

## RIGHT EFFORT by Sayadaw U Tejaniya

Right effort is persistent effort.

It is not energy used to focus hard on something. It is effort which is simply directed at remaining aware, which should not require much energy.

You do not need to know every detail of your experience. Just be aware and know what you are aware of. Ask yourself often: "What am I aware of now?" "Am I properly aware or only superficially aware?"

This will support continuity of mindfulness.

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You need to be aware of yourself continuously, whatever posture you are in, from the time you wake up until you fall asleep.

Do not let your mind become idle or run freely. It is important that the mind keeps working, i.e. keeps being aware.

Whatever you do, it is the awareness that is important.

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Awareness is the home of the mind, so we must stay at home.

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Continuity of awareness requires right effort.

In our context, right effort means to keep reminding yourself to be aware.

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Remember: it is not difficult to be aware. It is just difficult to do it continuously!

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YOGI: A question about flies. [Laughter] I tried to go for a walk without a fly net. I tried to be patient with the flies ...

SUT: Recognize. "Trying to be" is hard. "Recognize what is" is easier. It takes less effort. It is more natural. You don't have to do anything, you just have to know: "The mind is impatient, it doesn't like this, it wants to push it away."

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Right effort means perseverance. It does not mean focusing hard, controlling, forcing or restricting yourself.

Focusing hard arises from greed, aversion, or ignorance of the practice.

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Be cool and calm. Be interested.

There should be consistent effort but not exertion.

Instead of using energy to focus, we use our intelligence and wisdom, by waiting and watching.

Right effort is called "right" because there is a lot of wisdom present.

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We accept, examine, and study whatever is happening as it is. We don't interfere with what is happening. We don't try to make something unwanted disappear or stop; nor do we need to try to create preferred experiences.

The mind is doing its own work through recognizing, being aware, knowing, thinking about the practice, and being interested. We're just seeing and acknowledging what is happening.

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First, learn how to make this kind of right effort.

Between the mind and the body, which one is putting in effort?

It is the mind that is putting in effort.

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Can you become skilled in the practice if you don't know:

- The mind;
- What the mind is thinking;
- How much effort the mind is exerting;
- What kind of thoughts are present;
- What kinds of attitudes are present;
- The nature of the mind?

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Take interest in the work you are doing.

Many yogis encounter good and bad experiences in their practice. Sometimes they have good meditation and sometimes they don't feel satisfied in their practice.

When I ask them why, they don't know! Do you know why they can't tell me?

It is because they don't study or take interest in what they are doing. They don't know their minds.

They don't know what they are doing, or why they are doing it!

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When alertness fades, it indicates there is a lack of right effort. You need to pay more attention to the observing mind.

Watch the quality of the mind that is working to be aware, and notice when it changes.

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We don't need to use too much effort or too much energy to be mindful.

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The nature of the mind can know the object naturally, so we don't need to try to know the object.

If the mind is relaxed, the mind knows something about itself.

The meaning of effort is to try to continue, try to be patient, try to be relaxed.

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Effort is doing what we should do and not doing what should not be done.

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Making awareness continuous is effort.

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Check the quality of the watching, meditating mind.

The mind is meditating. The mind is watching. The mind is practicing.

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A mind which is striving towards a goal, which is focused on achieving a certain result, is motivated by greed.

Wisdom knows the cause-and-effect relationships and it will therefore concentrate on fulfilling the causes and conditions.

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It is the nature of the mind to know.

Everyone already has this nature of awareness which we are practicing to nurture, strengthen and grow. We only need more right practice, without forcing or focusing.

The momentum and strength of awareness will develop naturally when we practice continuously, moment-to-moment, without breaks.

This is right effort.

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Personal effort is always necessary in the beginning.

Because when we don't have a practice that has momentum and has its own steam then we have to put in personal effort to get the engine going.

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When you put in effort it's not only in the sitting. It's very important to carry your awareness into every moment so that awareness is continuous.

When your awareness is continuous over and over, day after day, it gains momentum. When it gains momentum it can't stop and that's when it feels effortless.

Right effort continues but you don't have to exert it so much because you have already exerted it enough for there to be momentum, for it to keep carrying on by itself. That is what is meant by effortless.

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Vipassana is a learning process.

In order to truly understand something we have to investigate that subject over a long period of time. If we look at something for a short time only, deep understanding cannot arise; our understanding will remain superficial.

Since we need to do this practice long term, we have to learn to do it consistently.

Right effort means perseverance.

We understand that this practice is important and so we keep doing it persistently.

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Try to notice the difference in energy needed to remain aware in different postures.

When you are walking, the mind is fairly busy and aware of many different objects.

When you sit, the mind has much less to do and therefore you need to learn to "tune" the mind to remain bright and alert in this position.

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Apply wisdom to keep the mind alert and interested.

Trying to get the mind more interested in what is happening is "wisdom effort."

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If a sense of curiosity does not come naturally, you can ask yourself questions.

Asking questions helps the mind to remain interested and therefore alert.

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Right effort is really not effort. It is very easy. Just don't expect anything from the practice.

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Be with your experience as it is and allow things to turn out without trying to control.

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The quality of awareness itself is wakefulness, so the moment we are doing right practice that quality grows.

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Reside in awareness and see what comes along.