

SCIENCE of ENLIGHTENMENT (book excerpt) ~ Shinzen Young

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00:00:12 Have you ever been in a situation of extreme danger
00:00:16 where time slowed down, everything got peaceful,
00:00:21 and you felt extremely focused and without fear
00:00:26 and able to respond in a remarkably effective way?
00:00:31 When I ask this question to any large group,
00:00:35 several people will always raise their hands and say yes.
00:00:40 One woman described going into a state like this
00:00:43 when she almost drowned in California's Kern River.
00:00:48 As the result of being so tranquil and present,
00:00:51 she avoided panic and was able to survive the incident.
00:00:56 She added an interesting comment.
00:00:59 If only I could have bottled that state,
00:01:03 I could have addicted the world to it.
00:01:08 People who have experienced this spontaneous state
00:01:12 of extraordinary focus often say
00:01:15 that it was the most meaningful day of their life
00:01:19 and that it changed them forever.
00:01:23 Sometimes it happens under circumstances
00:01:25 of exceptional stress, in sports, in combat,
00:01:30 terminal illness, accident, or assault.
00:01:34 But it can also happen at the opposite end of the spectrum.
00:01:39 When you're extremely safe and connected,
00:01:41 say while walking in the forest alone
00:01:44 or during a particularly profound experience
00:01:48 of making love, in these circumstances,
00:01:52 you again find that time slows down,
00:01:56 your mind becomes very peaceful, and you're very present
00:02:00 and focused and unified with what's going on.
00:02:06 What few people realize is that such states of presence
00:02:10 and focus are trainable.
00:02:14 You don't have to wait for unusual or extreme conditions
00:02:17 in order to experience them.
00:02:21 And it doesn't have to be sporadic or short-lived.
00:02:25 It can be a permanent abode.
00:02:28 Indeed, any person can live their day-to-day life

00:02:33 with that level of focus.

00:02:36 In other words, a person's baseline of focus

00:02:40 can be elevated through systematic practice.

00:02:45 The discovery that extraordinary focus can be intentionally

00:02:48 cultivated is one of the most significant findings

00:02:52 the human species has made.

00:02:57 It has enormous ramifications for both our personal lives

00:03:02 and our world.

00:03:06 The systematic training and focus

00:03:08 is called meditation practice.

00:03:11 It's the basic tool in the science of enlightenment.