

How we Evolve & Integrate (including the 'Dark Night') ~ Shinzen Young

00:00:00 So, yesterday I told the story of when I was at Mampuku-ji and a friend introduced me to
00:00:26 the poet Gary Snyder and we became buddies.

00:00:31 And then later in a presentation here in the United States at a university, someone asked
00:00:37 him who can save the world.

00:00:40 And he gave a typical Zen answer.

00:00:46 He said, well, I can't tell you who that person is, but I can tell you something about that
00:00:52 person.

00:00:53 It's going to be someone who doesn't need to save the world.

00:01:00 And he sort of left it at that.

00:01:02 So what did he mean by that?

00:01:11 Someone who doesn't need to save the world.

00:01:16 Let me see if I can fill in some of the details because it's actually a very deep issue.

00:01:31 This path, contemplative-based psycho-spiritual growth, is how I think of this path.

00:01:41 It's universal.

00:01:43 You find it all over the planet, east-west, prehistoric, historic times.

00:01:53 There's an underlying commonality, which if you think about it is utterly extraordinary

00:02:01 considering the enormous variation in culture, language, race, and so forth, that is this

00:02:12 planet, east-west, ancient-modern, prehistoric actually when I say ancient, Stone Age, our
00:02:22 remote ancestors.

00:02:27 So there is this very human thing, this universal human thing that I call contemplative-based
00:02:39 psycho-spiritual growth.

00:02:45 It represents a radical re-engineering of our humanity.

00:02:53 So I mean I like to present things as you know sort of in a light, humorous way.

00:03:00 And the reason is because this is actually such a heavy-duty industrial strength process

00:03:10 so it's nice to be light and humorous about it and not take ourselves too seriously.

00:03:16 But actually it is very heavy-duty.

00:03:26 My phrase is it represents a fundamental re-engineering of who we are.

00:03:37 And I'm going to guess that it's the next step in evolution, although obviously no one
00:03:44 can know that.

00:03:46 But if you look at how evolution has proceeded hitherto, it's through natural selection
00:03:55 at a biological level.

00:03:59 And we are the beneficiaries of that process.

00:04:06 Eventually that process, it took millions and millions of years, but that process produced

00:04:14 an amazingly intelligent species on this planet, at least relative to the intelligence of the
00:04:23 previous species.

00:04:25 Now yes, there's other quite intelligent species, elephants, porpoises, other great apes and

00:04:35 so forth.

00:04:36 But when you look at our brains, there's just an amazing difference at a physical level.

00:04:47 So we're smart, and I think that we're smart enough to figure out that there's a couple

00:05:00 little flaws in our engineering.

00:05:06 The other species have to just wait for the Darwinian timescale, which is mega years,

00:05:15 millions of years for natural selection, or certainly tens of thousands of years for natural

00:05:21 selection to mould through expansion and contraction, life and death, mould their evolution.

00:05:32 But apparently, and once again this is conjectural on my part, but apparently natural selection

00:05:41 has finally produced a species smart enough to actually realise that there are flaws.

00:05:54 The entire European tradition, at least post-pagan Europe, the Christian tradition, is based

00:06:07 on that paradigm, and whether or not one accepts the story, the Greek word for story being

00:06:16 mythos, whether or not you accept the myth or the story, you cannot argue with the logic

00:06:28 that there's something wrong.

00:06:33 Look out at the world, something's not quite right.

00:06:37 Now you can say, and we will say, that there is a primordial okayness also, but on the

00:06:53 surface there's some problems, which sort of makes sense when you think about it, because

00:07:00 very complex creatures like us can develop problems.

00:07:05 Our own strengths become our weaknesses.

00:07:11 We have this incredibly advanced immune system to defend us, but then what happens?

00:07:23 It commonly creates an inflammatory response that kills us.

00:07:33 Infection is our defences, sort of overworking, overreacting.

00:07:41 Septic shock can do you in.

00:07:45 So there's something a little off in the engineering.

00:07:51 We are real smart, so we have real big heads, which is sort of nice, but unfortunately they're

00:08:00 now too big to come out of the mother conveniently, so the birthing process is very, very difficult

00:08:09 for our species.

00:08:11 It's an engineering flaw.

00:08:14 Well we sort of took care of that with modern obstetrics and so forth.

