

How to do Healthy Merging ~ Shinzen Young

00:00:00 If you do a healthy merging with someone, it's not just good for you, it's good for
00:00:21 them and they won't feel invaded in any way.
00:00:31 And that's a skill of being able to do the merging and not make it look like you're invading
00:00:40 them somehow.
00:00:41 You actually have to practice that.
00:00:46 So when you healthy merge with someone, they shouldn't feel like they're being somehow
00:00:55 invaded.
00:00:57 They should feel like they're being loved unconditionally and everyone wants that.
00:01:06 Which goes to the equanimity piece.
00:01:10 The healthy merging is a state of unconditional positive regard towards that person.
00:01:24 So this is a question that comes up because people get to a certain depth with their practice
00:01:33 and they start to experience this merging.
00:01:35 I had this come up just a few days ago with someone.
00:01:41 And then they're noticing that people are sort of pulling away from them or something
00:01:46 because their focus is too intent.
00:01:51 And the Chinese have this expression, how can I translate it?
00:02:09 Tone down the light and share the dust.
00:02:14 It means like don't...
00:02:15 Share?
00:02:16 Share the dust.
00:02:18 It means don't blow ordinary humans away by looking like you belong to the non-human realm
00:02:33 too much.
00:02:37 It's a skill.
00:02:43 I know people tell me that you're supposed to share your innermost experience and students
00:02:52 love that.
00:02:53 I don't know if I'd buy that, okay?
00:02:57 Because do you really want that much information about your teachers?
00:03:01 There is such a thing as TMI.
00:03:06 So here I'm going to take a chance.
00:03:09 Now I got your attention.
00:03:16 Okay this is true, okay?
00:03:20 Not a day goes by that sometime bopping around in the world just interacting with people
00:03:29 I will have this impish thought.
00:03:34 I'm passing for one of them.
00:03:40 They don't know.
00:03:43 They think I'm a regular North American human.
00:03:48 And of course most of me is.

00:03:53 But there's a part that's not human.

00:04:01 And it's like they don't know.

00:04:05 They're deceived by the surface.

00:04:08 And it's sort of fun.

00:04:09 Like someone, I don't know, getting away with passing for something that they're not back

00:04:15 in the days when there was racism.

00:04:17 It's like pulling the wool over their eyes.

00:04:21 Anyway maybe that made no sense at all.

00:04:23 But you have to pass as a human after you've learned to contact a little bit of what is

00:04:31 not human.

00:04:32 So you have to express that in a way that doesn't weird people out.

00:04:38 And it takes some training.

00:04:41 So what characterizes, the reason I laughed when you said why do we merge, okay, is the

00:04:57 real question is not why do we merge.

00:04:59 The real question is why don't we all merge.

00:05:03 What happened that got in the way of what was originally there at birth.

00:05:14 That's all there was.

00:05:16 We just were.

00:05:19 We were everything.

00:05:22 And then I can remember when the self arose within me as a separate.

00:05:27 I don't have very good memory of childhood, of specific events.

00:05:33 But boy I absolutely remember when my personhood arose.

00:05:43 And it was at an early age.

00:05:46 And it's like, why, something's changed.

00:05:52 Something's changed.

00:05:54 I used to just be happy all the time for no reason.

00:05:59 And now I'm worrying.

00:06:02 And it was the arising of talk space.

00:06:09 Before that it's like there weren't any issues.

00:06:11 It's like why am I not happy anymore?

00:06:15 Why am I constantly thinking about the past and the future?

00:06:21 I was like, I didn't know what was happening to me and I couldn't stop it.

00:06:27 So the question is not why do we merge.

00:06:31 It's like what happened that prevented us.

00:06:34 Well what happened was we accumulated enough life experience that we developed a thinking

00:06:41 mind.

00:06:43 Which is good, but it became a prison instantly.

00:06:48 Which is not so good.

00:06:50 And then later on in life we're now making the great escape.

00:06:56 That's what this practice is.

00:06:58 It's the great escape from that.

00:07:02 So anyway to characterize the healthy versus unhealthy merging.

00:07:10 What characterizes the healthy merging is you understand the mechanism, why it happens.

00:07:20 You have control over it.

00:07:25 When you do it, it doesn't weird people out.

00:07:31 And you carry away just one, two tastes as I mentioned.

00:07:37 After I've merged I got bigger and I got cleaner and that's it.

00:07:41 You don't carry away usually anything specific from the merging.

00:07:47 Unless you decide that you want to do that.

00:07:49 And as I say in my long career, I mean it was only a couple of years into meditation,

00:07:56 maybe a year into practice when I started to get some of that sense of inside and outside

00:08:01 merging.

00:08:02 That was a long long time ago.

00:08:04 And in this whole career I've only twice intentionally merged for a purpose.

00:08:08 And I told you what those two were.

00:08:12 By the way you folks may get a chance to merge with a mathematician speaking math in front

00:08:18 of you that you don't understand.

00:08:22 Maybe tonight.

00:08:23 I'm preparing a sacred geometry powerpoint.

00:08:29 We'll see how that goes.

00:08:33 But anyway, so you just carry away an expanded identity and a more elastic identity for having

00:08:42 done it.

00:08:45 You don't typically carry away something.

00:08:51 So that you, it really doesn't make that much difference if you merge with a flower or a

00:08:59 garbage can or if you merge with a sinner or a saint.

00:09:05 People are like really afraid, I don't want to merge with a psychopath.

00:09:10 No you won't pick up any psychopathology.

00:09:16 You'll just incorporate that activity.

00:09:24 So the unhealthy merging doesn't have those characteristics.

00:09:38 You don't understand the mechanism.

00:09:41 You carry away something other than empowerment and purification.

00:09:48 And in fact typically what you carry away is disempowerment.

00:09:56 Identification with the aggressor, borderline personality issues, that kind of stuff.

00:10:06 So healthy separation is the, well I guess there's a psychological form of healthy separation.

00:10:18 But then there's like making the distinctions that are useful and empowering.

00:10:26 Meaning see, hear, feel, in, out, rest, flow, sway.

00:10:30 Those kinds of separating the sensory elements, those are empowering distinctions.

00:10:36 Those are useful discriminations.

00:10:41 Empowering distinction is where a lot of people live, which is that fundamental sense that

00:10:49 inside and outside are separated.

00:10:51 There's a boundary of my existence that starts with my skin and it's I versus it, which then

00:10:58 leads to us versus them.

00:11:00 I call that unhealthy separation.

00:11:04 So anyway that's what I have to say about that.