

Taking Temperature of Subconscious Processing ~ SHINZEN YOUNG

00:00:00 One of my favorite jokes, well not jokes, but just funny things that I'll ask someone

00:00:19 is, do you think that, like you look at a neon light bulb, neon, or that kind of thing,

00:00:30 you can touch it, right?

00:00:32 It's cold.

00:00:35 But I'll say, do you believe me that the temperature inside that neon bulb is comparable to the

00:00:49 temperature in the core of the sun?

00:00:54 Most people would say, no way, right?

00:00:56 But actually it is.

00:00:58 The thing is, there just aren't very many molecules in there.

00:01:02 So it doesn't transfer much heat to you.

00:01:05 But they're plasma.

00:01:10 They're like they're on the sun.

00:01:15 They're moving that fast.

00:01:16 But it has very little density.

00:01:21 So you touch it, they don't transfer hardly any heat to you at all.

00:01:25 So you have no perception of how really much energy there is on average.

00:01:35 But like I say, high average kinetic energy.

00:01:38 But if you don't have a lot of particles, then the total energy they're going to transfer

00:01:42 to the surface of that bulb is not very much.

00:01:46 So anyway, end of physics lesson.

00:01:51 What is the metaphor?

00:01:52 Well, you'll recall that Freud thought of the psyche in terms of pressures, because

00:02:02 that was sort of the physics of the day.

00:02:11 What I find interesting is that if you parse your mental experience into a visual component,

00:02:25 which would be mental images, and an auditory component, which would be mental talk, when

00:02:32 you start to do that, you're aware of images.

00:02:40 A lot of times they vanish right away.

00:02:42 You're aware of talk.

00:02:44 Sometimes it just vanishes.

00:02:46 But at some point, that sort of surface activity tends to go away.
00:02:53 But the space, image space, is still there.
00:02:57 Talk space is still there.
00:02:59 And when you tune into image space or talk space, sometimes you're aware of a kind of
00:03:08 subtle undercurrent of motion, like there's a kind of stirring in talk space.
00:03:15 You may or may not be able to make out words.
00:03:18 You may or may not be able to make out what the conversation is about.
00:03:24 But there's a sort of undercurrent of activation.
00:03:28 And there's something analogous to that in image space.
00:03:36 And there can also be something analogous to that in your emotional centers.
00:03:42 You're not actually experiencing any emotion per se, but it's like there's something sort
00:03:48 of idling down there.
00:03:53 So what is that?
00:03:55 A lot of times people will sort of look upon that as a problem.
00:04:01 It's like, I can't get rid of that sort of undercurrent of something going on down there.
00:04:09 Well what that is, is subconscious visual thought, subconscious auditory thought, and
00:04:20 subliminal emotional sensation.
00:04:27 And if you explore your inner space, image space, talk space, emotional body space, after
00:04:37 the surface stuff is sort of dissipated, and you're watching that general level of stirring
00:04:48 down there, sometimes it's uniform.
00:04:54 It just sort of is at a constant pace.
00:05:00 Other times it sort of speeds up and then subsides, sort of bursts and then subsides.
00:05:09 So although you're not aware of the specific content necessarily of the subconscious, you
00:05:19 are monitoring, by monitoring that general level of activation.
00:05:26 Do you see the metaphor?
00:05:30 You're taking the temperature of the subconscious.
00:05:34 You're monitoring sort of metaphorically the average kinetic energy that's going on.
00:05:42 And if the temperature is more or less constant, it's all sort of at the same frequency, then
00:05:53 what's optimal is to evenly cover subjective space and just let your awareness sort of
00:06:01 soak into that whole field.

00:06:05 And what that's going to tend to do is break up the, it's going to lessen the viscosity.

00:06:21 So density, viscosity, temperature, entropy, these are called state variables.

00:06:30 And these are sort of the, this is the great achievement of 19th century physics.

00:06:38 One of the great achievements is statistical thermodynamics.

00:06:43 So there are these state variables.

00:06:46 So if it's more or less like an even level of vibratory activity, then you sort of cover

00:06:55 the whole space.

00:06:56 You soak awareness into it.

00:06:58 You don't try to figure out what's going on.

00:07:01 You give it permission to just sort of move around down there.

00:07:07 And you'll find that that will cause that system to become more and more fluid, meaning

00:07:15 less and less viscous.

00:07:20 On the other hand, if you notice pattern that it sort of activates and then deactivates,

00:07:26 so it sort of like heats up and then suddenly cools off, metaphorically.

00:07:33 What's optimal in that case is to watch the sort of burst of energy and then detect the

00:07:40 gone and briefly look down the valley where those little bubbles went to, because they're

00:07:47 pointing right to nirvana, right to cessation.

00:07:51 So you get gone, gone, gone, gone.

00:07:56 If it gives you that pattern, then get interested in the rhythm of arising, passing, arising,

00:08:03 passing.

00:08:04 But this is subtle vibration, sort of shimmering and then dying away.

00:08:09 And when that foam sort of dies away, the silence that it points to is the absolute

00:08:17 rest, the still point of the turning world.

00:08:22 So there's a metaphor from good old 19th century physics.

00:08:33 I mentioned that, so in my mind, I think of this as, well, how cool is this?

00:08:40 If Freud had only known you can actually take the temperature in real time of the subconscious

00:08:45 mind.

00:08:48 And in doing so, the viscosity of the subconscious gets worked through.

00:08:55 And when the subconscious self, the psyche, this inner see, hear, feel self, when it flows,

00:09:07 it gets creative and liberated.

00:09:15 So that's one of my favorite metaphors, taking the temperature of the unconscious in real

00:09:24 time as a function of space.

00:09:30 Temperature of this room is what a scientist would call a scalar field.

00:09:35 It means, or a time varying scalar field, means at each point in the space of this room,

00:09:44 there's a physical quantity that can be measured by one real number, which is temperature.

00:09:53 And it's a temperature field, a scalar field that varies with time.

00:09:59 So the subconscious is actually analogous to a temperature field, because it has location.

00:10:08 There's the visual part, the auditory part, the emotional body part, and so forth.