

Turn Towards Difficult Emotion and Challenging Feel-Image-Talk Eruptions – 1 of 2 ~ Shinzen Young

00:00:00 The questions are always formulated in terms of specific emotions. How do I deal with this

00:00:14 kind of emotion? How do I deal with that kind of emotion? Fear, rage, shame, impatience,

00:00:24 grief, bereavement, etc. But really, you deal with it all in exactly the same way. In terms

00:00:34 of the have a complete experience of it, the answer to all of these questions is the same

00:00:41 answer. If we're going to do a focus on it, if we're taking that strategy, the it meaning

00:00:47 now you name it, anger, fear, sadness, embarrassment, impatience, disgust, confusion, any of the

00:00:55 emotional challenges, same basic principles apply. Untangle and be free. That's one really

00:01:07 basic principle. And then work with the parts, work with the whole, work with elements, work

00:01:15 with systems. In other words, work at small scale of organization, work at large scale.

00:01:23 Alternate the wide scope and the narrow scope so that you sort of do pointed work in the

00:01:33 small scope. And if you get quality work in all the different small scales, then you'll

00:01:41 discover that that carries over into the large scale and the overall constellation loses,

00:01:50 ceases to become a prison. So these are the basic themes and you just do it over and over

00:01:56 and over again. You set up the apparatus, the situation, and you let time pass. When

00:02:06 you have an intense emotional arising, there's good news and there's bad news. The good news

00:02:12 is feel and image and talk, all three elements are probably pretty strongly activated. When

00:02:21 you get subtle emotional arisings, mid-scale or micro-scale emotions that come up in daily

00:02:29 life, they may not noticeably activate all three. You might only be aware of the talk

00:02:36 part, for example. So there is, in a sense, something good about having a big emotional

00:02:44 Vesuvius. I know there's also something bad about it because it's miserable, right? The

00:02:51 opportunity is you probably have strong eruptions, not just in talk space, but in image space

00:03:00 and feel space. You remember the situation, you relive the situation, you rehearse about

00:03:05 the situation that's going to involve image space. And then you've got the eruptions in

00:03:12 feel space that are definitely not subliminal. There's the ache in your heart, there's the

00:03:21 butterflies in your stomach, there's the cold fear up your spine, there's the general shake

00:03:29 over your whole body, there's the tightness in the jaw, there's the, I want to hit someone

00:03:36 in the arms, etc., etc., etc. All the components are active, they're not subtly active, it's

00:03:43 all there. So work with the parts, work with the whole. Focus for a little. What's the

00:03:50 weakest link? Often the weakest link is image space, not inevitably, of course, depending.

00:03:56 Some people get some very strong things, archetypal things, weird things in image space. But I

00:04:04 find for myself, among the three, if I have an emotional upheaval, typically the image

00:04:12 is the weakest link. And the next weakest is actually for me, talk. The most challenging

00:04:21 is the feel in the body. Physical discomfort, you can, you know, your body has a natural

00:04:31 tendency to go into equanimity with physical discomfort. Physical discomfort is just part

00:04:36 of being an animal. And it happens to animals, so the body sort of knows what to do. Uncomfortable

00:04:45 feel, actually any, all the feel, not just uncomfortable feel. Feel, the somatic component

00:04:54 of emotional experience. When you're dealing with feel, okay, I'm being poetic here, I

00:05:02 hope you'll understand. You're fighting with Darwin. You're dealing with something that

00:05:12 has been honed over millions of years to control you. It's been honed by evolution to control

00:05:24 us, to control our behavior. It's been honed to be hard to have equanimity with, okay?

00:05:35 Honed by evolutionary forces. I don't know if you've ever had the experience of strong

00:05:41 feel arising and getting the sense that this isn't just me, that this is like, this thing

00:05:51 that's happening in my body is the tip of an iceberg and it goes down and out and it's

00:05:56 like everyone that ever had this happen to them in their life, you know, all of, millions

00:06:03 and millions of sentient beings. This is not just me. I mean, this is like the whole evolutionary

00:06:13 development of the limbic brain, which goes back at least to advanced reptiles, okay?

00:06:21 This is the monitor lizard. It's like these sensations have been fine-tuned by the greatest

00:06:31 engineering force known to us, which is evolution. The sensations, anger, fear, sadness, embarrassment,

00:06:41 impatience, disgust, interest. Interest you can't ignore either. If you wonder why you're

00:06:47 running all those entertaining fantasies, okay, just look for the interest flavor. It's

00:06:52 controlling you. You think the mind's controlling, but the reason you're running those entertaining

00:07:00 fantasies is the interest flavor is saying, fantasize, entertain yourself, and you'll

00:07:07 get more of me. They're designed to be, that we can't ignore them and it's hard to have

00:07:17 equanimity with them. Them meaning the different flavors of feel. It's hard to be matter of

00:07:23 fact about them, much harder than it is with regards to physical discomfort. However, they

00:07:30 are just body sensations. When a person is eight years old, they're controlled by rage,

00:07:42 terror, grief, and shame. Hopefully, by the time they're 80 years old, they will have

00:07:51 learned something, but usually they haven't. Why haven't they? Because every time those

00:07:58 sensations came up, they could not be ignored and they could not be viewed matter of fact.

00:08:06 That person never attempted to untangle or just observe, etc., etc. No growth in skill

00:08:17 took place over that lifetime. So when it comes time to die and those things come up

00:08:26 very strongly perhaps, freak out city. But good news, we're in this situation where we

00:08:34 can train ourselves. This retreat environment is, it's vaccination against future suffering.

00:08:49 That's coming up and we're retraining our deep circuits. So untangle. What part is feel?

00:09:01 What part is image? What part is talk? You can free float among them all or you can just

00:09:06 tease out just the image for a while, just the talk for a while, just the feel for a

00:09:12 while. Tease them apart so that instead of multiplying together, they merely add. And

00:09:19 then try to the best of your ability to totally open and affirm that, to not press it down,

00:09:28 but also to not hold on. And it just takes time, time, practice, practice, practice.

00:09:36 And if that doesn't work, untangle in more detail.