

Mindfulness, Cancer & Healing - 2 of 3 ~ Sat Dharam Kaur, N.D. Interviews Shinzen Young

00:00:00 However, it may be that the object of situation is not caused by suffering or that that doesn't
00:00:07 weigh very large, that other factors are large, and that there's not a cure. It doesn't get
00:00:20 cured. You stay sick or you get worse.

00:00:23 There's also the term, the term of the disease, which is called the disease of the heart.

00:00:30 There's not a cure. It doesn't get cured. You stay sick or you get worse.

00:00:36 There's also the genetic factors, too, that may be just strongly weighted, not in favor
00:00:41 of a cure.

00:00:42 That's right. What are you going to do? Well, now you can't actually maybe do something
00:00:46 with gene therapy and what have you. But my point is that even if you had gene therapy,
00:00:51 sooner or later, something's going to get you. If you learn the techniques that reduce
00:00:56 your suffering, perhaps in addition to learning the techniques that are designed to specifically
00:01:04 change the course. That's why I say that the two can go in parallel.

00:01:09 You do whatever interventional medicine you do to change the course. You use whatever
00:01:14 mind-focusing techniques you can relate to, or consciousness-focusing techniques, better
00:01:20 than that, to change the course, to actually objectively impact the disease, the health
00:01:26 situation, the injury, whatever it may be.

00:01:29 Let's do all of that, certainly. But there are these other things that we can do that
00:01:36 are designed to do that as maybe a nice byproduct. But they're primarily designed to reduce
00:01:44 suffering, no matter what's going on.

00:01:47 Why do I like to start with that? Well, number one, it may have an impact objectively on
00:01:52 the disease. Number two, even if it doesn't, you're okay. Since sooner or later, something's
00:02:02 going to happen that can't be changed.

00:02:04 Often, when people are diagnosed with cancer, they're in a fear state for quite a while.

00:02:09 So anything that will reduce that fear state is also going to be beneficial.

00:02:12 I think you said that some of the researchers that you respect say that it's actually that
00:02:18 fear state that may be a primary.

00:02:21 Right. Dr. Hammer is a German medical doctor who developed a medicine he calls German New
00:02:29 Medicine, which is...

00:02:30 German?

00:02:31 German New Medicine, which is...

00:02:33 Deutsche Neue Mediziner? I'm guessing. My German isn't that good.

00:02:40 He believes that all cancers are caused by an abrupt, unexpected shock that the person
00:02:45 has gone through that needs to be resolved and expressed.

00:02:49 They got hammered?

00:02:51 They got hammered, that's right. He calls it a hammerhead.

00:02:54 Really?

00:02:55 Hammer shirt, I think he calls it hammer shirt, yes. It's the resolution of that shock that
00:03:02 he believes will help to promote healing.

00:03:06 If we can reduce your suffering, it's good two ways. It may also improve your objective
00:03:15 conditions. Many people, both in the alternative medicine and in standard medicine, would agree
00:03:24 with that general premise. But also, just in case nothing can help, this will help.

00:03:33 Your physical discomfort doesn't go away, but your suffering does. I like the idea that
00:03:42 a person would acquire at least one technique that will do that for them, because sooner
00:03:49 or later they're going to need it.

00:03:52 Let's talk about the techniques that reduce suffering. How do we suffer? We suffer because
00:04:00 of uncomfortable physical sensations. We suffer because of uncomfortable emotional sensations.

00:04:08 Both of those are body events. We suffer because of negative mental images and negative judgmental
00:04:18 talk. We might say that there are uncomfortable physical and emotional body states and uncomfortable
00:04:29 visual and auditory mental states.

00:04:32 Sure. In Dr. Hammer's model, those would be all there from that initial conflict or shock.

00:04:37 They would still be there.

00:04:38 Yes, because you've got the mental images of what could happen. You've got the, Oh my
00:04:43 God, Oh my God, and the why me and the poor me in your talk space. You've got the fear
00:04:49 in your body and you've got the physical discomfort in your body constantly re-initiating.

00:04:56 Right, remembering.

00:04:58 Reusing those three to arise moment by moment by way of reaction.

00:05:02 Sure.

