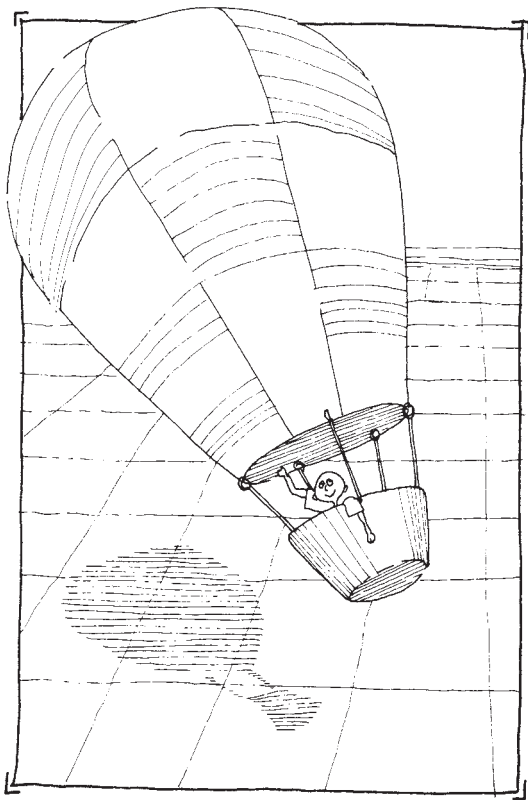


Our predicament is similar to those people chained in the cave. The shadows are the world of concepts in which we live.

Chained to our attachments, we perceive the world through our ideas, our thoughts, our mental constructs, taking these concepts to be the reality itself.

Through the practice
of mindfulness
of not clinging,
not condemning,
not identifying
with anything,
the mind
becomes
lighter and freer.







*IF A MAN IS CROSSING A RIVER
AND AN EMPTY BOAT
COLLIDES WITH HIS OWN SKIFF,
EVEN THOUGH HE BE
A BAD-TEMPERED MAN
HE WILL NOT BECOME VERY ANGRY.
BUT IF HE SEES A MAN IN A BOAT,
HE WILL SHOUT AT HIM TO STEER CLEAR
IF THE SHOUT IS NOT HEARD,
HE WILL SHOUT AGAIN,
AND YET AGAIN, AND BEGIN CURSING.
AND ALL BECAUSE
THERE IS SOMEBODY IN THE BOAT.
YET IF THE BOAT WERE EMPTY,
HE WOULD NOT BE SHOUTING,
AND NOT BE ANGRY.
IF YOU CAN EMPTY YOUR OWN BOAT
CROSSING THE RIVER OF THE WORLD,
NO ONE WILL OPPOSE YOU,
NO ONE WILL SEEK TO HARM YOU.*

-Chuang Tzu



LEARNING-TO-LET-GO

Sharing what we have
is a beautiful way of relating
to others.

Our friendships are much
enhanced by the quality
of generosity.

Even more significantly,
the cultivation of non-greed
becomes a strong force for
liberation.

What keeps us bound
is desire and grasping
in our own minds.

As we practise giving
we learn to let go.

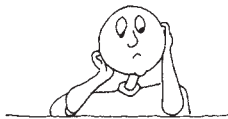
LET GO

of our
pre-conceived ideas
of how things are,
of how we would like
things to be.



LETTING GO

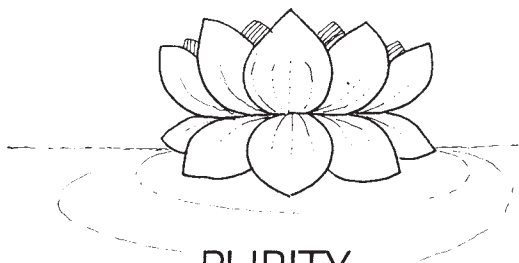
of the
attachment
to our cherished
opinions.



