

## **Recommendations For Practice In 2017 – Part II**

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**Buddhist practice is a training which leads to a way of being in the world and in relationship with others.**

The Historical Buddha: I know of no other single thing so conducive to misery than an untrained mind. I know of no other single thing so conducive to satisfaction and happiness than a trained mind.

**Focus first on the immediate, direct experience of sensations in the body and mind, rather than ideas, concepts or images about experience.**

The “breath” is a concept or idea which is shorthand for a large number of different sensations as air moves into and thru the body, and then moves out of the body. In Mindfulness, we are attempting to experience the sensations associated with the “breath.”

“Sensation” is also a concept or idea referring to a wide range of multi-dimensional experiences in the body and mind. These include, among many other things, the following *qualities* : intensity, size, shape, depth, temperature, weight, pressure, movement, change, a feeling tone of pleasant, unpleasant or neutral; and / or related emotional, psychological or thinking reactions or triggering.

Sensations, such as sensations of the breath, also have a number of inherent *characteristics* :

- They are in a process of constant & on-going change;
- Their qualities flow from one into another, rather than remaining separate, stable & permanent;
- They continue to happen on their own without the direction of the conscious.

Our careful and continuous attention to these processes, and their cause and effect relationships with our states of mind, emotions, thoughts and actions, lead to liberating Insight or Wisdom.

### **Monitor and manage the content of thought and thinking.**

From a Buddhist perspective, there are two types of thoughts: Those that point the mind and body toward balance, peace and satisfaction; and those that point the mind and body toward struggle, confusion and suffering. Every thought carries with it some emotional or psychological implication. With every thought we are pointing our mind in one direction or the other; and reinforcing pre-existing, or create new, habits of mind, body and emotion.

The Historical Buddha talked frequently about thought in his discourses; their positive and negative consequences; and the need for us to shepherd, or attend to, our thoughts like a good elephant mahout or cow herder.

### **Resources**

Thinking and Thoughts: The Role of Thinking In Meditation –

<https://sactoinsight.org/resources/our-practice/>

The Dvedhavitakka Sutta: Two Sorts of Thinking

<http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/mn/mn.019.than.html>

The Madhupindika Sutta: The Honey Ball Sutta

<http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/mn/mn.018.than.html>

The Vitakkasanthana Sutta: The Removal of Distracting Thoughts

<http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/mn/mn.020.soma.html>