

Shinzen's 'Dharma-Free' Funny Story of his Car Accident while on LSD

00:00:00 My ears are asymmetrical, there's just no way around it.

00:00:15 Get him to tell you that story.

00:00:17 You know how my ears got asymmetrical? I'm not sure there's any deep dharma to it.

00:00:24 I was in a car accident a long, long time ago.

00:00:30 We flipped over in a little sports car.

00:00:35 I was a passenger, we got sucked under a truck.

00:00:40 It can actually happen, it's like a triumph.

00:00:43 It's a very, very light car.

00:00:45 We were going from San Francisco to LA.

00:00:50 There's no dharma in this story, okay?

00:00:55 Is there any dharma in this story?

00:00:58 Can I make it into it?

00:00:59 You can make it into it.

00:01:03 No, there's no dharma.

00:01:08 This was before I was into meditation.

00:01:11 It was like way, way back in the crazy days.

00:01:16 Me and my friend were driving back from San Francisco to LA.

00:01:23 He just bought this car.

00:01:30 I didn't want to use the safety belt.

00:01:36 It may have been back when it still wasn't mandatory.

00:01:42 He says, no, there's no way that we're going to drive without having that seat belt on.

00:01:48 So I put it on.

00:01:51 He was in a normal state of consciousness.

00:01:54 I had decided to be in an altered state.

00:02:01 Highly altered.

00:02:03 It was back in the day.

00:02:04 We were living in Haight-Ashbury, so you get the general idea here.

00:02:08 What did you take?

00:02:09 Huh?

00:02:10 What did you take?

00:02:11 Wow.

00:02:12 Wow.

00:02:13 I haven't heard this one.

00:02:16 There's no dharma in this story.

00:02:20 It's just like a weird story.

00:02:22 I can't put a spin on it to be of any value to you.

00:02:26 It's just, God, he did crazy shit.

00:02:32 So, yeah, it's like a couple hours down from San Francisco.

00:02:37 We just got sucked under a truck and then skidded out and fishtailed and then flipped over and over again and landed upside down.

00:02:49 And of course, the only reason I'm still here is that I have the safety because otherwise I would have just been out.

00:02:56 So, yeah, I'm just sort of tripping out.

00:03:02 I see you're liking this story. It's not going anywhere.

00:03:07 You can find a little dharma.

00:03:09 Yeah, it's like things are getting, you know, the electrical poles were like becoming little sci-fi movies.

00:03:20 And then there's sort of like this rumble.

00:03:23 And then the next thing, it was just nothing.

00:03:25 It was like I have complete retroactive amnesia.

00:03:32 I was just, there was this rumble and the next thing I'm looking up at a highway patrolman.

00:03:38 And he's like, you're right on.

00:03:40 And my friend comes over and he's all bloody and everything.

00:03:45 And he said, we had an accident.

00:03:48 And I think I said, am I OK?

00:04:05 And then I passed out.

00:04:09 And then the next thing, I'm like in an ER.

00:04:13 And this doctor is looking down at me and he says, your ear has been torn off, but don't worry, we can sew it back on.

00:04:30 But mind you, the LSD trip is still happening.

00:04:34 It did not stop.

00:04:38 I don't want you to turn into a bad trip.

00:04:41 It never did.

00:04:43 It was never a bad trip.

00:04:46 I said, oh, great, OK.

00:04:54 But I wasn't a meditator.

00:04:56 I just got lucky, I guess.

00:04:59 I didn't freak out.

00:05:05 And then apparently my friend, the guy that was driving, who eventually became an MD himself, actually,

00:05:12 but he told me that we lucked out because the guy was a really good surgeon.

00:05:17 And you can't tell that, you know, it's like you couldn't quite tell which one it was, but you could still see the scar here.

00:05:27 So there were some funny parts, like my friend came up, he spoke Japanese.

00:05:39 He was American.

00:05:41 I mean, he was non-Asian, but we'd been in Japan together.