LET GO

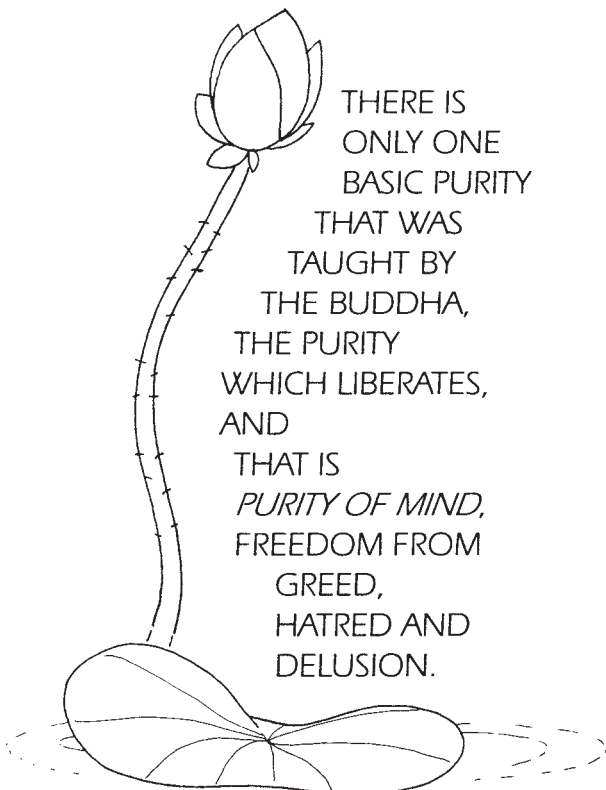
of
views,
opinions and
ideas
of all things
and the Dhamma
will be
revealed.





PURITY
DOES NOT EXIST
WITHIN
A TRADITION
OR
WITHIN
A METHOD
OR
WITHIN
A RELIGION.





THERE IS
ONLY ONE
BASIC PURITY
THAT WAS
TAUGHT BY
THE BUDDHA,
THE PURITY
WHICH LIBERATES,
AND
THAT IS
PURITY OF MIND,
FREEDOM FROM
GREED,
HATRED AND
DELUSION.



QUESTION:

How do we purify ourselves?

ANSWER:

The whole beauty of the practice is that the awareness itself is what purifies.

It is not establishing a certain program for oneself, "*I'm going to be pure,*" which is somewhat a contradiction.

The awareness of what's happening in the moment is what purifies so that there's nothing to get or be, nothing special to do or have: just a sitting back with awareness.





INSIGHT

AS BEING A SUDDEN,
WORDLESS UNDERSTANDING.

THIS KIND OF INTUITION
HAS A CERTAINTY ABOUT IT
BECAUSE IT'S NOT
THE PRODUCT
OF SOME THOUGHT
OR IMAGE
BUT RATHER
A SUDDEN
CLEAR PERCEPTION
OF HOW THINGS ARE.

Volition or intention

is a common factor of mind present in every moment of consciousness.

It is the *mental urge* or *signal* which precedes any action. When it is predominant, as they are between radical changes of posture,

between

sitting and standing,

standing and walking,

be mindful of them.

When we are mindful of volitions and intentions, we then have the freedom to choose whether or not we want to act on them. As long as we remain unaware of intentions, actions will follow automatically.





When there is
no mindfulness
words come out
before we are
even aware
that

there was an intention to do so.

It's all very mechanical.

But as the
mindfulness
gets sharper,
we begin
to be aware
before talking.



The intention to speak arises and
we're mindful of it.

INTENTIONS

are not always thoughts in the mind, not always words.

Sometimes they are experienced just as an *urge*, a signal that something is about to happen.

You need not be looking for words or a sentence in the mind.

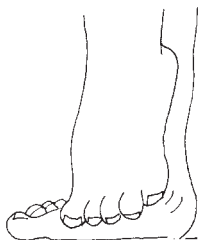
Just be aware of that impulse to do something.

And as you begin to notice how this cause and effect relationship is working in the mind and body, the concept of self dissolves into a simple and natural unfolding of the elements.



For example,
in walking, there is an intention to
stop before stopping.
There is an intention to turn
before turning.

The foot by itself does not make
the turning movement. It turns
because of a preceding volition.



There is no one
there, no one
"doing" the turning.

It is an
impersonal
cause and effect
relationship.

But, if in starting to turn we are
unmindful of how it is that the
process is happening, it becomes
easy to identify with the idea that
there's some *"one"* who is doing it.

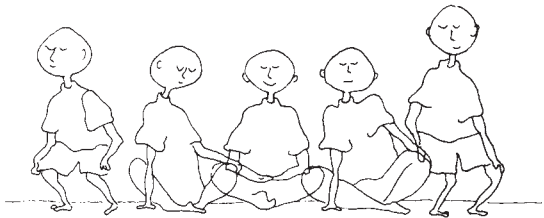
In sitting,
intentions will be noticeable
before each movement.

If you change position, there
will be an intention to do so.

If you swallow, there will be a
preceding intention.

