

### **Three As for managing the mind**

What does it take to cultivate *awareness*, *attention* and *acceptance* in these trying social and economic times? This is a simple, timely question, but it is not easy to address. For most of us our mind will find the mere mention of this idea uncomfortable and will wander off. Ah, but we can celebrate the mind's wandering. We can enjoy the idle daydream that takes us away from the present moment and still observe our mindless state!

Once acknowledged in this way, we can use our mind to be curious about what else is present during those precious, if mindless, moments! We can begin to free ourselves from needless suffering at the effect of unconscious, habitual thoughts and feelings. I see this natural human phenomenon as a ready-made opportunity to observe the mind's behavior and to attend to what our intuitive senses can tell us.

Relaxed observation is the beginning of awareness. To further cultivate the three As of *awareness*, *attention* and *acceptance* in everyday life we must consciously commandeer the workings of our mind, give it quiet direction to pay close attention and deliberately engage our senses in collecting information, impressions and perceptions with openness, compassion and non-judgment.

The primary purpose of focusing on being aware, attentive and accepting is to eliminate unnecessary suffering by cultivating insight into the workings of our mind and the nature of our perceived world. In time, we are better able to manage our mind with intention and compassion.

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