

Turn Towards Physical Discomfort Sequence & The Taste of Purification ~ Shinzen Young

00:00:00 Now we know what the it is in the case of physical discomfort.

00:00:08 It's the local uncomfortable touch, possibly the global spread, and possibly feel-image-talk

00:00:15 reactions.

00:00:16 That's the it.

00:00:17 However, I'm giving you general principle that you can apply to any sensory challenge.

00:00:23 Now there's a tendency to think that, oh, if I'm going to turn towards it, I have to

00:00:30 turn towards the most horrible, intense, solidified part of it.

00:00:38 However, that is, although there's nothing wrong with that, that is certainly not necessarily

00:00:43 the case.

00:00:45 Where I like to start is I look at the sensory challenge and I ask myself, what's the weakest

00:00:51 link?

00:00:53 Which component in the sensory challenge is least intense?

00:00:57 I'm going to go for that first.

00:01:00 Typically for me, I find that at least at the beginning of the discomfort, the least

00:01:07 intense components are actually the feel-image-talk reactions.

00:01:12 They're not too strong yet.

00:01:13 They're just a subtle hint.

00:01:16 So often I'll start with that.

00:01:17 I won't even go to the uncomfortable touch.

00:01:21 I'll go to, OK, what's going on in feel-image-talk reactive to this, or in general, what's going

00:01:27 on?

00:01:28 Because I know if at some point I lose it and freak out, the freak out is not in touch

00:01:33 space.

00:01:34 The freak out is in fit space.

00:01:36 So I want to get some momentum going in.

00:01:39 And if at some point I become unwilling to practice, like to hell with this, et cetera,

00:01:46 et cetera, that's going to happen in fit space.

00:01:49 Not in the physical body.
00:01:51 Touch space can take a lot.
00:01:53 Feel-image-talk space is pretty vulnerable.
00:01:57 So I start in feel-image-talk.
00:02:00 Then when I go to touch, I try to detect the subtle global spread, if I can.
00:02:07 And after many, many years of practice, usually I can.
00:02:11 And I work with that.
00:02:13 It's widespread, but it's not that intense relative to what's happening locally.
00:02:17 So I sort of work with that.
00:02:18 I note that touch, touch, sort of zoom into those things.
00:02:23 Sometimes zoom out to try to get the whole spread at once, which does help with the dissipating.
00:02:29 Zoom in means work with a small part.
00:02:31 Zoom out means sort of spread the attention over the whole thing.
00:02:35 Then I go into the local intensities, which is, that's the strongest link.
00:02:42 So when you work with the sensory challenge, you can focus away, or you can focus on it.
00:02:49 When you focus on it, you want to get a very clear classification of the sensory challenge,
00:02:54 all its components.
00:02:56 And then decide, well, do I want to go to this, which component do I want to go to?
00:03:00 Do I want to work with them all at once, et cetera, et cetera?
00:03:04 So like I say, I typically work with the weakest link, and then I sort of work my way up.
00:03:10 And then I work with it all at once.
00:03:13 But usually by that time, it's breaking up into flow, meaning that it's not so solid
00:03:20 anymore.
00:03:21 It's beginning to show waviness, bubbiness, that kind of stuff.
00:03:26 So now I'm noting touch, feel, image, talk.
00:03:31 But it gets very flowy.
00:03:33 So at some point, I'm just zooming out, and I'm covering touch, feel, image, talk, all
00:03:40 four simultaneously as a flow field.
00:03:44 They integrate into a single body-mind arabesque of energy.
00:03:49 And if it works right, I just get this flavor of purification.
00:03:58 I get this sense that because of the way that I'm experiencing this moment, every moment
00:04:06 of my life in the future is going to involve less suffering and more fulfillment.

00:04:13 And furthermore, the poison and pain that has been stored from the past is getting worked
00:04:18 out.
00:04:19 So the present is reaching into the future, making a brighter future for me.
00:04:24 And the present is reaching back into the past and cleaning that up for me.
00:04:29 I call that experience the flavor of purification.
00:04:35 Probably the most important watershed in a person's practice is when they start to develop
00:04:43 an awareness of that flavor.
00:04:45 Because after that, it takes off like a hockey stick.
00:04:50 It's exponential, because now you're getting a reward, an actual reward for your mindfulness.
00:04:59 You're actually tasting not when the retreat's over or when the sit's over, but like right
00:05:08 now in this instant, you're tasting that this is doing something significant and productive
00:05:15 for you.
00:05:17 So there's a reward there.
00:05:19 I personally have seen people sit for three days without moving.
00:05:29 And I can tell you how it's done.
00:05:30 It's done with a smile on the face.
00:05:34 So it's like, what?
00:05:37 Somebody's genetically engineered to do this?
00:05:39 A human can do this?
00:05:41 No, a human can train themselves along the lines of what I just said, so that the sense
00:05:49 of, this is meaningful and purgatorial, as opposed to meaningless and hellish, that sense
00:05:59 is present moment by moment.
00:06:01 And so there's a smile on the face, even though the pain is hour after hour, right on the
00:06:09 cusp of fainting intensity.
00:06:12 And this is the easy thing.
00:06:16 Now you want to know what the hard thing is?
00:06:21 This isn't that easy, I know.
00:06:24 But relative to something else, this is relatively easy.
00:06:28 When the uncomfortable touch breaks up, you're beginning to have a complete experience of
00:06:34 uncomfortable touch.
00:06:36 When the uncomfortable touch turns into purification flavor, you're well on your way to complete
00:06:43 experience.

00:06:44 And you remember I talked last night about the two things, getting over the self and

00:06:51 the world and improving the self and the world.

00:06:56 And you get over the self and the world by having what I call a complete experience of

00:07:01 yourself and the world.

00:07:03 The relatively easy thing is to have a complete experience of uncomfortable touch.

00:07:11 The harder thing is to have a complete experience of uncomfortable feel.