

Open Up and Turn Towards Challenging Letting Go States ~ Shinzen Young

00:00:00 Letting go, if we use that term as an equivalent for equanimity, will certainly, on the average,
00:00:12 eventually cause us to feel better and better and better. However, for short periods of
00:00:20 time, particularly in the early years of one's practice, one can go through periods where
00:00:27 the deeper one goes, the more uncomfortable one becomes. One of the classic manifestations
00:00:34 of that is the more we relax, the more icky, sticky, yucky kinds of antsy, unbearable sensations
00:00:45 arise within us. I have a whole article about that. I call it the icky, sticky, creepy,
00:00:52 crawly, doesn't really hurt, but I can't stand it flavor of sensation. That has a very peculiar
00:00:59 characteristic that the deeper you drop into samadhi and the more you relax, the yuckier
00:01:06 it gets, at least for a while, creating a negative feedback loop, causing a person to
00:01:11 be disinclined to drop into the deeper states. In fact, I once heard a senior Burmese teacher
00:01:18 who I had studied with, Usil Ananda, refer to it as samadhi pain in English. I'd never
00:01:28 heard that phrase. Maybe he made it up, but clearly he was familiar with the phenomenon.
00:01:36 That's one of the forms that going deeper makes things yuckier. There are other manifestations
00:01:43 of that disorientation. For example, you go deep and you get disoriented or you seem more
00:01:51 vulnerable, etc., etc. I can only say that these are temporary phenomena. They're not
00:02:00 characteristic of the big picture, the long-term practice. Essentially, we can say that the
00:02:07 spiritual path is a path of shedding gradually one coping mechanism and acquiring another
00:02:19 coping mechanism for life. The coping mechanism that's being shed could be succinctly characterized

00:02:28 as deal with what comes from the outside and comes from the inside by tighten up and turn
00:02:35 away. That sort of works. It armors. It's basically an armoring and denying strategy,
00:02:45 which can sort of blunt things, but in the end doesn't really work very well. Hopefully,
00:02:54 a person will eventually mature to the point where they realize, oh, there's a better way
00:02:59 of going about dealing with the impact of the intensity of the outside and the stored
00:03:05 poison and pain on the inside. They cultivate that better way. The tricky thing is that
00:03:12 that better way is ultimately a better way. However, it is the diametric opposite of the
00:03:21 former way. It could be succinctly characterized as open up and turn towards. The open up is
00:03:28 the equanimity piece. The turn towards is the sensory clarity piece.
00:03:33 Because it's the exact opposite of the previous strategy, it's difficult to avoid what I call
00:03:41 awkward intermediate states where the old strategy is being shed so it can't quite shield
00:03:48 you anymore. In other words, the mesh of your being is somewhat opening, but it makes you
00:03:55 vulnerable because it's not so open that the slings and arrows will pass through without
00:04:03 catching. You don't have the tight mesh that sort of shields you. That creates this awkward
00:04:11 intermediate stage. There's no way around it because that's the price of going from
00:04:18 one coping mechanism to another. If we think of enlightenment as the most stable state,
00:04:26 the ground state of our being, then there are other states that would not be as deep
00:04:33 as that. Let's say that we're in a relatively grounded state here, but we would like to
00:04:40 go to the global optimal, the most grounded state possible for the system, which might
00:04:47 be called our source. It will often happen that in a thermodynamic system, in order to
00:05:03 make the transition from a relatively stable state to a relatively grounded state, we have
00:05:10 to go over this metastable, ungrounded situation. One actually passes through

a lot of those

00:05:17 things, but there'll be a tendency to drop eventually to the deepest ground state. That's

00:05:24 sort of the price one may have to pay for moving on to the next level of what we call

00:05:54 the ultimate endowment, that is the ultimate survival, but all of the following can happen

00:05:57 urally.

00:05:57 That's a good question. That's the thermodynamic question youngrung should be finally ask,

00:05:57 where is there such a technology for survival? That's why we do a big international project

00:05:57 in BNP and MD to support the nature, nature consortium efforts that the BNP is actually

00:05:57 serving.

00:05:57 Just let the discussion be needs and what the big Christina Eicster is thinking.

00:05:57 Thank you

00:05:57 very much.

00:05:57 Thanks

00:05:57 RIP

00:05:57 Liz

00:05:59 traffs

00:06:02 web

00:06:02 Alice

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