00:08:24 We benefit from bipedalism, we could walk upright, but we get a lot of lower back problems.

00:08:33 So it's great, but Darwin is not perfect.

00:08:43 We have this intelligence, but unfortunately moment by moment, before the rational brain

00:08:55 gets activated, another part of the brain called the limbic system, the amygdala, the

00:09:04 nucleus accumbens, and other emotional structures, they get activated first.

00:09:16 So that our rationality is neuroanatomically coloured by emotionality.

00:09:33 So we have the situation of having this advanced primate brain, and in the centre of it is

00:09:44 essentially the world view of a Komodo dragon.

00:09:51 If you've ever seen any videos about Komodo dragons, their society is not a kind one.

00:10:05 So there's some possible problem here.

00:10:13 In the neuroscience field there have been numerous imaging studies, watching people's

00:10:22 brains react to politicians.

00:10:29 And it absolutely does not matter what your politics are.

00:10:35 When you listen to the other, your emotional brain lights up and your rational brain just

00:10:44 shuts down.

00:10:45 It's expansion and contraction.

00:10:49 So not surprising, huh, what happens, given that that's sort of how we're engineered.

00:10:59 So good news is we're smart enough to figure this all out.

00:11:06 I just said it.

00:11:08 We're smart enough to figure it out, and we're smart enough to correct it.

00:11:17 And the way that that has been done hitherto is certainly a lot faster than Darwin, but

00:11:28 maybe not as fast as we would like, because you probably noticed it takes years and decades

00:11:34 typically.

00:11:35 Although we get benefits right away, otherwise people would never come back after the first

00:11:40 retreat.

00:11:41 We do get benefits right away.

00:11:43 But those of you that have hung in for the duration know that in general God saves the

00:11:54 best for last.

00:11:58 Usually really mind-boggling dramatic changes tend to happen after a lifetime of practice.

00:12:10 What?

00:12:11 Well, happiness independent of conditions, which is pretty awesome.

00:12:18 So that's still pretty quick.

00:12:23 So it's a radical reengineering, and who knows what the next few centuries will bring.

00:12:32 Maybe as we partner with science, we'll be able to accelerate things by an order of magnitude.

00:12:41 I've got a friend at Google.

00:12:43 Some of you probably have read his books, Jet Meng Tan, known as Meng to his friends.

00:12:57 That's the weird Chow Chow dialect of Chinese.

00:12:59 He's Singaporean Chinese.

00:13:01 I call him Chan.

00:13:03 His last name is Chan in Mandarin, Chan-ee-ming.

00:13:08 It's a really cool name, actually.

00:13:10 It comes out Jet Meng in his dialect, but Ee-ming in Mandarin.

00:13:16 It means like one voice, one voice that shakes the world.

00:13:27 It's from Buddhism.

00:13:28 It's a Buddhist term.

00:13:30 Anyway, because he's a Google engineer, he started this Search Inside Yourself thing,

00:13:35 some of you are probably aware of.

00:13:37 His thing is 10x, stream entry 10x.

00:13:43 Stream entry is the traditional Theravada term for initial enlightenment.

00:13:50 And 10x means he wants to engineer it so it's 10 times quicker for all humans, and we have

00:13:59 10 times as many of them.

00:14:01 Now maybe we'll have a thousand or a million times as many of them, who knows.

00:14:07 Can't say about the future.

00:14:10 But it is a radical re-engineering of who we are.

00:14:24 So who are we?

00:14:25 Well, from an engineer's point of view, we're an input-output system.

00:14:33 We have sensory input, we have behavioral output.

00:14:38 The sensory input reflects objective conditions.

00:14:44 The behavioral output impacts objective conditions.

00:14:52 And in between we have inner and outer sensory experience.

00:14:57 I like to classify it in terms of inner and outer seaheer feel with the inner seaheer

00:15:03 feel creating the core sense of, or associated with the core sense of I am-ness.

00:15:11 So part of the re-engineering, the radical re-engineering I talked about yesterday.

00:15:26 On the sensory side, the ability to have complete experience allows us to experience discomfort

00:15:42 with less and less suffering, and it allows us to experience pleasure with more and more

00:15:50 fulfillment.

00:15:55 So that has an impact on our behavior.

00:16:19 Sensorially behavior is driven by suffering and frustration.

