

Working Through the Primal Feel Strata ~ Shinzen Young

00:00:00 As you know, I like to have people be sensitive to the fact that certain body sensations are
00:00:13 emotional in origin.
00:00:16 And I have a hypothesis that when people are noting those emotional feels, that in fact
00:00:28 what's happening in the central nervous system is activation in what's called the limbic
00:00:34 system and that there is a distinct neuronal apparatus that underlies the emotional type
00:00:45 sensations in the body.
00:00:47 And emotional sensations in the body are hugely important in my way of thinking in terms of
00:00:55 their influence on human perception and behavior.
00:01:02 So as people work with this category of the emotional body or feel space, as I call it,
00:01:13 you might think, well, as the result of meditating as the years go on, things get sort of mellowed
00:01:21 out, cooled out, that kind of thing.
00:01:25 But actually what happens typically is that you get strange changes that are sort of weird
00:01:36 for people.
00:01:38 And they take the form of things that would really, really, really bother anyone, like
00:01:49 don't bother you or not much.
00:01:53 But the flip side is that little things can cause these huge explosions of somatic emotionality.
00:02:07 And you wonder, it's like, what's wrong with me?
00:02:10 What's like sort of happening to me?
00:02:13 So what I tell people is if you work with the emotional body, one thing that you can
00:02:19 expect is that things will change.
00:02:23 But you can't predict what direction that change will take in terms of are things going
00:02:31 to be more mellow, more intense, are the flavors that come up going to be more appropriate
00:02:39 or inappropriate?
00:02:40 They seem to go through wild fluctuations.
00:02:44 And it's important not to freak out when this happens and wonder what in the world
00:02:50 is going on.
00:02:53 I would say there are some things that we can say are long-term trends.
00:03:01 Absolutely, definitely long-term trend.
00:03:07 Emotional sensations are going to become less problematic for you.
00:03:12 And absolutely, long-term trend, pleasant emotional sensations are going to become more
00:03:19 fulfilling for you.
00:03:22 However, in terms of local fluctuations, don't be surprised if there's some really weird,
00:03:32 chaotic kinds of things.
00:03:36 What to do if that happens is simply recycle the reactions.
00:03:48 The model that I like to use is that we have within us this freaked out infant animal deep
00:04:03 down within.
00:04:07 As we meditate, we develop another self, which could be called the meditator self or the

00:04:14 concentrated clear equanimous self or the witness.

00:04:19 And at a certain extreme, we'll call that the no self or the higher self.

00:04:29 So what happens is that this super adult part of us shines its attention on the freaked out

00:04:41 infantile animal part that remains and integrates or we could say even metabolizes, or if we

00:04:55 wanted to be a little more poetic, we can say eats up, literally nibbles away at the

00:05:06 freaking animal infant within.

00:05:10 And as this higher self or no self or meditator self, as it's sort of like nibbling away at

00:05:21 this freaked out infant animal, it's deriving nutrition from that.

00:05:28 It's growing, which is good.

00:05:34 And the freaked out animal infant is shrinking, which is also good.

00:05:42 But as it shrinks, it drops to even more primitive levels.

00:05:52 And that's why you get this weird sort of like, oh my God, what do I have inside of

00:05:57 me kind of thing.

00:05:58 So it's actually a sign of progress.

00:06:02 The surface of the freaked out animal infant, it's like getting integrated.

00:06:09 It's energy, what the energy bound up in it is going into the super adult.

00:06:16 That's good.

00:06:17 But you sort of like nibble away a layer.

00:06:22 So it shrinks, it's smaller.

00:06:25 In a sense, its influence over you is diminished, but it exposes a more primitive stratum.

00:06:33 And so it goes until you sort of work your way through this aspect, which might take

00:06:45 a while.

00:06:46 So as you get closer and closer and closer to becoming completely free, you're now exposing

00:06:53 more and more and more chaotic, intense levels of pure body emotion.

00:07:05 So this model helps me to have a conceptual framework for why it sometimes seems that

00:07:21 genius idiosyncrasies of a person are sins crying out to heaven for vengeance or why

00:07:33 someone can insult me with all kinds of lies on the internet.

00:07:37 And I don't even give it a second thought.

00:07:40 But if somebody cuts me off in traffic, it's like, that's huge.

00:07:45 It's like, I'm going to kill them.

00:07:49 It's like, it's like, so it's like weird.

00:07:58 That seems to just be the way it works.

00:08:02 I just wanted to share that for those of you that are wondering if you're on the way to

00:08:06 the booby hatch.

00:08:08 No, you're on the way to the source.

00:08:14 But as they say, membership has its price.

00:08:18 So you're joining the club.

00:08:20 Many, many, many human beings have taken this path.

00:08:26 So welcome to the club.

00:08:28 But membership has its price.