

Actualize OS

10 WEEK TRAINING

WITH KEN WILBER



ACTUALIZE OS

TRANSCRIPT

ACTIVATION THREE



3

ACTIVATING YOUR INNER TECH

Susannah: Hello and welcome to Activation 3 of this Optimization training from Ken Wilber on: Activating Your Inner Technology.

This is our final application module and in it Ken is going to speak about our “inner technology” – what that means, why it is so important and how it can help us actualize our highest potential.

Inner technology touches on spirituality, meditation, and contemplation and, as Ken will explain, when we adopt these inner practices, we develop core strengths and deep capacities, all of which contribute immeasurably to achieving our full greatness, changing ourselves and the world, one mind at a time.

To begin, here is Ken speaking about the importance of meditation – the core practice of inner tech.

Ken: Meditation is uniquely important for a couple of reasons. One is that if you look at all of the world's great spiritual and meditative and contemplative traditions, they all maintain that there are two truths. There's a relative truth and there's an ultimate truth. Relative truth is truth gained through a type of knowing that is called dualistic. The subject is separated from the object and the subject then attempts to learn about the object. Most of our modern sciences, chemistry, biology, physics, and so on. It's that type of knowledge. The traditions are totally in favor of that, so it's looking at aspects of chemistry, that's the object.

The subject studies it, does experiments on it, tries to find out its composition, it's makeup, what it does, how it acts, and so on. Of course, this is an extremely important part of human knowledge

and human growth and evolution itself. The traditions then also maintain that there is another type of truth and in some ways of course, even though both are important, this is sort of the king of truths. It's simply referred to as ultimate truth or absolute truth. It has to do with seeing not just the relative truth of a finite object that will exist for a certain amount of time and then eventually will end up dissolving, dying, disappearing, and so on.

Ultimate truth is truth concerned with that which will never die, which is eternal, which is timeless and spaceless and infinite. Of course it's all inclusive as well. The traditions maintain that that ultimate truth is not only the truth of everything that we see out there, it's the truth of our own being and realizing, recognizing, discovering the identity of this ultimate truth with our individual being. The Sufis call it the Supreme Identity because it's the identity of your being with Brahman, with the Godhead, with Tao, with Spirit, with ultimate reality.

This has been a truth that humankind has recognized for thousands of years and is, of course, probably the most central of the types of truths that a person can have access to. Now, given our modern and postmodern age, it's very common to say that's just a fairy tale. That's the tooth fairy and Santa Claus and so on. That's not the type of knowledge that this ultimate truth is talking about. This truth is talking about not a narrative, a mythic narrative that has certain stories about heroes or superheroes that can perform miracles and fly through the air and walk on water and raise the dead, and all of that. That, to put it politely, may or may not be true, but ultimate truth is not about that anyway.

Ultimate truth is about a direct experience that you have of this ultimate reality. The individuals that have this experience -- including scientists with PhDs -- the vast, vast majority of individuals that have this kind of experience, they're blown away by it. They are absolutely convinced that it is indeed real and that it is something -- of course, it's a life-changing experience -- that many of them actually end up devoting their life to trying to transmit the importance of that kind of truth. We have, in most cultures, and certainly most Western cultures, we have very little of this type of truth that is made available to human beings.

This is in a certain sense, shocking because if you look at all the great religions, including Christianity, it started in a riot of mystical transcendental experience. The first gathering of Christians, Pentecostal, had flames encircling their heads and many other gatherings have white doves and all these were symbolic of an actual change in consciousness that was happening to these people. As Paul said, "let this consciousness be in you, which is in Christ Jesus, that we all may be one." It's that unity experience, that unity feeling, that is what drives ultimate truth. Almost the only way that ultimate truth has been able to be discovered is through meditation or contemplation.

In addition to all the other types of practices that we do, meditation is certainly something that we recommend as a central practice because it's the only one that deals with ultimate truth. As you want your life grounded in various intelligences and various capacities, and various skills, and so on, you don't want to leave out ultimate truth. There are, and we went through several of these in our previous discussions and looking at the different states of consciousness that humans have access to, there are different meditations that can work with each of these states. All of them are recommended. All of them have some very profound awareness and knowledge and truth that is conveyed.

If we wanted to narrow down the kind of most centrally important ones, then we would probably take the two highest states that are acknowledged. We find them in the West and the East. In the East, they're referred to as Turiya, which simply means "the fourth." The fourth simply means that there are three states prior to that which are our lower reality, less real, but still profoundly important. Turiya, the fourth, and it is essentially the ever-present witnessing consciousness. This is taken to be pure awareness -- awareness itself without any qualifications, any characteristics, any defining marks, because it's essentially just infinite spaciousness, infinite openness, infinite awareness, infinite consciousness.

It's sometimes referred to as "mirror mind" because as it witnesses everything that's arising, it does so much like a mirror. As Chung-Tzu said, "The perfect person employs the mind like a mirror. It receives, but does not keep. It reflects, but does not grasp." The idea is just that. It's to be in a state of awareness where you simply allow things to arise, moment to moment. You don't identify with them. You don't condemn them. You don't judge them. You simply allow them to arise, moment to moment. What you're doing, of course, is in each of these cases, you're taking whatever subjective component could be there and you're making it an object, because you're looking at it.

