

# Zero and One – Part 2 of 4: Complete Experiences Cont'd, Strong Determination Sits ~ Shinzen Young

00:00:00 We can't always have enough concentration, clarity, and equanimity to have a complete  
00:00:21 experience of something.  
00:00:25 But maybe we can have a little bit of concentration, or a little bit of  
00:00:32 clarity, or a little bit  
00:00:36 of equanimity, and that's not too shabby.  
00:00:43 Maybe we can't have any concentration, clarity, and equanimity at all under  
00:00:46 certain circumstances,  
00:00:55 but we can have equanimity with that.  
00:01:01 We can accept that that's the case, and we can continue to do formal practice  
00:01:07 despite  
00:01:10 the fact that we have essentially no concentration, no clarity, and no  
00:01:12 equanimity.  
00:01:18 However, we're still setting the stage for nature to do its job.  
00:01:25 We're catalyzing a natural process.  
00:01:32 We're giving nature what it needs.  
00:01:39 On the surface, it seems like we're wasting our time doing a formal practice  
00:01:46 because it's  
00:01:53 like total monkey mind, total confusion mind, total lost in emotional chaos,  
00:02:00 sleepy, aches  
00:02:07 and pains.  
00:02:14 It seems like we're wasting our time.  
00:02:21 However, deep down, slowly, changes are taking place even under those  
00:02:28 circumstances because  
00:02:35 we're giving nature a chance.  
00:02:42 If you have a lot of concentration, clarity, and equanimity, great, you can  
00:02:49 explore the  
00:02:56 possibility of complete experience.  
00:03:03 If you can't have concentration or clarity, maybe you can have some  
00:03:10 equanimity.  
00:03:17 If you see what I'm saying, there's always a way to look at it positively.  
00:03:24 If you can't have all three, try to have one or two.  
00:03:31 If you can't have any at all, keep doing the formal practice because that's  
00:03:38 still doing

00:02:15 some good in the long term.

00:02:18 You can always do what seems like going through the motions.

00:02:22 It's still better than just completely acquiescing to desperate and hopeless wretchedness of

00:02:31 human condition.

00:02:33 However, on occasion, and certainly with practice, given enough time, enough time might be a

00:02:42 lot of time, folks.

00:02:44 You'll start to get hints of an experience of sensory completeness.

00:02:52 Where things get really extraordinary is when you can have a complete experience of feel-image-talk

00:03:01 all at once that integrates the mind and the emotions into a single arabesque of empty

00:03:15 energy.

00:03:16 There's a oneness and a nothingness there.

00:03:19 The world of concept and the world of emotion, which are often thought of as the head and

00:03:26 the heart being separate.

00:03:29 The head and the heart literally are integrated.

00:03:32 That's the oneness theme.

00:03:35 They're integrated by having a complete experience simultaneously of feel-image-talk so completely

00:03:44 present in the moment that there's no time to fixate them.

00:03:52 They manifest as a wave rather than as a particulate thing called a self or thing called thought

00:04:01 and feeling.

00:04:03 That's quite an integration.

00:04:04 That's quite a theme of oneness right there.

00:04:08 But there can be a broader theme of oneness.

00:04:12 That would be the theme of integrating not just the head and the heart, but the mind

00:04:20 and the whole body, not just the emotional body, but the physicality of the body, touch

00:04:25 space as I call it.

00:04:27 If feel is the emotional sensations, all the other sensations, what are we going to call

00:04:32 them?

00:04:33 The itches and aches, the pressures and pains, the sleepiness sensations, ordinary physiology,

00:04:39 the pulse, etc., etc., hot and cold, bladders full, stomachs empty, all that sort of stuff.

00:04:46 I call them touches whether they're on the surface or on the inside.

00:04:50 The body is touch feel space.

00:04:53 Well, there's a tradition in mindfulness practice.

00:04:59 It's not a requirement, but it's something that's done by some people sometimes.

00:05:05 It's very interesting.

00:05:07 You can learn a lot from it.

00:05:08 It's done in other traditions too, but in our tradition, it's called strong determination

00:05:14 sitting.

00:05:15 Aditana in the Pali language.

00:05:19 It means you make a decision for a certain period of time, I'm not going to make any

00:05:24 voluntary movement.

00:05:27 Typically it's a minimum of one hour, but I guess theoretically it could be anything,

00:05:32 one hour, two hours, three hours, four, half a day, whatever you want to do.

00:05:39 I did a retreat once in Australia.

00:05:43 It was a two-month retreat, and it was great.

00:05:46 I didn't have to run a retreat.

00:05:47 I was taking a retreat for two months.

00:05:52 Didn't have to do anything but meditate.

00:05:55 Of course, I wanted to make optimal use of that time.

00:05:59 The way the schedule worked, there was this nice four-hour slot in the afternoon.

00:06:09 I decided the first day, okay, for the next two months, I'll do a four-hour strong determination

00:06:16 sit during this slot.

00:06:19 See what happens.

00:06:20 You know what happens, right?

00:06:23 And it ain't pretty.

00:06:36 What happens is that after about an hour, you start to get some really significant pain.

00:06:44 And then after about an hour and a half, you're gnashing your teeth and your hands are now

00:06:58 a sweaty fist.

00:07:03 And then your body starts to shake uncontrollably, and then you're flooded with huge emotions

00:07:17 of fear and mental confusion and distorted thinking, ideation.

00:07:25 And then you start to lose control of your body.

00:07:29 Your eyes start to go up into your head and you can feel like it's horrible.

00:07:35 It's really, really bad.

00:07:39 However, it is, after all, just a huge eruption of touch, feel, image, talk.

00:07:51 The will, the freak out is in feel, image, talk.

00:07:55 The pain is in the touch.

00:07:57 It's just a dance of four strands of sensory experience.