00:16:32 So suffering is physical and or emotional pain that is not experienced fully.

00:16:44 So sensorially that causes suffering, and in terms of what we do say and think in the

00:16:52 world, our behavior, it causes a driven-ness in the behavior.

00:17:01 On the flip side, when pleasure fails to deliver the full potential for fulfillment, it turns

00:17:14 into what might be described as frustration or craving.

00:17:21 Same thing.

00:17:23 The experience of a craving in the moment is just an experience of an incomplete pleasure.

00:17:31 You may have heard the notion that the impurities are pure.

00:17:37 What the hell does that mean?

00:17:39 Well, it actually means something very, very deep and important.

00:17:44 It's not just an enigmatic thing that someone said in order to blow your mind or get your

00:17:49 attention.

00:17:52 When you have a craving for some pleasure, you could have a mental image of the pleasure,

00:18:00 you could have some mental talk that says, hey, I want this, but you actually get a little

00:18:06 taste, a memory of the physical pleasure and more importantly, emotional pleasures, a rosiness

00:18:15 in the chest, a little hint of smile on the face, a frisson of excitement going up your

00:18:21 back.

00:18:22 Very, very subtle pleasure is present in that moment of, in the sensory experience of desire.

00:18:34 If you are able to complete that pleasure, then it won't, that pleasure, the pleasure

00:18:42 that is part of the sensory gestalt of the moment of desire, then that pleasure will

00:18:49 give you complete fulfillment, the pleasure in the desire will fulfill the desire.

00:18:56 If that doesn't happen, then the desire becomes a desire that drives sensory experience because

00:19:03 you're not satisfied yet.

00:19:06 That was pretty subtle and complex, but driven behavior, need, is associated with physical

00:19:22 and or emotional discomfort that has turned into suffering and or physical and or emotional

00:19:29 pleasure that was too subtle to complete, was so subtle that you couldn't experience

00:19:37 it fully enough to fulfill you right then and there.

00:19:41 And now we're driven.

00:19:45 So there is need.

00:19:52 Half of the radical reengineering of this process is sensorially the reduction of suffering

00:20:06 and the elevation of fulfillment.

00:20:09 But that is linked behaviorally to the reengineering of driven behavior into what, for lack of

00:20:22 any official word, I might call motivated or dynamic behavior.

00:20:35 I think it's very important that the result of our practice not make us indifferent to

00:20:46 conditions, conditions in our own individual life, community, nation, world.

00:20:58 So in order for that to happen, we actually have to take measures to make sure that not

00:21:06 only is our experience one of reduced suffering and elevated fulfillment, that our behavior

00:21:18 moves, is reengineered, evolves from driven to dynamic.

00:21:33 So what characterizes dynamic behavior is it is motivated by

00:21:48 pain and fulfillment.

00:21:52 It is not driven by suffering and frustration.

00:22:15 As we evolve, we go from the somethingness of self and world to a kind of doingness of

00:22:36 space.

00:22:40 However that requires acclimatization.

00:22:53 Some people, as they get their emptiness or no self or nothingness, whatever you want

00:23:04 to call it, as that becomes evident, some people, actually many people, probably most

00:23:15 people immediately love it.

00:23:22 And it is functional in most cases.

00:23:27 One of my teachers used to say a couple drops of emptiness are the best medicine in the

00:23:37 world.

00:23:38 It cures a gazillion diseases.

00:23:42 However, it is not necessarily the case that for everyone, contacting emptiness or no self

00:23:55 or nothingness is immediately a source of safety, fulfillment, love, and appropriate

00:24:08 behavior.

00:24:11 For some people, you have to sort of cultivate a taste for it.

00:24:20 There's some work required to integrate it so that it is a source of fulfillment, safety,

00:24:39 love and appropriate behavior.

00:24:46 For some people, they have to go through an awkward intermediate zone where they sort

00:25:00 of are in a flatline situation.

00:25:05 Where in some way it's sort of nice because the old gross suffering and horrific perennial

00:25:17 agitation is gone.

00:25:20 But the old bounce is also gone.

00:25:24 And the edge and the motivation and the passion for life seems to have left.

00:25:34 I call that the flatline stage.

00:25:38 So some people have no difficulty at all integrating emptiness.

00:25:47 It's just so obvious how it's liberating and functional.

