

How Intense Emotions Can Be No Problem – SHINZEN YOUNG

00:00:00 The ancient Taoists had experienced the same thing and had an interesting phraseology for it.

00:00:15 It relates to jing qi shan, which are terms that you may be familiar with if you've studied Asian medicine

00:00:29 or martial arts and so forth.

00:00:31 So jing means essence, literally. So essence of what?

00:00:36 Well, in terms of sensory experience, often in the process of completing an experience,

00:00:48 a certain flavor has to sort of get distilled and dominate your awareness.

00:00:59 And that distillation of that experience could be described in Chinese as jing, or essence.

00:01:07 Now in the Taoist practice, this particular distillation that they often worked with was sexual sensation.

00:01:17 But this can be generalized to any kind of experience, and it doesn't necessarily have to be in the body,

00:01:26 although it's sort of easiest to understand there, but the same thing can happen in visual and in auditory.

00:01:35 You sort of ... everything gets distilled.

00:01:39 So let's say, for example, you are working on having fear no longer be an issue for you.

00:01:54 How can that be? Because there's so many circumstances of fear in this world,

00:02:02 so many legitimate reasons to be afraid. It just goes on and on and on.

00:02:09 How can it be that a human being could become a human being for whom fear is no longer an issue?

00:02:19 Broader still. If you can do that, well, why not add in grief and sadness?

00:02:28 Or anger? Or on a more mundane note, that frenetic impatience that we have all day,

00:02:42 that comes out when you're in a traffic jam?

00:02:49 Which is very ordinary, but actually a source of significant suffering in the world.

00:02:58 And now at the other extreme, what you would hardly think any human being could ever come to grips with,

00:03:10 shame and embarrassment. How about that one?

00:03:14 So anger, fear, sadness, embarrassment, impatience, disgust.

00:03:21 Those are the big six on the negative side of flavors of human emotion.

00:03:30 I know for sure that a human being can reach the point where those are no longer an issue for them.

00:03:47 So how is that possible? How is it possible to do with all of those?

00:03:51 How is it possible to do with even one of those?

00:03:54 Well, first you have to be willing to allow it to distill into an essence.

00:04:07 What that means is that particular favor, whichever one it is, anger, fear, sadness,

00:04:17 each one has its own very distinct quality in the body.

00:04:23 So the essence of fear occurs when there is nothing but the fear sensation.

00:04:36 It is in every cubic centimeter of your body, and it is continuous, unbroken in time, for a period of time.

00:04:50 Now, we're very, very afraid of what the consequences of that would be.

00:05:01 But the fear of the consequences of that is actually what keeps us imprisoned for our whole life.

00:05:09 Because the consequences of allowing it to become essence, in the way I've just described,

00:05:16 the consequences are nothing negative at all.

00:05:22 The long-term consequences are freedom.

00:05:28 But because we're afraid to let it go to that point, very few people become free.

00:05:37 So if the shit really hits the fan to the point where you cannot avoid

00:05:47 one or a combination of these negative emotions becoming essence,

00:05:53 well, in a sense that could be a very good thing.

00:05:58 So I repeat, there is nothing but that flavor, essentially hardly aware of anything else in the body.

00:06:08 It's everywhere, and it's continuous through time.

00:06:14 So now you are inundated with the essence of shame, or grief, or fear.

00:06:25 Or the impatience associated with being in a traffic jam and you're late to an appointment.

00:06:34 That one is just about as hard to work with as all the others.

00:06:38 It took me, oh my God, from the time I realized what the task was,

00:06:45 which is what I'm now describing to you, from the time I realized what the task was,

00:06:52 to the time where I could actually do it with that impatience thing in traffic and not suffer.

00:07:01 Well, I don't want to ... Maybe I shouldn't say this.

00:07:07 Twenty years. But the twenty years passed anyway.

00:07:12 I know what you're saying, well, I don't have twenty years.

00:07:17 But that's another Dharma talk. I'm going to give a talk about aging.

00:07:22 But the quick answer is, aging is a natural state of no-self.

00:07:30 So you've got something going for you.

00:07:34 But if you're young and have twenty years, well, it might not take you twenty

years,

00:07:39 but it took me twenty years to get to the point where it really felt good, like liberating,

00:07:48 to have that level of essence with impatience.

00:07:56 Like I say, if you're already old, you've already got some things going for you,

00:08:02 we'll talk about that later. So there's hope in both cases.

00:08:10 So it becomes essence.

00:08:15 And then it starts to get sort of liquidy.

00:08:30 化精为气

00:08:33 The essence converts into a kind of energy that is first sort of liquidy

00:08:44 and then sort of shimmering and gaseous.

00:08:54 And then 化气为善

00:09:03 That becomes this effortless, simultaneous, formless, rich doing of space, spaciousness,

00:09:24 effortlessly spreading, effortlessly collapsing.

00:09:29 And it's at that point that you have a complete experience of that particular essence.

00:09:40 It has now become 善, pure spirit.

00:09:46 Now, as I say, they did this traditionally with sexual sensations.

00:09:55 So it's the same process.

00:09:59 The sexual sensation inundates the entire body, there's nothing but that.

00:10:07 And it's very hard to have equanimity with that.

00:10:10 It's hard to have equanimity with uncomfortable things,

00:10:13 but it's also hard to have equanimity with intense pleasures.

00:10:17 And then it starts to flow everywhere.

00:10:23 And then it's sort of like more gaseous.

00:10:28 And then it's just pure space.

00:10:31 And that's what the Tibetans called 德同意而美

00:10:34 The non-duality of bliss and void.

00:10:43 So if you can go through that phase progression with just a half dozen negatives,

00:10:55 it's a small list.

00:10:57 Unfortunately, each one of those essences, each one of those flavors,

00:11:04 has been honed by Darwin to control animals.

00:11:12 And by Darwin I don't mean the man Darwin,

00:11:15 I mean natural selection over millions and millions of years.

00:11:20 So it is very hard to allocate all your resources

00:11:33 to having a complete experience of these things,

00:11:36 because everything in the sensation says,

00:11:43 I got to do something about this, I got to do something about this,

00:11:45 I got to do something about this,

00:11:47 because those sensations have been honed by evolution
00:11:51 to make animals do something quickly about something.
00:11:59 Either approach it and eat it, or run away from it, etc. etc.
00:12:07 Or make love to it, etc. etc. etc.
00:12:13 So it's very hard to just allocate the totality of your resources towards
completing.
00:12:21 But all you have to do is do that a few times,
00:12:26 or well, more than a few times, a few hundred times.
00:12:31 And then it becomes habitual.
00:12:34 Then for the rest of your life,
00:12:36 you will have experiences in your emotional world
00:12:43 that are maximally poignant and minimally problematic.