00:05:45 So he says to me in Japanese, don't worry that the doctor's looking right in your eyes,

00:05:51 because with head trauma your eyes dilate anyway.

00:05:58 They're not going to know.

00:06:02 So he's sneaking me this secret message in Japanese in front of the doctor.

00:06:09 So I said, OK, good.

00:06:13 And it was actually something pretty funny.

00:06:17 So I had to be in the hospital, but then they let me out the next day.

00:06:22 I really lucked out because it freaking totaled the car.

00:06:26 I completely destroyed the car and neither of us sustained any significant injury.

00:06:31 And my friend had the presence of mind to bury all the drugs by the roadside.

00:06:38 Despite the fact that he thought he had killed me.

00:06:47 I was just hanging there, unconscious, because the car was upside down.

00:06:53 Not a serene scene, apparently.

00:06:59 I have blessedly no memory of this at all.

00:07:05 So they keep you in the hospital, and I'm just laying there at night, and I'm just peaking.

00:07:16 I'm looking at the ceiling, and it's like flowers are blooming.

00:07:23 Well, there's the Dharma, OK, expansion and contraction.

00:07:27 It was very evident.

00:07:31 I couldn't get to sleep, right?

00:07:37 So I called the nurse, and I can't get to sleep.

00:07:43 Just give me something to help me get to sleep.

00:07:47 She says, oh, no, in cases of head trauma like this, we never want you to be on any drugs.

00:07:54 I said, OK, OK, let's watch the movie for a few more hours.

00:08:08 Actually, I fell asleep.

00:08:11 That's how I got asymmetrical ears.

00:08:16 But actually, I can work Dharma into this in a very minor way, which is after that, I started to have something.

00:08:30 There was no untoward consequences of this, apparently, other than my parents pretty much freaked out when I called them.

00:08:40 But it was OK.

00:08:43 At the clinical EEG, they checked out everything.

00:08:47 But I did start to have something happen that has subsequently happened from that time on, which is, and it was probably a consequence of this.

00:09:06 I don't know, but there's something called sleep paralysis.

00:09:10 You probably experienced it where you really think you're awake, and you can't move.

00:09:20 And then all sorts of, sometimes some very weird stuff happens.

00:09:27 Some people get Kundalini rising.

00:09:31 They call it the exploding head syndrome.

00:09:35 I've had that happen many times during the sleep paralysis.

00:09:41 It's like someone sheared off a fire hydrant, if you've ever seen what that looks like, except it's going up your spine and blasting out of the top of your head.

00:09:54 So I started to have occasionally those kinds of experiences.

00:09:58 But the really weird things were I would have experiences where I thought I was awake and things had happened in the real world.

00:10:13 I mean, I absolutely was convinced they had happened.

00:10:18 But then when I checked reality with all people, they hadn't happened.

00:10:25 So I was having dreams that were so vivid that they completely fooled me.

00:10:33 And that was a little bit weird.

00:10:37 And then, so some of you, if you've ever had this sleep paralysis, then you know what I'm talking about.

00:10:45 Now, what's happened over the years is I eventually did start to meditate, but the sleep paralysis thing still happens.

00:10:53 But it's completely different because now I'm lucid.

00:10:57 I know it's happening and I know I'm a meditator.

00:11:01 And so I can play with it.

00:11:03 And I don't play with it.

00:11:05 I just meditate in it and sort of explore it as an altered state.

00:11:12 But in addition to the exploding head syndrome and the dreaming that is so vivid, that really sort of alters your sense of what might be reality.

00:11:26 Like, let's just imagine if in 10 seconds you suddenly find yourself in bed and someone's waking you up saying you had a dream you were at a meditation retreat.

00:11:44 Just imagine how jarring that would be.

00:11:50 So that happened a lot of times.

00:11:54 And that was sort of interesting because once again, I hadn't meditated yet, so I didn't have a context for this kind of thing.