00:25:55 Some people have to sort of intentionally train themselves to develop the palate, the

00:26:01 taste for it, to appreciate that it is liberating and functional.

00:26:08 Some people have more of a challenge.

00:26:12 You go through this flatline situation.

00:26:17 Now most people don't have much of a difficulty or they require some training, but it's not

00:26:29 a big deal.

00:26:35 Less people have the flatline, but it does happen.

00:26:39 I get emails from students all the time that are in that state.

00:26:47 Fortunately the severe end of that spectrum, so you see I'm presenting to you a spectrum

00:26:56 of relationships to the emptiness.

00:27:04 No, a better phrase would be a spectrum of degree of challenge to integrate emptiness

00:27:15 so that it is liberating and motivating.

00:27:23 So there's the real easy end, and that's a lot of people.

00:27:29 Then there's, well, take some work, and then there's like take some more work because you're

00:27:35 in that flatline thing.

00:27:38 Then there's the deep doo-doo end.

00:27:43 Now fortunately that is, in my experience, quite rare.

00:27:50 But as more and more people practice, even though it's a relatively small percentage,

00:28:00 you're going to have larger numbers of people have to face that.

00:28:05 That's going to be part of the shadow side of contemplative-based psychospiritual growth

00:28:14 becoming the norm on this planet.

00:28:17 It'll be a wonderful thing that that happens, but hey, we have to be honest.

00:28:22 We have to address this issue.

00:28:27 Fortunately all of these sort of steps, the spectrum that I'm describing, there are effective

00:28:37 things you can do to deal with it, even the really deep end.

00:28:42 So the deep end I call dark night, some other people also call it the dark night.

00:28:51 It's similar to a known psychiatric condition called DPDR, depersonalization, derealization

00:29:02 disorder, which happens to non-meditators.

00:29:07 It just happens to people out of nowhere.

00:29:12 The classic report of DPDR is I was sitting in my room and suddenly it seemed like I was

00:29:22 no longer real and the world was flat and cartoonish and had no reality to it whatsoever.

00:29:35 No matter what I do, I can't get out of this and it's awful.

00:29:44 So the disease names the condition depersonalization, they've had insight into no self.

00:29:55 Derealization, the world is no longer real, disorder and it's a bad trip.

00:30:07 If you go to websites of people that have this condition, some of them know that no

00:30:15 self and emptiness are major Buddhist themes.

00:30:20 There's one website where they say, I just don't get it, how can the Buddhists say this

00:30:28 is the best thing that ever happened when this is the worst thing that ever happened?

00:30:38 Yet the great majority of people that do Buddhist practice do indeed find it to be the best

00:30:48 thing that ever happened.

00:30:50 So what's the difference?

00:30:54 Well I don't know exactly what's the difference.

00:31:01 Someday we'll probably know.

00:31:04 But what I can say is several things.

00:31:10 First of all, you've probably noticed that the word mindfulness is now used a lot.

00:31:18 It's like everywhere, which is a good thing.

00:31:22 But now that it's everywhere, it sort of can mean anything.

00:31:32 And so the meaning of mindfulness gets watered down and sort of generalized as it becomes

00:31:41 a common term.

00:31:44 That's why I'm so adamant to say that what I mean by mindfulness is exactly this.

00:31:56 Well people picked up on the term dark night.

00:32:01 Now it's gaining currency and it's getting watered down.

00:32:09 And now it sort of means just any difficulty that you might encounter when you meditate.

00:32:16 People are starting to call that the dark night.

00:32:18 Well I prefer to have mindfulness be a technical term, not a general, hey be aware folks.

00:32:28 But I would prefer the dark night to mean what it meant for St. John of the Cross, which

00:32:33 is in the Catholic tradition, which is where this comes from.

00:32:38 Which is when they finally, when you were born into 16th century Spanish Catholicism.

00:32:47 And you definitely had some ideas about what God was going to be like.

00:32:53 And it turns out that it's not quite that way.

00:33:01 And it takes some getting used to the fact that nothing whatsoever is in fact divine.

00:33:17 So that difficulty integrating the emptiness of God, what St. John called it the dark night

00:33:29 of the soul.

00:33:31 You start out and you have to struggle with your sinfulness, your selfishness, your impurities,

00:33:40 your lack of concentration.

00:33:44 You struggle with that.