If you open your eyes there will
be an intention to open.

ALL OF THESE
SHOULD BE
NOTICED.



There is
acting
without an actor,
doing
without a doer,
suffering
without anyone
who suffers,
enlightenment
without anyone
who gets
enlightened.



CLARITY

“Not being
muddled
or
confused
about what is
happening.”

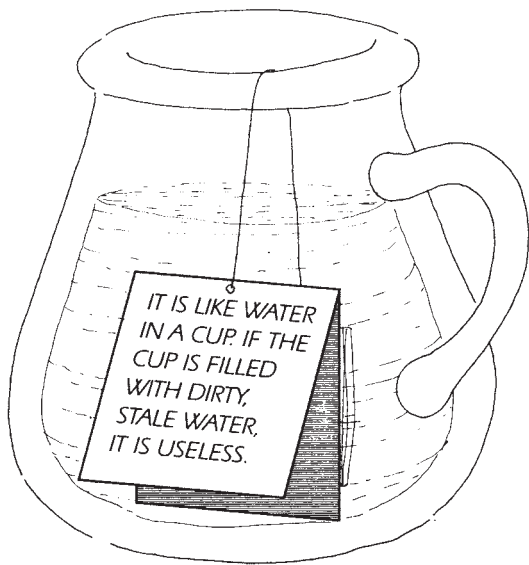


It's like a room in dim light:
if we turn on a strong light,
everything becomes
sharp and clear.

When there's just a little light in
the mind, you can't see things
so clearly, you get the general
outlines, but without that sharp
perception.

With a lot of light in the mind,
everything becomes distinct
then the process becomes so
clear, so easy to understand.

**That light is the
*light of awareness,
of mindfulness.***

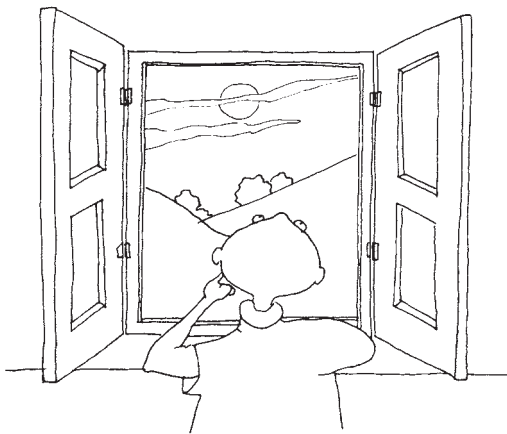


Only after the old water
is thrown out
can the cup become useful.



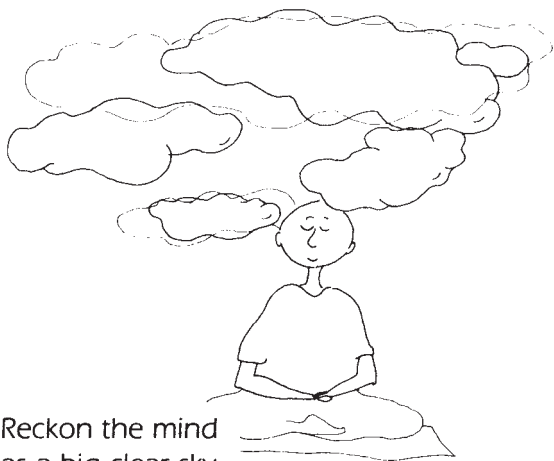


THE SKY



The sky is clear and unaffected
by what is happening.
The clouds come and go,
the winds come and go,
so does the rain and sunlight,
but the sky remains clear.





Reckon the mind
as a big clear sky
and let everything
arise and vanish on its own.

Then the mind
will stay balanced,
relaxed,
observing the flow.

Clarity

with respect to the

BODY-



being aware of postures,
the interplay
of the physical elements,
becoming sensitive to
just how much food and sleep
is actually needed.

Bringing all the different kinds of
bodily energies into balance.



