

Questions for Reflection
Talk 3 Series 14

Here is an idea for your reflection this week:

Please pick out two of the common mistakes that Zen students tend to make that you see yourself making and make a plan to correct yourself. Then monitor yourself as you practice the correction to see what for you are the main obstacles and find ways to address those. Here are some of the common mistakes:

1) *People say that practicing Zen is difficult, but there is a misunderstanding as to why. It is not difficult because it is hard to sit in the cross-legged position or to attain enlightenment. It is difficult because it is hard to keep our mind pure and our practice pure in its fundamental sense . . . I am interested in helping you keep your practice from becoming impure.*

2) Actually, when our practice is involved in a feeling of joy, it is not in very good shape. It's not poor practice but it's not true practice either.

3) Whether we are sleepy, tired of practicing zazen or repeating the same thing day after day, even so we continue our practice. We just do it.

4) **So long as we continue our practice we are quite safe.**

5) *It is when your practice is rather greedy that you become discouraged with it. So you should be grateful that you have a sign or warning signal to show you the weak point in your practice.*

6) Usually when we practice zazen, we become very idealistic and set up an ideal or goal which we strive to attain. But when you have some gaining idea within yourself by the time you attain your ideal, your gaining idea will create another ideal. Because our attainment is always ahead, we will always be sacrificing ourselves now for some ideal in the future. We end up with nothing. This is absurd. But even worse is to practice zazen in competition with someone else. Roshi says this is a poor, shabby kind of practice.