00:33:45 He called that the dark night of the senses.

00:33:48 That's the beginning of the meditative path.

00:33:51 But then if you're really successful, you have to deal with the consequences of that.

00:34:00 So he called that the dark night of the soul.

00:34:04 So he had a lot of difficulty integrating the nothingness of God.

00:34:11 But eventually he did.

00:34:12 He was successful.

00:34:17 So that, as I'd like the dark night to refer to that specific problem.

00:34:31 Rather than just be another word for, hey folks, you know if you meditate you might

00:34:35 have to face some gnarly shit.

00:34:38 And you're going to go through your dark night.

00:34:42 Well everyone goes through some gnarly shit, okay.

00:34:45 Just living you go through some gnarly shit.

00:34:47 Doesn't mean you're experiencing depersonalization, derealization that you can't get out of and

00:34:53 it's a bad trip.

00:34:57 That's a very, very different critter.

00:35:01 Now as I say, in my experience it's relatively rare.

00:35:07 So don't think, oh my God I better not meditate because I'm sure that's going to happen to

00:35:14 me.

00:35:15 So there's a spectrum of challenge associated with integrating the emptiness.

00:35:34 And integrating it means two things, that it's sensorially it accrues to an empowerment

00:35:44 and behaviorally it does not lead to an indifference.

00:35:58 So how do we make sure that this radical reengineering is successful?

00:36:11 Well I've got a lot of talks about this.

00:36:16 But just to give you the executive summary, we're going from one kind of passionate life
00:36:36 to another.

00:36:40 The former kind of passionate life was driven by passions in the sense of craving, aversion,
00:36:50 unconsciousness and so forth.

00:36:53 The new passionate life arises in a different way.

00:37:02 And if that happens automatically, fine.

00:37:05 If it doesn't happen automatically, then that becomes part of the training to make sure
00:37:10 that it does happen.

00:37:12 So let's say that some training is required.

00:37:20 So essentially from my perspective you do the same thing for any place on that spectrum.

00:37:34 The person that needs to do a little bit of effort to integrate the void, the person that
00:37:41 is flatlining and needs more effort considerably, and then the rare case of the person who is
00:37:50 essentially paralyzed by the void.

00:37:56 What differs is not so much the qualitative part of the intervention, what differs is
00:38:05 the quantitative part.

00:38:08 The more difficulty integrating, the more massive the intervention that is required.

00:38:19 So it's a matter of amount.

00:38:22 But in terms of what you actually do, it's pretty much the same thing.

00:38:29 So the common problematic situation is not DPDR, it's the flatline.

00:38:41 So it's like, how do I get the old bounce back?

00:38:49 So let me give a bunch of tangible suggestions.

00:39:06 This is something you can know about for your own practice, but it's also something to know
00:39:11 about in teaching others.

00:39:16 Because again as mindfulness becomes more prevalent and part of mainstream culture worldwide,
00:39:26 it will be important to be clear about these things.

00:39:32 So let's say that you've gotten some taste of emptiness, but there's some challenge in
00:39:40 making it integrated.

00:39:43 So first one thing you can do is selectively attend to what is pleasant in the emptiness.

00:39:57 Now you might say, well the emptiness doesn't have any pleasure.

00:40:00 Well that's technically true, but it can cause pleasant impact on a human.

00:40:08 So what could be things that you would train someone to tune into if they were in a flatline
00:40:15 situation?

00:40:16 Well, I'd have them look for certain things.

00:40:20 For one thing, the emptiness may carry a tranquility with it.

00:40:29 And you can train yourself to appreciate that tranquility.

00:40:39 And it may actually take an intentional training to sort of tune in, oh yeah, it's sort of
00:40:45 nice that I can touch this tranquility on demand.

00:40:53 So that's a training, it's a development of a palate, a taste for the void.

00:41:00 What else?

00:41:01 Now, of course, the tranquility might not be something they're aware of.

00:41:05 This is an algorithm, it's an interactive process that I do.

00:41:15 So one thing I ask is, okay, can you sort of enjoy a tranquility associated with the

00:41:23 void?

00:41:24 I use emptiness, void, no self.

00:41:27 They all mean the same thing.

00:41:29 Some people might quibble that they're different terms, but it's essentially the same continuum

00:41:36 at the same critter.

00:41:38 Okay, what else?