Clarity

with respect to the

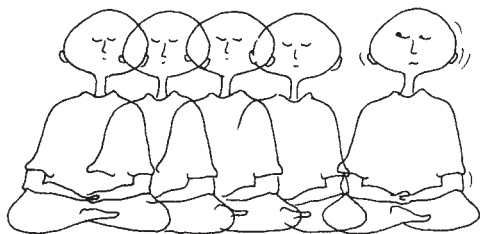
MIND -

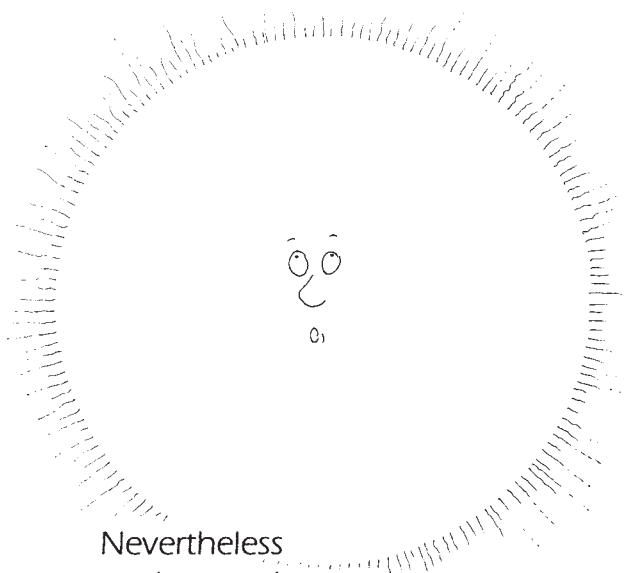


emotions,
thoughts
and different mental states.

Not getting caught up
in the whirlings
of the mind,
staying clear
and balanced in their flow.

When
the mind is clear
it experiences
the ceaseless change
on a
microscopic level:
instant to instant
we are
being born and dying.





Nevertheless
we have to become *aware*
of the clarity itself
so as not to cling to it,
not to identify with it.

*Clarity
is only part of the process.*

HINDRANCES

Often there is a tendency to condemn the hindrances when they arise. The condemning mind is itself the factor of aversion.

Every act of condemning the hindrances strengthens the enemy. This is not the way.

No judging, no evaluating.

Hindrances come, simply observe them. Mindfulness makes them all inoperative.

They may continue to arise, but they do not disturb the mind because we do not react to them.

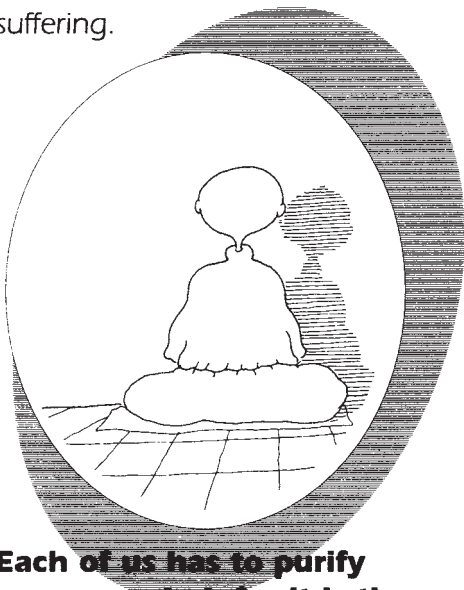


All
the hindrances
are impermanent
mental factors.
They arise
and they pass away,
like clouds in the sky.



If we are mindful of them when
they arise and don't react or
identify with them, they pass
through the mind without
creating any disturbance.

There is no magic formula
which will release us from
suffering.

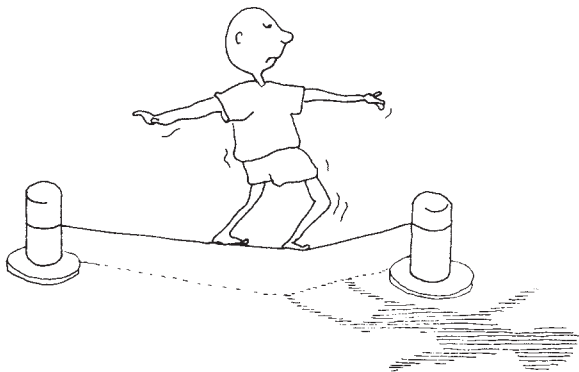


**Each of us has to purify
our own mind, for it is the
attachment in our mind
that keeps us bound.**



Try sustaining
the effort and
continuity of awareness;

the mind which has
overcome the power
of the hindrances is
unshakeable in its
balance and pliability.



Restlessness

There is no "one"
who is restless;
rather
it is the working
of a particular
mental factor,
it comes and goes.

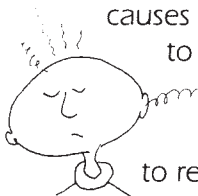
If there is
a balanced awareness,
it does not
disturb the mind.