00:12:02 But it really does make you think, like, maybe this is just one really big dream.

00:12:10 So anyway, that's...

00:12:15 And the other cool thing is I completely understand alien abductions.

00:12:22 I have been abducted by aliens.

00:12:25 It's happened several times.

00:12:29 And it's a classic.

00:12:32 I mean, the whole classic thing, they're gibbering in some extraterrestrial language.

00:12:40 And yes, it's true.

00:12:44 It's true.

00:12:50 I've experienced it myself several times.

00:12:54 They do probes.

00:13:03 Yes, I can confirm.

00:13:06 And it is what they say.

00:13:08 It's that place that gets probed.

00:13:15 The one little difference is, you think I'm making this up?

00:13:21 It's happened any number of times.

00:13:25 But the one difference is I know it's happening in sleep paralysis.

00:13:31 I don't think.

00:13:35 But it's very, very vivid.

00:13:37 It's actually the origin, this sleep paralysis and then weird shit happening with you being, like, violated,

00:13:47 or in some way, like, being touched in a way you don't want to be touched, et cetera, et cetera.

00:13:55 That is the origin of the word nightmare.

00:13:58 Originally, well, night is night.

00:14:03 What the hell is a mare?

00:14:05 It's not a female equine species.

00:14:10 A mare is a demon, and it may even be cognate to the Sanskrit word mara.

00:14:18 I'm not quite sure about that, which is demons or devils in Buddhism.

00:14:23 The original nightmare was an experience of an incubus or a succubus.

00:14:30 These are, like, creatures that sit on your chest, or they prod you or bite you or do weird things that are, like, very uncomfortable.

00:14:43 And this goes back centuries and centuries.

00:14:46 You can look it up, succubus and incubus.

00:14:48 Those were the Latin terms for it.

00:14:50 But nightmare was the Anglo-Saxon.

00:14:53 So this sort of being paralyzed in sleep and having weird stuff happening, that's – there's a lot of cultural references to it.

00:15:03 But each age interprets it differently.

00:15:05 So in the Middle Ages, where people were superstitious in the Christian sense, they thought it was devils and things like that.

00:15:13 And nowadays people sort of have archetypes of sci-fi and space opera, so they experience it as an alien abduction.

00:15:23 So I know that I'm just in sleep paralysis.

00:15:27 I don't believe it's actually happening, but it's very, very vivid.

00:15:33 It's as vivid as anything.

00:15:35 But I don't know if this is true for other people, but I can tell you that when – as I'm waking up, as I'm waking up from this,

00:15:58 I could actually watch the transition between the two realities, the one where there's these aliens and they're doing this anal probe thing, okay,

00:16:11 and then coming back to the current physical reality.

00:16:17 And I don't know if it's other people, it's the same or not, or this is just me.

00:16:22 But as I'm coming back to ordinary reality, the experience of the anal probe becomes the experience of detecting my pulse in that region of my body.

00:16:38 So apparently that's a slightly uncomfortable sensation if you're in a vulnerable sleep-like state and it gets interpreted.

00:16:50 At least that's my experience. And it's always that. I can detect my pulse there.

00:16:56 It has a physical basis. And I guess it's just a very sensitive region that when you're in a sleep state –

00:17:03 Yeah, Louie's finding this hilarious.

00:17:08 Has it happened to you?

00:17:11 I refuse to talk about it.

00:17:15 I know, it's very painful. It's hard to talk about.

00:17:18 I can't reveal the source of my laughter. I can't reveal why I'm laughing.

00:17:23 I see. Well, I tell you, I'm going to check to see if you've got a zipper back here.

00:17:34 That you're just wearing a human suit of your love.

00:17:41 Come to think of it, that seems plausible.

00:17:46 I remember you from somewhere.

00:17:50 Well, that is not a Dharma talk.

00:17:56 But they say you should tell stories.

00:18:00 That's how my ears got asymmetrical and how my mind got maybe commensurately warped. I don't know.