00:41:41 Well, the emptiness might be associated with the disappearance of a boundary between inside

00:41:48 and outside.

00:41:52 And that can be fulfilling and give you a sense of expanded identity and connectedness.

00:42:07 So I check for that, and if that's available, okay, now we're going to selectively attend

00:42:12 to that.

00:42:14 Instead of attending to worrying about the bleakness of the void, let's look at these

00:42:21 factors.

00:42:22 What else?

00:42:23 Well, it's possible that the emptiness is associated with subtle vibratory energy that

00:42:38 could be perceived as pleasant.

00:42:43 So you tune into that if that's available.

00:42:50 Okay, well, what else?

00:42:59 Well there might be a sense of sort of effortless expansion with a simultaneous contraction.

00:43:16 If so, you could tune into that, that may or may not be present.

00:43:21 So what else can we do?

00:43:24 All of the things I just mentioned I call accentuating the positive.

00:43:32 Then there's eliminating the negative.

00:43:38 If the emptiness causes fear or irritability or any other sort of confusion, if there's

00:43:54 any or a disinclination to act, those are sensory events.

00:44:07 So everything is empty, so why should I bother doing anything at all?

00:44:15 Why should I bother doing anything at all?

00:44:22 Is a thought now, isn't it?

00:44:25 It's an arising in the inner system.

00:44:30 Probably it is not the case that everything is empty for this individual because the perception

00:44:39 everything is empty so why do anything ain't empty.

00:44:46 It's a something for that person.

00:44:50 Before the perception, I thought that the emptiness was going to be nicer than this.

00:45:00 I think that's what John of the Cross' problem was.

00:45:05 He was expecting the angels and the triumphalist whatever and instead he got nada, nada, nada.

00:45:17 He had molte nada.

00:45:27 Or as my people say, bubkus.

00:45:30 So it's like I thought it was going to be better than this.

00:45:40 No, that's not a thought.

00:45:42 That's not empty.

00:45:44 So you empty out the reactions to the emptiness.

00:45:48 Then there's nothing to get in the way of responding appropriately to objective circumstances.

00:46:03 But now the response is not driven.
00:46:06 It just happens and it's powerful and it's magic.
00:46:17 And it's progressively more appropriate.
00:46:25 Just because you're functioning from emptiness doesn't mean that what you do is always appropriate.
00:46:33 You'll still make mistakes or it makes mistakes.
00:46:39 But then it learns from those mistakes just like the self-self learned from its mistake.
00:46:44 The baby doesn't just get up and walk.
00:46:47 It falls to the right, it falls to the left.
00:46:51 But at some point it equilibrates.
00:46:54 When the no-self doesn't perfectly speak in public or respond to each situation perfectly,
00:47:07 it makes mistakes.
00:47:09 It's inappropriate.
00:47:11 But then it learns just like the self-self learned.
00:47:15 And if it doesn't, then you become something not very pretty.
00:47:20 So don't let that happen.
00:47:22 If it doesn't learn from its mistake, if you think anything you do that just happens and
00:47:30 there's no ego behind it and so it's okay no matter what it is, even if you're mistreating
00:47:37 people, no, don't think it works that way.
00:47:43 Some people think it works that way, but I strongly disagree with that philosophy of
00:47:49 practice.
00:47:56 So you now are more and more arising from the situation.
00:48:06 So your objective behavior comes out of objective reality.
00:48:13 And if it's not right, it learns.
00:48:17 You learn, whatever remnant of self is there learns.
00:48:21 The no-self learns to do it right.
00:48:26 To the extent that that happens, now you start to become a magic person that just walks into
00:48:34 a situation and magic things happen and it's wonderful for everyone.
00:48:42 What else?
00:48:43 Well, more might be required, particularly with respect to making sure that the actions
00:48:53 are appropriate from a human point of view.
00:49:00 You may need to intentionally build certain human habits and how you build those positive
00:49:13 human habits?
00:49:15 Easy, nurture positive.
00:49:19 You create an activity called an admirable self by training admirable human traits, rational
00:49:32 thought, positive behavior changes of various sorts, habitual good feelings towards people
00:49:44 and so forth.
00:49:46 Well, you can build those by the nurture positive techniques.
00:49:53 So you can use things like focus in to deconstruct the resistance to act or the freak out that
00:50:03 is a reaction to the void.
00:50:07 So you empty out the reactions to the emptiness, you empty out the disinclinations to act and
00:50:15 focus in deconstructing the inner see, hear, feel is a good technique for that.
00:50:22 And then you reconstruct or strengthen certain positive habits through nurture positive.