Anger

Freedom from illwill
means
freedom from anger.

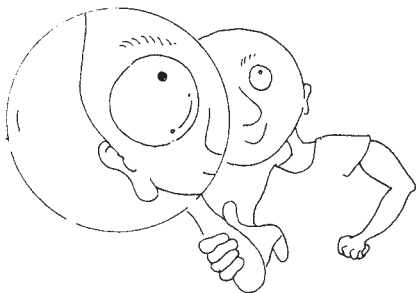
Anger
is a burning in the mind,
and when expressed
causes great suffering
to others as well.



It is helpful
to be able
to recognize anger
and to *let go*.

Then the mind
becomes light and easy,
expressing
its
natural lovingkindness.

One of the factors
of enlightenment
is
INVESTIGATION
OF THE DHAMMA –
an investigative quality
of the mind which
examines,
which explores
just how the elements
of mind and body work.

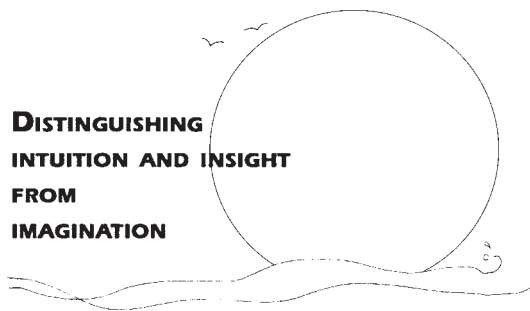




INVESTIGATION OF THE DHAMMA

is the quality of mind
that is investigating,
probing,
analyzing
the mind-body process,
not with thoughts,
not on the conceptual level
but
with a silent
and peaceful mind.

**DISTINGUISHING
INTUITION AND INSIGHT
FROM
IMAGINATION**



Intuition comes out of the silent mind; imagination is conceptual. There is a vast difference.

That's why the development of insight does not come from thinking about things, it comes from the development of a silence of mind in which a clear vision, a clear seeing, can happen.

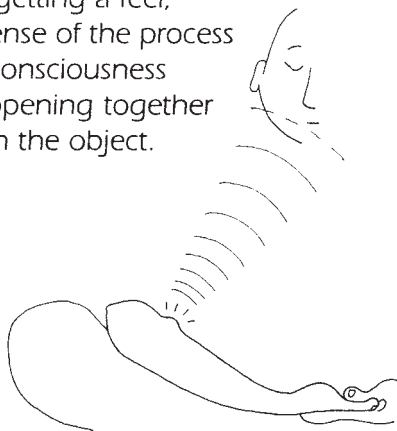
The whole progress of insight, the whole development of understanding comes at times when the mind is quiet, then a sudden,

"aha, that's how things are!"



INVESTIGATE

not with words,
not with thoughts,
not with concepts
but rather
try getting a feel,
a sense of the process
of consciousness
happening together
with the object.



This experience brings freedom
from identification
with the observer.

“ There seems to be a distinction between awareness and absorption in something. I can be engrossed in music, without being mindful; very much in the moment, but not being aware of being in the moment. ”





That's the *difference*
between
concentration and mindfulness.
You can be very one-pointed
on the music yet not very mindful,
although there will be
some *mindfulness* there.
What is predominant is the
one-pointedness factor,
the mind not wavering.
Add to that a sharp mindfulness and
there you have the entire practice.

EPILOGUE

Keep your eyes
fixed on the
Path to the Top,
but don't forget
to look
right in front
of you.

*The last step
depends
upon the first.*

Watch your footing.
Be sure of the next step,
but don't let that
distract you
from the
Highest Goal.





There is a kind of monkey trap used in Asia. A coconut is hollowed out and attached by a rope to a tree or stake in the ground. At the bottom of the coconut a small slit is made and some sweet food is placed inside. The hole on the bottom of the coconut is just big enough for the monkey to slide in his open hand, but does not allow for a closed fist to pass out. The monkey smells the sweets, reaches in with his hand to grasp the food and is then unable to withdraw it.

The clenched fist won't pass through the opening. When the hunters come, the monkey becomes frantic but cannot get away. There is no one keeping that monkey captive, except the force of its own attachment. All that it has to do is to open the hand. But so strong is the force of greed in the mind that it is a rare monkey which can let go.

It is the desires and clinging in our minds which keep us trapped. All we need to do is to open our hands, let go of our selves, our attachment, and be free.

The Experience of Insight
Joseph Goldstein

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