

# Teaching 'Turn Back' (or UM's Self-Inquiry) Practice ~ SHINZEN YOUNG

00:00:00 Hi, I'm Devin. How are you?

00:00:11 It's been a while. There you are. Here I am.

00:00:15 So, I want to say how I love the use of language to point to experience.

00:00:24 And yet, a couple of days ago, Juliana was guiding, what is it, now it's see, hear, feel, back, as opposed to self.

00:00:33 And there was an interesting way in which she was guiding this.

00:00:37 It was a reverse. It was instantaneous. It was like a pinprick. It was the opposite of gone.

00:00:43 And that was a different way for me to kind of hear that being presented with language.

00:00:49 And my first thought was how you must be enjoying the symmetry of that being the opposite of gone.

00:00:56 Because how many times do we talk about it?

00:00:58 You go, if there's no symmetry, there's beauty in symmetry.

00:01:01 So, I did kind of go, oh, Shenzhen must really be loving that.

00:01:06 But I also said, when we're doing turn back, as opposed to gone,

00:01:11 we have to kind of break through that sense of observing self in a way we don't with gone.

00:01:17 And what was really interesting to me about ...

00:01:20 It's true.

00:01:21 And so, what I liked about the quick, she'd say, quick stab at the past, and also it was the past.

00:01:27 It wasn't, oh, I think there was a mention of reversing the direction of where you see perception coming from,

00:01:33 but this notion of it being past in time.

00:01:36 Of course, we've got our time-space metaphor there.

00:01:40 But I was kind of interested in this languaging and how it helped get to a certain experience.

00:01:46 But I've had an experience with this technique that I'd like to help guide people to.

00:01:52 And what I thought this was helpful for was when I first did this technique,

00:01:58 which was you and I had a conversation about 21 years ago where you were talking about the koan you used, like who am I.

00:02:06 And you gave me privately, I had a koan, who is ...

00:02:11 It was looking, listening, and feeling.

00:02:13 It was a different time.

00:02:14 And who was, we could say now, see, hear, feeling.  
00:02:17 And the moment I would ask the question, there would be this separation of not just observer and subject,  
00:02:24 but of self and observer.  
00:02:26 So the observer was kind of back here or up somewhere, and I came to you and you went, yeah, yeah, yeah,  
00:02:32 but look at that observer.  
00:02:33 The observer is just what we would now call see, hear, feel, or talk, image, feel is what you said then.  
00:02:38 Yeah, but the observer is just talk, image, feel.  
00:02:40 And I broke that apart and went, yeah, there really isn't anything there.  
00:02:43 And then every time I asked the question, instead of it being this instant separation that had this lovely equanimity in the middle,  
00:02:52 instead of that, now there was a, there wasn't an observer.  
00:02:57 There was more of an abiding in an aware, an empty awareness.  
00:03:06 And from which, and there was an abiding.  
00:03:09 It wasn't a quick jab.  
00:03:10 It was an abiding.  
00:03:12 And so what I was interested in that kind of reverse, like Julianne would go reverse, reverse,  
00:03:18 and that to me tended to take people to that first thing that I experienced.  
00:03:24 And I have a lot of students and clients who get that.  
00:03:27 Oh, the observer is back here.  
00:03:28 And if I say, yeah, but it's really just, you know, if I try to tell them what you told me,  
00:03:33 everyone doesn't have the chops to do that.  
00:03:35 And I wondered if you had some languaging that's as effective as the, hey, like gone, like reverse,  
00:03:44 to help people kind of drop into an, which is my experience of it.  
00:03:51 It's kind of an abiding.  
00:03:52 It isn't a quick, it's a, oh, yeah, I can hang out there.  
00:03:56 So that's my question.  
00:03:59 What's good in languaging to help people or are you assuming that once they kind of do that, they'll just fall in?  
00:04:10 The way that I typically treat this issue is in a sense to sidestep it, but not really.  
00:04:29 I'll explain.  
00:04:31 So the broader perspective on this kind of thing is that different languagings of a certain direction that someone would like to point,  
00:04:54 who's a coach, teacher, different languagings work for different people at different times.  
00:05:04 So that's just something to know as a general principle.

00:05:11 It means on one hand, it's good to try a range of ways of describing things, although that can be also confusing to people, but it's a shotgun approach.

00:05:30 Something hopefully lands.

00:05:35 That's one way to go about it.

00:05:38 The it meaning deal with the issue that there are often many ways to describe something and for a given individual at a given time, one might have a stronger effect.

00:05:53 Another way to deal with the issue is to say that when you do a technique, the technique is one thing.

00:06:17 It has a focus range, it has an instruction set, there's a way of describing the technique.

00:06:24 Technique is one thing.

00:06:26 The kinds of experience that a given individual at a given time has when doing a technique may have when they do a technique.

00:06:38 That varies from person to person, time to time.

00:06:42 And that's actually different from the technique.

00:06:46 So you can describe, here's the technique.

00:06:53 Here's how it works.

00:06:55 Here are some of the challenges.

00:06:58 And then you can say as a general principle, if we look at a lot of people over a long period of time, there are some experiences that people tend to go through with this technique.

00:07:16 And yes, there is a trend with time.

00:07:20 But you may go back and forth, we're just going to sensitize you to these experiences.

00:07:28 And then with, we're talking about the turn back technique.

00:07:37 This is the standard sequence, but we're very careful in the language we say, we don't say you're going to go through this or you have to go through this but often people go through, when we look over the long term of practice, decades, often people will go through a progression.

00:08:02 Typically, with turn back type family. The first is, what are you asking me to do.

00:08:14 I don't understand the instructions.

00:08:17 That's usually where it starts, because it's not it's a hazy, it's a finger pointing to a hazy.

00:08:26 Try as you might. And here's the great thing. The great thing is any number of our coaches are better at it than I am.

00:08:40 They just got the knack for doing that, but it's hard to put into words.

00:08:45 So that's the first experience, WTF.

00:08:51 What are you asking me to do here.

00:08:54 And at some point.

00:08:57 Hopefully, you get a sense of it.

00:09:05 In between.

00:09:07 I don't know what you're talking about, and I've got a sense of it may be some false learning where you think there's an actual verbal answer that you're going to bring to the teacher.

00:09:21 And then you get this clever thing that I thought of.

00:09:25 No, no, no.

00:09:29 And then you get the hang of it.

00:09:32 You get a sense of it, and then you get that sense of.

00:09:36 There's a witness back here, typically, and it has equanimity so now you're getting equanimity.

00:09:44 You're not fixated in space, and then you have to turn back to that from that and turn back from that and go through a sequence until you're unfixated in space, while your eyes are open, taking care of business.

00:10:03 And at that point, you have true non dual awareness.

00:10:11 There's a non duality

00:10:15 between the formless source, and the trillion forms of life of daily life embodied life.

00:10:26 And you can point out a sequence of states that they will likely experience.

00:10:41 So when those things happen, they're prepared. You can even do sensitizing exercises that may help that happen. Are we good stuff is this enough for now. Thank you. I appreciate it.

00:11:11 Thank you.