

Spacing Out & Resistance are Golden Opportunities ~

SHINZEN YOUNG

00:00:00 Yes?

00:00:07 So using that, which is how I mostly meditate,

00:00:12 usually between one of the techniques I space out.

00:00:16 Often that will happen.

00:00:18 And I'm not in a good place to figure out what to do next,

00:00:22 during that space out period,

00:00:25 when I realize I've spaced out.

00:00:27 So what I've been doing is picking something,

00:00:30 having something already set in mind that if I find a space out...

00:00:32 That's great. That's a clever strategy.

00:00:34 But also, you know my standard thing,

00:00:36 as soon as you get the hint that you're spacing out,

00:00:41 if possible, what?

00:00:43 What do you do?

00:00:44 I'll give you the hint.

00:00:48 S.L.

00:00:50 Spoken labels.

00:00:52 It's not so much a matter of I'm spaced out,

00:00:54 oh, I've got to find a new technique.

00:00:57 It's I'm spaced out,

00:00:59 I've got to use my options with this technique.

00:01:02 So let's continue on this, because I know that,

00:01:05 and that often comes to mind,

00:01:07 and I don't want to.

00:01:10 I wish I felt stronger to work with that,

00:01:14 so usually I'll just go back to that beginning technique.

00:01:17 Okay.

00:01:18 So let me put a positive spin on I don't want to.

00:01:22 That's my job, basically,

00:01:26 is to show that actually everything is a window of opportunity.

00:01:30 The I don't want to.

00:01:35 What's positive about the I just don't want to?

00:01:41 Resistant thing. Okay.

00:01:43 Well, you're spacing out, right?

00:01:46 It means that the concentration isn't good.

00:01:49 It means that the attention is being scattered,

00:01:52 and we want to gradually train ourselves
00:01:55 so that our attention isn't scattered.
00:01:59 But what's difficult is that what's scattering attention is not tangible.
00:02:05 There's an intangible force that is scattering your attention,
00:02:10 and you're at the mercy of it as long as it's intangible.
00:02:14 Now, here's why the I just don't want to use spoken labels
00:02:20 is a window of opportunity,
00:02:23 because if you do speak the labels,
00:02:28 you're going to not feel good in subjective space.
00:02:33 The speaking of the labels is going to be uncomfortable.
00:02:37 That's why you don't want to do it,
00:02:39 and forcing yourself to do it will make you uncomfortable.
00:02:45 Why is that good?
00:02:47 Because the invisible forces that were controlling you
00:02:51 now have come up as tangible sensations in the body that are penetratable.
00:02:59 Okay?
00:03:00 And so you go to focus in or focus on feel, feel in,
00:03:06 and you force yourself to do the spoken labels,
00:03:09 and you apply it to how uncomfortable you are speaking the labels.
00:03:15 And that then allows you to work through those forces in a tangible way.
00:03:21 So I wasn't being facetious or cavalier when I said that actually
00:03:27 it is actually a window of opportunity to work through the driving forces of scatteredness.
00:03:34 So if you're willing to do it,
00:03:36 you're going to really develop concentration power effectively.
00:03:40 If you're not willing to do it, it's petty-wise and powerful.
00:03:43 You feel a little better during the set,
00:03:46 but you're not really deeply training the skills.
00:03:50 So that's my little motivational spiel for SL, spoken labels.
00:03:56 Yes?
00:03:57 Well, just to piggyback on that,
00:04:00 this morning I spent the first and second SID.
00:04:05 I was really tired from that morning.
00:04:07 And so I used labels that were mouth.
00:04:12 Yeah, you used sotto voce.
00:04:14 That is not nearly as difficult for me anyway to do as spoken labels,
00:04:19 and it was completely effective.
00:04:21 It was really good.
00:04:22 You whispered the words.
00:04:24 Not even whispered.
00:04:25 You sub-vocalized.
00:04:26 You just moved your lips.
00:04:27 Just lips.

