

Evoking and Working Through Challenging Material ~ Shinzen Young

00:00:00 Within the sort of standard methodology, it's what you say. If stuff percolates up spontaneously,
00:00:14 that is negatives from memories and so forth, it can only come up as some combination of field
00:00:25 image talk. So you simply apply the focus in technique to it. You untangle the strands,
00:00:33 you open up to them, you give it permission to last as long or as short as it wants. And as you
00:00:39 say, if that's unfinished business, then this finishes the business, or at least is part of
00:00:46 an ongoing process that maybe a year later some more has to percolate up. But you're fostering
00:00:53 the finishing of the business. Or another way to put it is that you're letting the ghosts out of
00:01:01 the cellar and they dissipate and are gone. So typically that's how one deals with negatives.
00:01:14 Now when you say focus on negative, okay, that could have a different meaning because focus on
00:01:21 positive means intentionally hold and radiate the positive. So no, there's no technique to
00:01:31 intentionally hold and radiate the negatives in my system. So in that sense, yes, I apologize,
00:01:38 it's asymmetrical. There is something, it's not really a focus on negative because focus on
00:01:46 positive here, attempting to nurture positive content, and there's no way we're going to
00:01:50 nurture negative content. However, there is something that people frequently ask about,
00:01:56 which is, well, do I have to wait for it to spontaneously arise? Can I evoke something
00:02:03 that I know is problematic and then observe it? Then apply the deconstruction practice to it?
00:02:13 The answer is yes, subject to a couple of constraints. The first constraint is I would
00:02:21 not make that the centerpiece of mindfulness practice because then you're doing psychotherapy,
00:02:27 you're not doing mindfulness. But it's okay to do that on occasion. The second is to sort of
00:02:35 know how to do it so as to optimize the mindfulness cathartic component. By that I mean,
00:02:45 if you consider, well, you've heard the expression like, what are some of the expressions? Like,
00:02:56 okay, rattle your cage when it's a negative or ring your bell when it's a positive. What does
00:03:06 that mean? If you look at the act, if the bell stands for the samskaras, the stored materials,
00:03:15 so you can with intention strike that bell by bringing up some feel, image, talk, typically a
00:03:23 negative, an issue. So you strike the body-mind bell intentionally, but then it's like hands-off,
00:03:33 and you let it resonate and you observe. You don't strike it again until it completely dies down.
00:03:40 And then you strike it again. At some point, you may find this happens. And that could be
00:03:50 actually at the very beginning, in which case you don't beat that dead horse trying to evoke
00:03:58 that thing. The idea is it needs to be something that will resonate on its own readily after
00:04:05 evoking, freeing up all your energy to now apply the technique to it. So you can't be constantly
00:04:11 trying to beat it, like strike it into existence and deconstruct it. But if you find a bell that
00:04:19 resonates, so you strike it and now, however subtly you can still detect it as it damps,
00:04:37 and then strike it again. If at some point you can't evoke it anymore, you're done for that
00:04:45 session. So I call that evoking. And it's not a focus on negative, but it's a little related to
00:04:51 what you brought up.