

# No Place to Stand ~ Shinzen Young

00:00:00 Okay, we use metaphors for this practice. We meaning all the mindfulness teachers in the world.

00:00:09 And those metaphors are metaphors and if they help you, good, and if they get in the way, not good.

00:00:15 One of the metaphors for equanimity is, and it's a standard one and it's used by very famous and

00:00:26 deep teachers, you sit on the bank of the river and watch it. But that is just a metaphor for equanimity.

00:00:36 That's not what equanimity is, okay.

00:00:45 One of the things about the way I teach that people often find weird is I don't actually

00:00:53 give you a whole base to go back to. A lot of people give you the breath, say okay, keep coming back to the breath.

00:01:01 Why doesn't Shinzen do that? Well, not against it. It's a totally valid way to practice.

00:01:09 But there is a reason why I don't give you a place to stand.

00:01:14 And I quote no less an authority than one of the great enlightened masters of China, Lin Ji,

00:01:26 who says, inside of every human being, there is an authentic person that has no position.

00:01:47 The authentic human with no position.

00:01:51 If I were to characterize the experience of Zen practice at Mount Baldy, I would say it is de-centering.

00:02:06 You've heard of centering prayer? That's de-centering prayer. Gives you no place to stand.

00:02:13 It's very disorienting.

00:02:15 When you finally give up the notion that you're going to have a place to stand,

00:02:23 that's when that figure ground reversal takes place. That's when you're doing three-dimensional Zen,

00:02:29 as opposed to flat Zen, which would be the Zen put down of the way Vipassana is often done,

00:02:37 from a fixed perspective. I'm over here sitting on the riverbank, watching the river.

00:02:50 Well, if that works right, at some point you will become the river without being caught in the river,

00:02:59 if it works right. But if it doesn't work right, you're going to spend 20 or 30 years on the bank of that river

00:03:05 and never be liberated. So I don't want you to have a place to stand. I don't want you to have a center.

00:03:17 I want the center to have you. It's a completely different experience. It's intentional.

00:03:26 So it is hugely not a problem if you cannot find a place to stand while you do Vipassana.

00:03:34 It's like hugely not a problem. It will be a problem if you don't have some modicum of concentration,

00:03:42 clarity, and equanimity, though. But that's why I asked you the question about the spoken labels.

00:03:48 Once I determined that you were doing something, then I could say with confidence,

00:03:54 absolutely do not try to find a place to stand in general, ever. And just let the place.

00:04:05 I don't know if you know, but the very common word in ordinary Israeli Hebrew for God is hamakom.

00:04:13 That means the place. The place. Let the place find you, rather than you find a place.