00:04:28 And so there's that, but also I have to tell you,
00:04:31 I looked through the manual,
00:04:32 and you don't have any place where you describe
00:04:35 the three different ways of labeling,
00:04:37 the four different ways of labeling.
00:04:39 That's in the next edition.
00:04:41 That is the biggest lacuna in there,
00:04:45 which I realized in my horror soon after we brought out this.
00:04:49 What's wrong with this picture?
00:04:51 The central technique is not fully described.
00:04:54 Now, there is the how to note it label on the paper,
00:05:03 but we forgot to put it into the manual.
00:05:06 So, yeah, it's like the thousand pound elephant in the room.
00:05:09 So I am poignantly aware of that.
00:05:15 Thank you.
00:05:18 Yes.
00:05:19 This thing you were describing about the self-resistance
00:05:24 and you stop undying,
00:05:26 I'm not sure you understood what you're doing.
00:05:30 You're stopping undying in the character.
00:05:33 Well, what happens is, yes, I went through it fast, so thanks for asking.
00:05:40 So we sometimes are aware of just that there are like forces driving us,
00:05:47 in our behaviors, driving us to think, driving us to talk, driving us to move.
00:05:53 And it's like force.
00:05:55 It's just a force that's making me do it.
00:05:57 And it's intangible in the sense that I can't locate it in time and space
00:06:03 or give any quality to it other than say it's a force.
00:06:07 Follow what I'm saying?
00:06:09 Nothing mysterious so far, right?
00:06:12 Okay, so how can we make these invisible, intractable forces tangible and tractable
00:06:21 so that we can actually penetrate them and work them through?
00:06:25 Well, they have to come up to, percolate up to tangibility.
00:06:29 The way they percolate up to tangibility is through abstinence.
00:06:33 Okay?
00:06:34 If you abstain from X, then what's been driving you to do X is going to come to the surface.
00:06:40 It's going to come to the surface as image, talk, emotional body, sometimes physical body too.
00:06:46 This is true for any addiction recovery situation, whether it's recovery from a substance
00:06:52 or recovery from compulsive thinking or recovery from life.
00:07:01 The ultimate recovery program.
00:07:04 Break the addiction to life and death.
00:07:08 It's called liberation.
00:07:10 But the same is true, okay?

00:07:12 The same principle holds.

00:07:14 You have to abstain in order for what's been driving it to come up and be tangible as image, talk, body.

00:07:24 Okay?

00:07:26 So when that happens, now you can apply a technique.

00:07:29 So the situation that Pam was describing is, well, I space out.

00:07:35 And that's a habit.

00:07:38 I space out.

00:07:40 And I know that I should go to the spoken labels, but I don't want to do it.

00:07:46 So that's another habit.

00:07:48 Not wanting to do the spoken labels.

00:07:50 So what I said is, well, let me put a positive spin on that situation.

00:07:55 If you force yourself, if you abstain from not speaking the labels, okay?

00:08:01 So in this case, it's a do the behavior thing.

00:08:04 If you do that behavior, you're going to feel uncomfortable.

00:08:07 Well, we don't want to feel uncomfortable in general, but actually in this case we do.

00:08:12 Because whatever comes up in image, talk, and emotional body of I hate this, or, you know, you get bang here, bang here, bang here.

00:08:20 That represents the forces that were driving those behaviors.

00:08:25 But now those forces are not invisible forces.

00:08:28 They're tangible sensations.

00:08:31 They're tangible visual, auditory, and somatic experiences.

00:08:35 Well, what is tangible can be quantumized and can be experienced completely, can be penetrated.

00:08:42 Therefore, what is tangible is trackable, meaning that we can apply a mindfulness technique to it.

00:08:58 Things are intangible, they're not trackable, okay?

00:09:02 So there's little we can do other than white knuckle.

00:09:06 But what is tangible is trackable, meaning you can note it.

00:09:15 What is trackable is tractable, means you can get a handle on it.

00:09:21 So that's the mechanism that I was describing with regards to why you, what's going to happen if you force yourself to speak the labels and why that's a good thing kind of thing.

00:09:34 So that's the same as stopping at a dime?

00:09:37 It's very related.

00:09:38 Because when you stop on a dime in daily life, then the juices that have been stirred up by life come up with a vengeance very quickly.

00:09:52 And if you can be Johnny on the spot with it, you can actually meditate retroactively.

00:10:02 You say, well, I thought that's against the rules. You can't do that.

00:10:07 Let's say that you're bopping around in the world and you're just like a whirling dervish and you're going here, going there.

00:10:15 No techniques, no awareness.

00:10:17 And I'm going to really face what's been stirred up. In that ten minutes, if you really bring your A game, you can retroactively process all those hours of unconscious freneticness.

00:10:44 And that's the rhythm of the Zen day. Unlike a vipassana training day, the Zen day is run around like crazy, stop on a dime.

00:10:56 Run around like crazy, stop on a dime.

00:10:58 At least Rinzai Zen. Soto Zen not so much. But Rinzai Zen, absolutely.

00:11:02 Run around like crazy, stop on a dime. Run around like crazy, stop on a dime. All day.

00:11:08 Now that's either going to make you just frenetic as hell or you're going to learn what I just said.

00:11:15 Which is like when you're running around like crazy and then you stop on a dime, you can process all that crazy very, very quickly.

00:11:25 So yes, it's related.

00:11:28 It sounds like a version of asceticism.

00:11:31 Well asceticism is a generic term. So there are many facets to asceticism. That could be one of them, yes.

00:11:45 Well when I was running my restaurants, I would every hour go out and sit on the bench in front of the restaurant, the bus stop bench, for five minutes. And I found the great advantage of that, stopping like that, is that then at the end of the day you haven't built up a whole lot of samskaras.

00:12:07 You periodically let go of them so that you're much calmer at the end of the day.

00:12:13 That's my peppering.

00:12:16 That's a great specific example.