

Questions for Reflection
Series 6, Talk 10

Here are some ideas for reflection during the week:

1) First: When Subha said to the man about to violate her, "You say my eyes are beautiful. Very well, I will pluck them out and give them to you. Better to be blind than violated by you" what did you feel? Do you agree with the Buddha's precaution to have nuns always in two's?

2) Second: If you are not aware that you are eating the tangerine, the tangerine is not real. If the tangerine is not real, the person eating it is not real either. Many of us in our busy lives are not aware when we are eating; we are thinking instead about our problems, looking at our cell phones and surfing the web. Experiment, if you can, with having a meal without any devices. You might even experiment with having a meal in silence, or, if you are eating with another, the first half in silence and see what happens.

3) Third: When your mindfulness is solid," Dogen explains, "you will not be harmed even if you go into the midst of the robber of the five sense desires. It is like wearing armor and going into a battlefield, so there is nothing to be afraid of." Dogen speaks from an ultimate truth viewpoint, e.g., that everything is interconnected. This view is beyond the perceptions and workings of the intellect. Even if you can't yet fully relate to this viewpoint, have you ever experienced mindfulness that is solid and, as a result, you feel stronger? What are its distinguishing qualities?

4) Fourth: **Coffee cups, smart phones and running shoes are all mind, which means they are all impermanent.** What does this statement say to you?

5) Fifth: **It's not necessary to decide how we feel about feelings; we can simply remain aware of them as they arise without obsesing or fixating on them and without analyzing them to invest them with special meaning.** This is one way to practice equanimity. One identifies a feeling as it arises, names the feeling and that's all. Actually, in doing this, because everything changes, the feeling loses its force. The next time you find yourself upset, switch gears and study what happens.

