

# Experiences of the Dissolution (Bhanga) Process ~ Shinzen Young Interactive - 1 of 3

00:00:00 I remember a number of years ago you went through experiences of flow that were not  
00:00:12 like a massage.  
00:00:13 They were more like a beating.  
00:00:17 Yes.  
00:00:18 I had sort of left spiritual practice for many years.  
00:00:22 I had bad experiences with other teachers and I said, no more teachers, no more gurus,  
00:00:27 no more techniques.  
00:00:28 I am going to let life be my teacher.  
00:00:31 I had many friends at that time who were students of yours and they were saying very positive  
00:00:36 things about you.  
00:00:37 I said, yeah, whatever.  
00:00:40 I ended up coming up to one of your retreats in 2006.  
00:00:44 I had good experiences with you.  
00:00:46 You showed lots of techniques.  
00:00:48 You reactivated my desire to meditate.  
00:00:55 Nothing particular happened on that retreat.  
00:00:58 I was getting used to the pain of sitting for long periods of time.  
00:01:03 I was practicing your techniques and then I went home and I thought, well, that's all  
00:01:07 very interesting and that was a pleasant experience in general.  
00:01:12 And then about two or three weeks later, something started to happen.  
00:01:18 Something started to happen in my solar plexus area where there were waves and impulses and  
00:01:27 gnawing sensations and incredible terrors.  
00:01:32 And I started reliving terrors from my childhood and I started having a very chaotic feeling.  
00:01:41 I felt like I was just going crazy.  
00:01:45 Friends said that I should call you.  
00:01:47 You were able to walk me through it and ask specific questions and we were able to isolate  
00:01:54 the sensations and you actually said that this was a positive experience and it was  
00:01:59 a type of purification and it was a type of dissolution.  
00:02:04 I gave you the Pollywood bonga.  
00:02:06 You said bonga.  
00:02:07 B-H-A, yeah, B-H-A.  
00:02:08 And that pleased my ego a little bit.  
00:02:12 That gave me some pleasant feel, oh, I guess something good is happening.  
00:02:17 But the experience itself was still so frightening to me because it was so disorienting.  
00:02:24 The description I have now is like there's a jazz drummer on speed living in my torso  
00:02:34 going boom, boom, boom, boom, boom, boom, boom, boom, boom, boom, boom, boom.

00:02:37 And it felt like a Jim Carrey movie where there was like pounding and twisting and morphing  
00:02:44 and tingling and just completely incoherent thoughts, terrors, even things didn't look  
00:02:55 familiar anymore.  
00:02:57 I kind of, I have to keep looking at my hands and I say, these are my hands.  
00:03:04 Where am I?  
00:03:06 And I would actually hide in my apartment at home because I was so frightened.  
00:03:11 And we spent a fair bit of time together and you said that this was an experience of the  
00:03:21 dissolving of an old self.  
00:03:24 I've heard people talk about it before and it's always different when it happens to you  
00:03:28 personally.  
00:03:29 Yeah, my standard phrase is you read the book, now you're going to have to live the movie.  
00:03:38 And so many things about the spiritual path that I had read about started happening after  
00:03:45 that and I would never have imagined what the experience of that was from the inside.  
00:03:53 It's so different that when you read about it and then it starts happening.  
00:03:57 It was frightening.  
00:03:59 It really was frightening.  
00:04:01 And it was very disorienting and it's been almost three years since that's happened.  
00:04:08 That still comes and goes.  
00:04:10 And it's now a bit, I'm a bit more familiar with it.  
00:04:14 Just a few hours ago on the retreat I had another wave of it where I was having like  
00:04:25 these very primordial terror thoughts, like a frightened animal feeling like something  
00:04:34 was a matter of life and death.  
00:04:36 I felt things being ripped apart.  
00:04:39 It felt like my heart was being ripped open.  
00:04:41 It just felt like this ripping experience.  
00:04:47 How did you work with that?  
00:04:48 Did you do the love it to death?  
00:04:54 It was actually too frightening to even bring that in at certain times.  
00:04:59 I just did the focus on flow, which is a little more hands off.  
00:05:06 Little more hands off.  
00:05:07 And I knew I was safe.  
00:05:09 So you just noted it as flow.  
00:05:11 Harsh flow, but still flow.  
00:05:14 Very again the jazz drummer that was hitting every drum all at once.  
00:05:19 And I specifically remember a few images, image and feel combos that literally I thought  
00:05:30 I was going to die.  
00:05:33 And sight space collapsed.  
00:05:34 I just completely collapsed into raw image feel and then let go.  
00:05:44 Do you remember when you first called me the conceptual model that I gave you for Bhangka?  
00:05:54 I talked to you about how it's described in the tradition.  
00:05:58 It could be very just purely blissful.  
00:06:01 It's all champagne bubbles and massage.

00:06:04 I mean earlier you were describing this blissful massage.

00:06:08 There is that component.

00:06:09 Yeah.

00:06:10 But for some people it's only bliss city the whole way and the dissolution process just

00:06:16 sort of gently and blissfully dissolves them like an Alka-Seltzer tablet into the source.

00:06:26 So for some people it's like just bliss city.

00:06:30 It's pleasant vibratory and undulatory flow in the body and mind is pretty restful.

00:06:39 For other people it's at the other extreme.

00:06:42 It's like nothing but the horrific.

00:06:46 The flow patterns are harsh and jarring and torturous.

00:06:52 The mental pictures are archetypal and horrific monsters, images of death, animals eating

00:07:00 you up.

00:07:01 That's exactly what I went through.

00:07:03 I went to a Goenka retreat two years ago in India and the meditations were horrific.

00:07:09 I was an insect being eaten by another insect.

00:07:14 You actually saw that in the images?

00:07:15 I saw this big mouth come and crush me, consume me.

00:07:19 People see skeletons of death.

00:07:24 And then I was some animal running for its very life and this other animal grabbed me

00:07:29 and just started ripping my flesh apart.

00:07:32 Unfortunately this Bhanga thing is not limited to Buddhist practice.

00:07:38 It's described all over the world but specifically in shamanic traditions.

00:07:43 All over the world in pre-literate cultures it is not uncommon for the shamans to report

00:07:53 animals have to eat them up, monsters get them, they see their own death, they see the

00:07:58 death of everyone in the world.

00:08:02 This kind of thing.

00:08:03 So there can be these horrific images, uncomfortable touch and feel, and jarring, tearing energies.

00:08:13 What happened in talk space?

00:08:14 Did you get irrational talk going on?

00:08:18 What sorts of talk would come up?

00:08:20 It felt like all the cylinders were firing.

00:08:23 It was mostly chaotic feel for me.

00:08:25 Horrible shame and guilt.

00:08:26 I felt like I should be caught and taken in front of a firing squad and killed right away.

00:08:34 I would come out of meditation and I would be waiting for someone to torture me and kill

00:08:42 me.

00:08:43 So that's the horrific side of Bhanga.

00:08:45 So for some people it's only bliss, believe it or not.

00:08:48 They never get any of that stuff.

00:08:50 For other people it's mostly horrific.

00:08:53 For other people it's a mixture of both.

00:08:57 Has both sides to it.

00:08:59 And then actually there's the fourth possibility.

00:09:02 Not everyone on a spiritual path or a path to enlightenment passes through a dissolution

00:09:07 experience.

00:09:09 It's not a requirement.

00:09:11 Many people do, but not inevitably or it may be so mild that you don't really even think

00:09:18 of it in terms of a dissolution.