

Shinzen guides a meditation for Pain. Part I of III ~ Shinzen Young

00:00:00 I'm Shinzen Yang, and this is?

00:00:09 My name is Richard Ford.

00:00:12 And I'm going to demonstrate how to interactively guide a person in working with the issue of

00:00:22 physical discomfort. Richard, would you, or you prefer Rich?

00:00:27 Yeah, Rich.

00:00:28 Rich, would you say something about what you're experiencing now in terms of physical discomfort,

00:00:35 pain and so forth?

00:00:37 Well, the physical discomfort is in the lower back, both sides, extends down to the hip

00:00:42 on the right side. And then occasionally it's shoulder stiffness, and I think it's associated

00:00:48 with the back pain in the lower back.

00:00:52 And is this a condition that's with you, like, most of the time?

00:00:57 It's been on and off for 20-something years.

00:00:59 I see. So it's a long-standing condition.

00:01:02 Yes.

00:01:03 Is it something that represents a major impediment in your life, or more just sort of an inconvenience?

00:01:12 It's an inconvenience, but it has been a major impediment.

00:01:14 So it sometimes flares and becomes worse, and then other times it's not so severe.

00:01:21 Okay. What we're going to do is I'm going to just start guiding you, and you can just

00:01:28 follow along, and we'll see where it takes us. So I'd like you to start by closing your

00:01:35 eyes, and you can sort of lengthen your spine and settle into your posture. Okay, good.

00:01:42 Now, do you feel pretty settled into the posture?

00:01:52 Yes.

00:01:53 Okay, good. We'll call the areas where you feel the discomfort clearly the primary areas,

00:02:00 and I'd like you to focus for a moment on those primary areas, and get a sense of the

00:02:07 size, shape, position, and so forth. Able to do that?

00:02:35 Yes.

00:02:36 And is it one connected area, or is it several disconnected areas that are the primary?

00:02:44 Two areas.

00:02:45 Two independent areas?

00:02:47 Yes.

00:02:47 Okay, good. Now, I'd like you to check out and see if the physical discomfort in your

00:02:55 body is limited to those two primaries, or whether the primary areas in some way affect

00:03:02 the rest of your body. You can do a sort of conceptual experiment. You can imagine if

00:03:11 there was not that primary discomfort, would the rest of your body be in some way more

00:03:17 comfortable? If so, then that represents a spread of influence from the primaries. But

00:03:24 if that's not the case, then they're truly isolated, and there's no secondary spread.

00:03:32 Can you make a guess as to whether ...

00:03:35 It's a spread.

00:03:36 There's a subtle spread. Does it affect much of your body, most of your body, or the spread

00:03:44 is not too wide?

00:03:47 Most of it.

00:03:48 Okay. That is, by the way, excellent spatial resolution. Very often, when a person has

00:03:56 a discomfort in their body, most of the suffering will be in the subtle spread. People tend

00:04:04 to think it's in the local intensity, and sometimes it can be, but subtle is significant,

00:04:09 I often say, and the subtle spread, the fact that you can detect that subtle spread is

00:04:14 highly significant. So that's excellent.

00:04:19 So here's what I'd like you to do. I would like you to work with the, not with the primary

00:04:26 initially, but with the subtle spread. We're going to work with the easier material first.

00:04:32 And I'd like you to let your attention freely float within the secondary sensations, and

00:04:39 to just sort of note the part of your body, like knee, face, arms, that kind of thing,

00:04:46 where there's secondary discomfort. And because that secondary discomfort is

mild relative

00:04:53 to the primary discomfort, you may be able to have perfect equanimity with it, just totally

00:05:00 accept it. You may not be able to totally accept the primary sensation, but you may

00:05:05 be able to totally accept the secondary sensations, because they're milder. Does that make sense?

00:05:10 Yes, it does.

00:05:11 So I'm going to have you do that with spoken labels. I'd like you to do that now.

00:05:23 Spoken labels.

00:05:24 In other words, you'll say out loud, knee, face. You'll note, you'll let your awareness

00:05:30 freely float within the secondary sensations, go wherever they want, and just say out loud

00:05:36 where you're focusing on the secondary. And that will tend to sort of circulate through

00:05:41 your body. You'll see your awareness will just sort of naturally go from place to place

00:05:46 within the secondary. Does that make sense?

00:05:48 Yes.

00:05:49 Good. I'd like you to do that with spoken labels, and I'll just listen in.

00:05:56 Shoulder blades. Neck muscles. My fingers.

00:06:11 Good. To make it more impersonal, a matter of fact, you can just make it really simple

00:06:18 like shoulder, finger, neck, in a sort of gentle, a matter of fact voice, so you don't

00:06:25 have to make it my or like, you make it like really simple and sort of impersonal in a

00:06:33 matter of fact.

00:06:40 Shoulder blades. Forearms. Thumbs. Neck. Spine.

00:07:10 Lower back. Good.