

Ordinary Consciousness is the Way – Part 2: Mindful Awareness & Varieties of Flow ~ Shinzen Young

00:00:00 One of the sensory experiences that you focus on is a restful state, which is the darkness,
00:00:21 brightness in front of or behind your closed eyes.
00:00:23 I call that, I say that represents a blank mental screen.
00:00:29 Now although that darkness, brightness could be stable, in which case actually that can
00:00:35 be good.
00:00:36 That becomes what's called a casino and that can stabilize consciousness and become a basis
00:00:41 for absorption states.
00:00:44 On the other hand, very often that darkness, brightness is sort of swirling, vibrating
00:00:49 or whatever.
00:00:51 That's impermanence, that's flow.
00:00:53 And most people, at least occasionally, get that sense of flow in the blank on their mental
00:01:01 screen.
00:01:02 And if you focus on it, the more you focus on it, the more fluid it becomes.
00:01:06 It sort of massages you, it comforts you and so forth.
00:01:12 So my generic term for continuous type changes is flow.
00:01:24 And then if something disappears, that's gone, vanishing.
00:01:28 So in the restful aspect of image space, there may be flow.
00:01:33 Images come.
00:01:36 They typically, they disappear, so that's a vanishing.
00:01:40 Even when they're rising, they may fade in, fade out, melt, morph.
00:01:43 So there's usually some, even if there's image activity, there's some sense of change.
00:01:49 What can be really interesting, this doesn't happen to a lot of people, but sometimes you
00:01:55 can have mental images that they're real.
00:02:01 They're alive.
00:02:03 They're animated from inside, just like living things.
00:02:06 They're 3D and they just move as though God's hand were inside a puppet, making this thing

00:02:15 animated.

00:02:17 Sometimes people get freaked out when that happens.

00:02:22 But if you just get fascinated with the flow of expansion and contraction in those realistic

00:02:30 images, then you're going to go to the source.

00:02:36 It's going to take you to the formless doing that molds not only those images, but the

00:02:45 visual so-called material world, everything.

00:02:50 In other words, if you ever have, not that this happens very often, but sometimes people

00:02:56 quote, see spirits and whatever, there's two ways that you can relate to that.

00:03:00 One is, well, it's sort of a message and you can honor its content, but that's the world

00:03:07 of powers and that has its place.

00:03:09 But what we would prefer is that you not be so interested in that message, but be interested

00:03:17 in the movement of the media.

00:03:20 Because when you're seeing spirits, you're very close to seeing the great spirit, but

00:03:25 you have to let go of your preoccupation with the spirits and just see the underlying pure

00:03:34 flow of formless energy that is what is behind making them seem so real.

00:03:43 I know half the people hearing this are, I'll never experience that, I never experienced

00:03:51 that, and the other half is, I hope I don't experience that.

00:03:59 Some people experience this and if you do, you'll know how to make use of it as a liberation

00:04:06 path as opposed to either something that wigs you out or something that shunts you off into

00:04:18 a lesser God.

00:04:20 Let's put it that way.

00:04:23 In your visual thinking, either the restful aspect of the blank or the active aspect of

00:04:28 image activity, there could be flow, things could vanish, things could change and move

00:04:34 and melt and morph, and you could decide to focus on that and to sort of ride on that,

00:04:38 get fascinated with it.

00:04:39 The more you focus, the more pronounced it gets.

00:04:42 That's the theme of flow and go.

00:04:45 In visual thinking, how about auditory thinking?

00:04:49 Well, sometimes there's not too much happening there.

00:04:52 There's a kind of quiet, but then there's an underlying current, a kind of buzz.

00:04:57 That's a kind of vibratory flow in the subtle auditory processing.

00:05:05 In Tibetan, that's called nam dok ok je.

00:05:09 They actually have a term for that, a technical term.

00:05:14 Nam dok means thinking, and ok means underneath or beneath, and je means a stream.

00:05:26 I took great pleasure in finding out that this thing that I had always called subtle

00:05:31 processing and made part and parcel, as you know, of the techniques, sure enough, in Tibet,

00:05:38 it was known and they have a technical term for it.

00:05:42 Somebody told me that, a Tibetan scholar, a couple of months ago.

00:05:46 Anyway, so you can have that subtle sort of vibratory flow in talk space.

00:05:50 Even when you have explicit words in talk space, they may boom in talk space.

00:05:55 That's expanding.

00:05:57 That's expansive flow.

00:05:59 They may grip and hold you.

00:06:01 That's contractive flow.

00:06:03 In your auditory thoughts, you could have flowing experiences.

00:06:07 What's interesting about what I call talk or auditory thinking has some sort of interesting

00:06:15 characteristics.

00:06:16 One is, it's for most people the hardest to stop, not that I'm advocating you stop it,

00:06:24 but if you try to stop it, it's hard to stop it.

00:06:27 But it's very easy to initiate.

00:06:30 You can think about anything you want in talk space.

00:06:32 You can repeat a mantra or some litany, and there's a lot of control in initiating talk.

00:06:39 It's really hard to stop doing it once it gets going.

00:06:44 The other interesting thing is that talk is probably the easiest sensory phenomenon within

00:06:53 which to notice abrupt vanishings.

00:06:57 People will often report this to me as though it were a problem.

00:07:04 As soon as I notice my internal talk, it disappears.

00:07:07 What am I doing wrong?

00:07:08 It's not a problem.

00:07:11 That's an insight, insight into impermanence.

00:07:16 You can note the vanishings, the gongs.

00:07:19 As you can see, the mind is mental experience, visual thinking and auditory thinking has

00:07:28 a lot of potential for impermanence, for focusing on the theme of change.

00:07:38 How about the body?

00:07:40 If you zoom out and cover your whole body, it's pretty hard to keep the whole thing in

00:07:47 awareness and perfectly stable.

00:07:49 It tends to puff out a little here, pull in a little bit there.

00:07:52 That's flow.

00:07:56 Sometimes people get tingling, vibration, undulation.

00:08:01 That's flow.

00:08:02 A problem that people report in the body is there's pressure.

00:08:09 People usually blame themselves for it.

00:08:11 It's like, well, something's trying to expand, but I'm resisting it kind of thing.

00:08:16 They make themselves responsible.

00:08:18 If you have pressure, you can ask yourself, is it inward, outward, or bidirectional?

00:08:27 Instead of making it a problem, just look upon it as force flow.

00:08:34 Pressure is actually momentum flux.

00:08:39 You can look upon that as a kind of flow.

00:08:41 Einstein did.

00:08:46 Instead of making pressures something I'm resisting or I'm fighting or I'm whatever,

00:08:52 it's just there's an outward force.

00:08:56 That's an expansion.

00:08:58 Even if there's no volumetric change, it is an expansive flavor of flow in that force

00:09:04 is flowing out, pressure force.

00:09:07 Inward and just yield to it.

00:09:11 It might make it worse for a little while, but then at some point you get a sense that,

00:09:17 yes, that's not a problem.

00:09:19 That's part of the flow of nature too.