00:50:31 What else?

00:50:35 Well, if the old behavior was passionate in the sense that it was driven by passions,

00:50:51 what's going to provide the bounce for the new behavior?

00:50:55 Well, the situation, all the things I just mentioned plus something else.

00:51:03 You can train your motor circuits in to a quality of spontaneity.

00:51:14 We've talked about this and done this now in a number of retreats and we're going to

00:51:19 be doing it at the end of this retreat if you look at the schedule.

00:51:22 The auto, the training not of the sense circuits but of the motor circuits to enjoy their own

00:51:39 natural just happeningness.

00:51:44 So you can develop a taste for what children experience directly but don't think of as

00:51:55 an object because it just happens to them.

00:51:59 But children just like stomp in the mud because it's just fun to stomp in the mud.

00:52:07 It just happens.

00:52:10 There's a just happeningness to the way a child stomps in the mud or runs here or runs

00:52:15 there.

00:52:16 Well, an adult, even if they're an alta cocker like me, an old foggy crapper like me, can

00:52:27 still have that childlike bounce because the circuits are still there.

00:52:34 It's the nature of our motor circuits to just happen.

00:52:39 So you can train yourself to speak, move and even think from the place of bounce.

00:52:53 That's what literally puts the bounce back in your step and puts the lilt back in your

00:53:00 speech.

00:53:03 That's a huge factor in making sure that the realization of emptiness does not make you

00:53:14 inexpressive or indifferent with regards to the world.

00:53:28 What else?

00:53:31 Well, some people, and this can happen as the result of contacting the emptiness, but

00:53:42 it can actually happen.

00:53:45 It can be something that you contact the first time you ever meditate.

00:53:55 In fact, for some people, the thing I'm about to describe is something they've known about

00:54:00 their whole life.

00:54:04 Not everyone, but some people have this sense that inside of them is a primordial black

00:54:16 hole of dissatisfaction that can never be filled.

00:54:31 Now I'm stating it one way, people use different language, but there's just this void in me

00:54:42 that no matter what I try, it's just never filled.

00:54:49 And it cannot be filled.

00:54:54 Despite that, I keep flailing around and flailing around hoping to find something that will

00:55:01 fill it.

00:55:03 So not everyone, not all humans have this perception, but I have found this to be a

00:55:08 not uncommon perception, something along these lines.

00:55:14 The trick here is to realize that yes, indeed, nothing will ever fill that hole.

00:55:22 However, from another perspective, there is absolutely a way to fill that hole.

00:55:33 And the way to fill that hole is not to try to do something to fill the hole, but not

00:55:41 surprisingly, the trick is to have a complete experience of that hole.

00:55:52 Because that perception that there is this hole inside of me that can never be fulfilled
00:55:58 is a sensory event.
00:56:03 It happens in the inner system, it comes up in life, it may be lurking all the time in
00:56:09 the periphery or sometimes come up strongly.
00:56:12 Now as I say, not all human beings have this by any means, but quite a few do.
00:56:18 The trick is to realize it is an inner sensory event.
00:56:25 It comes up in some combination, albeit perhaps subtly and nebulously, but it's coming up
00:56:31 in the inner system.
00:56:33 Now when something comes up in the inner system, sometimes you can't quite pin it down in terms
00:56:39 of image, talk and body motion, but at least you know it is in the inner system.
00:56:45 And that gives you a general direction to pour clarity and equanimity constantly down
00:56:55 into that hole.
00:56:58 And guess what?
00:57:00 Just like every other sensory event, it eventually evaporates and problem solved.
00:57:12 Now you've filled it, you've filled it by annihilating it.
00:57:23 So once again, the fundamental drivenness has been worked through.
00:57:30 So when Gary said the kind of person who can save the world is the person who doesn't need
00:57:38 to save the world.
00:57:43 What he was implying is a human being who has been re-engineered in a radical way.
00:57:59 Because he was giving the Zen poetry answer, he didn't fill in the details.
00:58:13 So notice that the details took a full hour to describe.