00:05:03 Let's call that whole, let's use another word, German word, Gestalt. That whole constellation
00:05:14 of uncomfortable sensation in the body, which could be physical pain, it could be fatigue,
00:05:20 it could be nausea, it could be heat, lots of things people get, right?

00:05:24 Sure, yeah.

00:05:25 Those are all physical type sensations. Then you've got your mental and emotional reactions.

00:05:32 We'll call that whole Gestalt or that whole constellation of body-mind distress the sensory
00:05:38 challenge. Meditation techniques can be divided into two categories. The ones that have you
00:05:47 focus away from the sensory challenge, not in a way to suppress it or deny it, but simply
00:05:55 in a way that you're focusing away from it. On to what? Pleasant restful experiences.

00:06:01 Who was it? One of them, what was the one?

00:06:03 Dr. Mears.

00:06:04 Mears, okay.

00:06:05 Yeah.

00:06:06 Okay, different kinds of cool out, mellow out. You can focus away from the sensory challenge,
00:06:11 the uncomfortable body-mind states. You can focus away on the pleasant restful states.

00:06:16 We can teach you, we meaning the meditation teachers of the world, can teach you actually
00:06:23 a wide range of different ways of focusing on pleasant restful states. Another way to
00:06:30 focus away from the sensory challenge is to focus on positive mental images, positive
00:06:38 internal talk, positive emotional feelings in your body.

00:06:41 That's what Lauren LeShan really had people to do with his suggestions. He suggested that
00:06:47 cancer patients find and create the life that gives them the greatest fulfillment, meaning

00:06:51 and joy, and had them focus on making that manifest as quickly as possible for themselves.

00:06:58 They would do that through image and talk.

00:07:00 They would also actually go out and create it. For instance, there was a woman who was

00:07:04 bedridden in a hospital who had always loved the opera. Her family members brought her

00:07:09 newspaper articles historically about the New York opera, and she wrote a book while

00:07:15 she was in her hospital bed about the opera and lived twice as long as they did.

00:07:19 That gave meaning to her life.

00:07:20 Sure.

00:07:21 One thing that you can do is focus on pleasant restful states. Another is you can focus on

00:07:27 positive image, positive talk, positive emotion. There's even other things you can do. You

00:07:33 can anchor yourself in pleasant sights and sounds, like focus on music.

00:07:38 Right.

00:07:39 All of those would be ways that you can use your attention to focus away from the sensory

00:07:45 challenge without denying or suppressing the sensory challenge.

00:07:48 That's important, not to suppress what you're feeling.

00:07:51 That's right. There's a whole range of strategies that I call focus away strategies. Of course,

00:07:59 people immediately think, oh, well, if I'm focusing away, then I'm denying or suppressing,

00:08:03 but that's not necessarily true. It depends on how you choose to focus away. You can focus

00:08:09 away from it whilst totally giving it permission to just be there as a sensory event, but it's

00:08:14 in the background. Then you're not suppressing, but you are developing core focusing skills

00:08:21 that are very useful. That's sort of like plan A, turn away, but turn away in a very

00:08:28 special way, not in a denying or suppressing way, but in a way that sort of creates a space

00:08:36 that the stuff can sort of break up of its own.

00:08:38 How long might someone have to do that? How many minutes at a time would you suggest they

00:08:42 focus on pleasant sensations?

00:08:43 I usually recommend a minimum of 10 minutes. That's minimum daily, absolute minimum.

00:08:49 The other range of strategies at first seems a little bit hard to understand perhaps, because

00:09:00 it's the exact opposite. Instead of focusing away from it, you elect to focus on it. Remember,

00:09:08 the focusing away is a very special kind of focusing away. It's not like, oh, I've got

00:09:14 to get rid of this so I can focus away. It's a very healthy way to focus away.

00:09:21 Now, if your attention is drawn to the sensory challenge, you can decide to just go with

00:09:29 that and say, you know what, I'm going to focus on it. But there's an unhealthy way

00:09:34 to focus on the pain and the emotions and the negative thoughts. There's an unhealthy

00:09:40 way to do that, and that's the way most people probably will end up doing that.

00:09:45 But there is also a healthy way to focus on it.