And because you're looking at it, you're no longer looking with it. It stops distorting the world. It stops presenting the world through its own lens, through its own way of looking at something, which is going to be, of course, in some way, narrow and limited and even prejudiced because it's going to have it's one particular view of how it looks at things. Instead of looking at the world through that prejudiced view, we look at the view. As Robert Kegan says, "The view no longer has us. We have it." That's part of the overall meditative development what's offering from two, both East and West, as neti-neti: not this, not that.

We went through several exercises for this. I'll give just a very brief one as a reminder of the type of exercise that's involved and that you can simply do, right now. Just get in a comfortable, relaxed position and be aware of yourself. Just feel yourself, look at yourself, get a sense of it. Where is it located? Does it have a color? Does it have a shape? Many people feel that their self, for example,

is located behind and between their eyes. Wherever it is, just feel it, get a sense of it. Once you've done that -- because what we're actually trying to do is to anchor your being in ultimate awareness -- we want your true self not to be identified with a false, narrow, partial, finite, limited self, but with a true ultimate real timeless, spaceless, infinite, and eternal self.

What we want to do again is get plugged into that awareness as the very ground of your being. If you are going to be identified with something, it might as well be God. This is where we want to start. As you're being aware of yourself and you're looking at it; you're paying attention to it; you're seeing where it's located, what it feels like. You can describe it. I weigh so much. I'm this tall. I'm in this relationship. I have this many kids. I have this job. I like this music. I drive this car. A whole list, but as you're doing that, notice that there's actually a second self involved in this. One is the self that you are looking at and that's the objective self. That's the self that can be seen.

The self that's looking at that is the observing self, the witness. It can't be seen. It's not an object. It's a pure subject and it's that pure subject -- Zen Master Shibayama calls it absolute subjectivity -- and that's an important phrase because it's driving to the fact that there's an absolute subjectivity that's beyond finite subject and finite object. As you rest in this absolute subjectivity, then you won't see any objects or if you do, they're fine. They're objects. They're just continuing to arise and your small self might continue to arise and you might see mountains and rivers and trees or tables or sofas or whatever. Those are all objects. Those are not subjects. Those are not what you really are.

As you rest in this witnessing self, and you simply witness everything that's arising moment to moment, then that is in a sense, what you're after. As you rest in that witnessing self, if you see anything, that's just another object. It's not the real see-er. It's not the real subject. It's not the real self. All you'll notice as you rest in this witness and notice objects arising is, as for the witness itself, all you will notice is that it's a sense of freedom. It's a sense of not being identified with all these objects.

It has an awareness that says, "I have sensations, but I am not my sensations. I have feelings, but I am not my feelings. I have thoughts, but I am not my thoughts. I have a body, but I am not my body. I have a mind, but I'm not my mind." All you are is this infinite freedom and all these objects arising moment to moment, but that's not what you are. You are this infinite sense of witnessing awareness. This pure mirror mind awareness that's not identified with anything. It has a sense of great liberation, of vast freedom, of infinite openness and transparency, and not being tied to anything because that I Am-ness is one's true self.

As you just rest on that feeling of I Am-ness, you can start to get a sense of its core being and how absolutely central it is to your own fundamental being and that I Am-ness is simply reflecting what's arising moment to moment. It's identified with none of it. Because of that, it's not identified

with any particular object that could hurt it or harm it because it's absolutely free of all of that. Those objects just come and go, but the true stuff, the pure see-er, simply witnesses them without any identification, attachment, condemnation, judgement, anything. What we find is that we're the victims of a colossal case of mistaken identity.

We have inadvertently identified with a small self, often called the ego, but it's finite. It's a separate self. It was born. It will live a while, be victimized and subjected to various forms of pain, and then it will die -- great life. This is what Buddha meant when he said the Second Noble Truth is that life as typically lived is suffering. Yet life awakened to the true self is free of suffering because it's free of an identification with any of those broken, fragmented, torn parts. That shift in awareness from identifying with this small, finite, separate self, which incidentally isn't even a real self because you can see it -- it's an object!

This case of mistaken identity has us identified with a series of objects that aren't even real subjects and aren't even real selves. That's why most of the traditions maintain that the separate self sense, besides not being our real self, is illusory. It's just a fundamental mistake that we have made. What we want to do in order to awaken from that is watch it as an object. In meditation, we might sit and simply as we get a sense of the separate self, as we become aware of it, we simply give it our attention. When we give it our attention, we make it an object. We're converting it from a pretend self, pretend subject to an object and that breaks our identification with it.

That leaves us identified with that which is observing the small self, namely the true self, the real self, the ultimate self. That's step one, is to get out of identifying with this small objective self, the self-contraction, the separate self sense, and start resting in this vast infinite field of spaciousness and transparency and clarity and openness and emptiness and freedom. It's all of those and it's a vast, vast sense of liberation and identification with a narrow, finite, illusory self.

That's the fundamental lesson of the meditative traditions, that we are born under a case of mistaken identity, but we can overcome that by simply giving that small self our attention, turning that subject into an object and therefore disidentifying with it.

