

Three Reasons Why Shinzen Young 'is a Lousy Teacher'

00:00:00 Here are the things that people tell me they don't like about the way I teach.

00:00:11 It's complex and subtle.

00:00:15 I give a lot of precise definitions of things and I have a lot of categories and relationships

00:00:24 between categories.

00:00:26 So some people find this tedious.

00:00:31 Of course I would say by way of defense that I'm trying to create an all-encompassing

00:00:38 framework within which the world's contemplative slash mystical traditions can be understood.

00:00:48 Einstein said, Alles sollte so einfach wie möglich gemacht werden, aber nicht einfacher.

00:00:58 Which means in good science everything should be as simple as possible, but no simpler.

00:01:05 Meaning that sometimes a certain degree of complexity is simply unavoidable if you are

00:01:12 looking for wide applicability.

00:01:18 But a lot of people that are on a spiritual path get impatient with going back into elementary

00:01:27 school or middle school or high school and memorizing definitions and terminology and

00:01:34 so forth.

00:01:35 So I understand that that complexity and subtlety might be off-putting to some people.

00:01:45 Some people say I'm sort of cold and intellectual.

00:01:51 Well it's a personality trait.

00:01:55 T.S.

00:01:56 Eliot talked about the sharp compassion of the healer's art.

00:02:00 I think I'm in the sharp compassion side, which he compared to a scalpel.

00:02:07 The wounded surgeon applies the steel that questions the distempered part.

00:02:12 Beneath the bleeding hands we feel the sharp compassion of the healer's art.

00:02:18 So I think I might be a little bit on the cold and sharp form of compassion as opposed

00:02:28 to the more warm and heartfelt side, but that's a personality trait.

00:02:38 Some people find my irreverence to be off-putting.

00:02:43 I am quite comfortable criticizing my own roots in Buddhism, and sometimes I do that

00:02:54 in a pretty irreverent form that some people find off-putting.

00:03:00 And I can have a perhaps a little bit over-the-top sense of humor sometimes about making fun

00:03:07 of the Buddhist tradition.

00:03:11 And some people say that's too much.

00:03:16 So there's three reasons why people say I'm a lousy teacher.

00:03:20 I'm complicated, I'm cold, and I'm irreverent.

00:03:28 But I think there's some good stuff there too.

00:03:31 Check it out for yourself.