

The Blooming of a Lotus

#25 Looking Deeply to Mental Health

1. Aware of my mental health, I breathe in.
Smiling to my state of mental health, I breathe out.
Aware of mental, health, Smiling
2. Seeing poisons such as anger, jealousy, suspicion (1) in my consciousness, I breathe in.
Knowing these poisons are harming me and those around me, I breathe out.
Poisons in consciousness, Harmful to self and others
3. Seeing myself watering these poisonous seeds and allowing them to be watered every day, I breathe in.
Knowing that to continue to live like this is to add to suffering every day, I breathe out.
Poisons watered every day, Adding suffering every day
4. Seeing myself determined not to water these seeds anymore, I breathe in.
Determined to do things like breathing, smiling, and walking mindfully (2,) and no longer to do things like judging, blaming, comparing (3), in order to weaken and transform the poisons, I breathe out.
Determined to transform, Acting

This exercise, like the one which precedes it, can also be practiced with the help of pencil and paper. The principle is the same as that of exercise twenty-four. The first stage is to acknowledge the poisons that are already present within us. The second is to recognize the poisons currently being introduced into our bodies and minds. In the third stage, we are able to determine what we should or should not do to transform our state of being.

In the first stage we acknowledge the poisons already present in us: the raw materials of hatred and resentment, fear, violence, infatuation, and anger, which we know are lying in the depths of our consciousness ready to surface at any time to cause us suffering.

In the second stage we acknowledge the evils constantly assailing us during the course of our everyday lives. We are often exposed, if not first hand, then through films, reading material, and conversations, to violence, fear, hatred, meaningless infatuations.

Society is full of violence and hatred, which accumulates in the collective consciousness. If in our daily lives we do not know how to abstain from damaging materials and attitudes, the seeds of violence, hatred, and suffering in us will continue to be watered. We need to be aware of what we hear, see, and read every day. We need to be aware of the cultural products we consume and the people with whom we are sharing experience and conversation. Do our associations and consumptions poison us?

The third stage marks our determination to live in mindfulness to avoid poisoning ourselves anymore. We determine to abandon those things that harm body and mind. We choose which films to watch and which materials to read, and we are careful in the associations we make and the conversations we have. This is not difficult to do if those around us, our families or our communities, are determined to practice together with us. The insights we discover in our meditation can be noted clearly on a sheet of paper. This is a way of establishing a healthy diet for living. By following this diet, we shall be able to restore the health of body and mind and recover joy in being alive. It is best if we can share this exercise with our families or the people with whom we live.

NOTES

- (1) Also fear, anxiety, hatred, violence, arrogance, passion, intolerance, illusion, prejudices . . .
- (2) Also, listening to, reading, or discussing subjects that can water the seeds of happiness, tolerance, compassion, forgiveness, openness, bringing joy to people . . .
- (3) Also, listening to, reading, or watching materials that can water the seeds of the poisons mentioned in note 1.