RELAX AND BE AWARE by Sayadaw U Tejaniya

The first instruction I give yogis new to this practice is to relax and be aware. ##

Don't have any expectations or try to control the experience. Don't focus, concentrate or penetrate. Instead I encourage him or her to observe, watch and be aware. Just pay attention. ##

In this practice it is important to conserve energy so you can practice continually. ##

Do you want something out of the practice? If you are looking for a result or want something to happen, you will only tire yourself. ## It is so important to know whether you are feeling tense or relaxed. Check in repeatedly throughout the day. If you don't do this, tension will grow.

When you are relaxed, it is much easier to be aware. ## Not so much effort is required and it becomes an enjoyable, pleasant and interesting experience.

Many yogis think that being aware means we focus on an object and give it awareness with a great deal of energy. In fact we don't need that much energy. ##

The awareness we are seeking is unprompted. We are not digging for it. We are simply residing in the ebb and flow of nature itself. ##

Awareness is remembering, not forgetting what it is to be aware. Just simply knowing that you are aware. ##

For example, you are sitting or lying down reading. Do you know that you are sitting or lying down. Do you know that you are reading? Yes? Good! That's awareness. ##

How much energy did that require? Was it tiring or difficult? No? So, you can meditate. ##

The innate nature of our mind is wakefulness, where nothing is created. There are no conditions, just bare awareness. We can reside in this. ##

Your work is to keep the mindfulness continuous. Be vigilant concerning the amount of energy you are putting into each moment of awareness. ##
When you remind yourself to be mindful or think about being mindful, then awareness is automatically there.

If the intention to be mindful is always in the background of the mind, then this is what we will eventually always come back to.

So what do we need to be aware of? What do we need to investigate? We all have good qualities of mind and bad qualities of mind. The bad qualities we call defilements. The practice of meditation is about cultivating the good qualities we already have and giving them strength.

When we meditate, it is comprised of two parts. There is the object that you recognize and know and the mind that does the knowing—the observed and the observing.

When it is not possible to be aware of awareness, we need to lightly use an anchor, something in the body or awareness of the breath, something that is easy for your mind to be aware of, just to build continuity.

Do you know that the mind is paying attention, knowing that you are reading? What is the mind doing that you are able to know this? You know because the mind is aware and paying attention to it now. This is not thinking. It is simply being aware.

**ESSENCE OF THE PRACTICE**

Develop a right understanding of the practice.

Practice continuously. This is absolutely essential to develop insight and wisdom.

Relax!

Have the right attitude: accept your experience just as it is.

Be aware intelligently.

Recognize the defilements.