



Any Ideal of Practice is Just Another Fabrication

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Of course, what was said in the paper entitled "You Make, You Have", is also just a view and thus, in some way, lends itself to idealization. It is all too easy to idealize the notion of mindfulness practice, or of our own practice, or fall into notions of attainment and, as we have seen, special states of mind, and then stay stuck in our concepts and ideals of practice for years without seeing that they are themselves fabrications, big ones.

For getting stuck over and over again is nothing other than practice too, as long as we are willing to see it and work with it through continually letting go, and through continual kindness toward ourselves. One thing is virtually certain. We will get stuck over and over again in the short run no matter what we do or think, because that is the nature of the unexamined and underdeveloped mind.

We will fabricate problems and everything else that the mind and its ongoing story of me can come up with or react to over and over again. And once we get into meditation, we will do it about meditation as much if not more than we do it about everything else in our lives. That is only natural, and it is not necessarily a problem! Like all fabrications and all proliferations of mind, it is simply part of the landscape of practice. The challenge, and it is a huge and unrelenting one, is to stay mindful even as we are getting stuck, or to recover mindfulness as quickly as we can after we lose our minds and succumb to our countless insecure, fear-driven, ingrained, and mindless habits.

This is not an ideal. But it is hard work. It requires an attitude that insists that there is no other time than now, no matter what is occurring, no matter how conflicted or in

turmoil you may feel. There is simply no other, better occasion to be awake, no other, better moment, ever, in which to be aware. And so it is literally, as the song says, now or never. Choosing now, we open to it and rest in awareness itself. Now we can act—spontaneously—in the nowscape, out of that very dimension of being and knowing, in the simplest and purest of ways, embodying wholeness and wisdom, not through thinking or fabrication, but because wholeness and wisdom are what and who we already are—our H₂O, our true nature—but, sadly, in terms of our own potential keep forgetting.

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*The Great Way is not difficult
for those not attached to preferences.
When love and hate are both absent
everything becomes clear and undisguised.*

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*If you wish to move in the One Way
do not dislike even the world of senses and ideas.
Indeed, to accept them fully
is identical with Enlightenment . . .*

Seng-Ts'an, third Zen Patriarch (circa 600 ce)
"Verses on the Faith-Mind" (*Hsin-Hsin Ming*)

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