

The Big Picture as I See It ~ Shinzen Young

00:00:00 I started this series of talks defining mindful awareness in terms of three components, concentration
00:00:13 power, sensory clarity, and equanimity.
00:00:16 Then I talked about how those three components would lead to these four forms of happiness.
00:00:34 Extraordinary happiness for yourself as sort of the root, and then they also foster ordinary
00:00:40 happiness for yourself, and they lead you to bring both ordinary and extraordinary happiness
00:00:48 to others.
00:00:49 So these are like sort of the four quadrants of the picture of total happiness.
00:00:57 I would claim that you need all four quadrants to be a totally happy person.
00:01:05 We started with a definition of what mindful awareness is, and there were three elements
00:01:10 needed for that.
00:01:12 Then we talked about, well, why do you want it?
00:01:16 What good is it?
00:01:17 And we sort of got these four quadrants of total happiness.
00:01:20 Then I mentioned the five things that you need in order to be successful with mindfulness
00:01:26 practice, learn the concepts, get one good technique.
00:01:30 Be willing to apply in life, and regular rhythm of day-to-day practice, periodic retreat practice,
00:01:36 day-to-day self-practice.
00:01:39 And then those four plus time are sort of the factors that lead to mindful elevation
00:01:47 of the base level of mindful awareness.
00:01:51 There is mindfulness practice.
00:01:56 It's a little time to acquire a few concepts, acquire one good technique.
00:02:03 Then you apply them in the concepts and technique in your life, and you do a regular practice.
00:02:11 If you can, daily practice, I recommend at least 10 minutes a day.
00:02:15 Of course, it can be much longer.
00:02:18 And then periodic retreat practice, I recommend four hour, at least a four hour mini retreat
00:02:25 per month.
00:02:27 So those four things plus time, not necessarily a lot of time, I'm just saying time itself,
00:02:38 constitutes sort of the practice.
00:02:42 And so the mindfulness practice elevates the base level of mindful awareness.
00:02:48 And that leads to something that I've been calling extraordinary happiness for yourself,
00:02:53 a happiness independent of conditions, an experience of body and mind that no longer
00:03:00 limits you in identity to the body and mind, and external behaviors that improve with time.
00:03:09 It's an interesting thing, a paradox, a deep mystery, how the experience of going beyond
00:03:26 the body-mind identity, which is an experience of dissolving into the source, which is an
00:03:34 impermanent dynamic but vacuous doing, and quite impersonal, how contact with the impersonal,
00:03:47 how when a human, a human who has feelings and behaviors, feelings being pleasant and
00:03:53 unpleasant, behaviors being good and bad, a human who has feelings and behaviors contacts

00:04:03 that which has no feeling, no pleasant or unpleasant, no good or bad, that as the result
00:04:13 of that, that human becomes more and more deeply nurtured in terms of their fulfillment
00:04:21 and refined in terms of their behaviors.
00:04:25 That's the central mystery of the mystical path, how that happens.
00:04:31 Because it sort of is strange, you wouldn't expect it.
00:04:35 Why should contact with that which is not good or bad and isn't human and doesn't
00:04:41 have feelings so nurture us at the level of feeling and refine us at the level of skillful
00:04:51 and unskillful in our behaviors?
00:04:53 It sounds paradoxical, but that's what happens.
00:04:57 And that's what I'm talking about as extraordinary happiness for yourself.
00:05:04 It's also interesting that contrary to what you might think, the more you transcend conditions,
00:05:13 the better it is to improve conditions.
00:05:17 You might think, well, you transcend conditions so you become indifferent to conditions and
00:05:22 therefore things fall apart, but actually as you become extraordinarily happy, a happiness
00:05:30 that's beyond this world, so to speak, that's outside of time and space, your experience
00:05:38 inside of time and space, your ordinary happiness for yourself statistically tends to improve,
00:05:45 not inevitably.
00:05:46 It isn't true for everyone always, but as a general principle that is true.
00:05:52 And then from this transcendence comes a contact with the womb of consciousness, and from that
00:06:03 womb is where self and others arise.
00:06:10 So there is this concern for the well-being of others, both that they have ordinary happiness,
00:06:19 so that sort of ordinary service, and also that they have extraordinary happiness as
00:06:25 you have begun to experience, which is teaching and supporting teaching of this path.
00:06:34 So that's sort of the big picture as I see it.