Susannah: You've spoken about how meditation and contemplation, at least here in the West, have become research-based methods for accelerating our evolution through stages of self-development. Just how critical are meditation and contemplation to becoming our greatest self?

Ken: If you look at what meditation is actually doing, it is taking whatever subjective self is arising in you, moment to moment, that you take as a self, that you identify with, that you call yourself, that you identify with. It's looking at it as an object. The very fact of looking at it as an object, it breaks an identification with it, because it's clearly something you're looking at. It's no

longer something you're identified with. It's clearly something else. It's something that is not you. It's something that you are aware of.

We saw that the key to development is a subject of one stage becomes the object of the subject of the next stage. In meditation, what's happening is that whatever subject is arising, and your giving it awareness, you're making it an object, therefore you're disidentifying with it. Therefore you are making room for the next higher subject to emerge. Then as that emerges and you identify with that, then the same problems will start happening with that self. It will start to become the source of the self-contraction and it will become the source of pain and suffering.

When you identify with it, then if something happens to it and that will cause depression and distress and angst. If it doesn't live up to your expectations, then you become disappointed and upset, but if you're meditating and that self comes up and you become aware of that, you see it as an object, then again you break your identity with it. Because of that, you open up a space in which your next higher self can emerge. That will simply continue until you reach a subject that cannot be made an object. That's the true self. That's absolute subjectivity. It's a subject that is doing the looking and not something that can be looked at.

It's, like I say, Zen Master Shibayama calls it absolute subjectivity. At that point, that is equivalent to enlightenment, particularly with regard to the separate self because you are no longer identified with it. You're no longer open to the self-contracting pain and suffering that is inherent in the self-contraction. Pain and suffering and anxiety are not something that happens to the self-contraction. It's something that the self-contraction is.

As long as you're identified with that small finite objective entity as if it were a real subject -- first of all, it's a lie because it's not your real self. Second of all, it's going to identify you with a finite thing that by definition is set apart from all other finite things. Therefore, all other finite things can crash into it and cause pain and suffering and hurt and so on.

Susannah: Thank you Ken. You've spoken about how many people tend to grow up and develop to a certain point, and then they become stuck. Are meditation and contemplation useful for getting people back on the path of growth and openness to different perspectives?

Ken: Yes, and for reasons that are not terribly well understood, individuals can transform fairly quickly until about age 20 or so. Then they just simply tend to stop. Whatever stage they're at when they're 20 - 25 tends to be a stage that they will tend to remain at until they're 60 or older. There have been a number of studies done on various types of activities to see if any of them could help move a person, get them growing again when they're adults. If you take all of the ones that have been tried and you add up the overall amount of actual stage growth that was gotten using all of these techniques, the average amount of stage growth is 0.25%.

In other words, all of these techniques, including psychoanalysis, including Hatha (physical yoga), including most forms of psychotherapy, including physical exercise, including any number of coaching and other practices. All of those have not been able to produce more than a fourth of one stage of growth, which is rather pathetic. Individuals practicing meditation twice a day for four years show an average of two full stages of growth. It's the only technique that's been demonstrated to grow human beings at adult levels.

The thing is that we needed to add these new discoveries about the other types of intelligences and skills and capacities and dimensions that human beings have that weren't known about when the great meditative traditions were first created. All of them are 2000 years old. We didn't even learn to define a structure of consciousness, which means a particular level of consciousness, until about 100 years ago. That's why we simply don't find in any meditative system the world over, maps of the levels of consciousness as we're talking about them, structures of consciousness in any meditative system the world over. It's just not there.

On the other hand, if we look at Western models of growth and development, we don't find anything about state growth leading to enlightenment and awakening. On the one hand, we're completely lacking an understanding of various levels and how important they are because actually a level determines how you will interpret your state experiences. On the one hand, we have systems, meditative systems, contemplative systems that are brilliant at helping individuals grow through states and we have terrific Western models that help individuals grow through structures or levels. Never in history have these two been put together.

What we have found is that there are other types of practices that make meditation more effective. One of them is "shadow work" because meditation itself doesn't get at the shadow material and in some cases can make it worse. If you combine meditation with shadow work and I'll give you one more quick one -- this is reported by Mike Murphy.

There's a test where a group of meditators were divided into two halves. One half was given meditation plus weight lifting. The other group was given just meditation. Both groups practiced the same overall amount of time, only one group is doing half meditation, half weight lifting. The other group is doing all meditation. The teachers aren't told which half is doing which. At the end of six months to nine months in a year, they grade the students on how well, how advanced they are in meditation. Virtually without exception, the people doing meditation and weight lifting scored higher on the meditation score than people just meditating.

That's what we call cross-training. That's what Integral Life Practice does. If you just right there take meditation, add weight lifting, add shadow work, you're going to get a more effective meditation and a more effective transformation growth. That's one of the things that will

best combine the techniques that we do have even though some of them alone won't show transformation. When combined with others, they all actually accelerate each other. Athletes have known this in cross training for a long time.

Most athletes now, without any exceptions at all, will cross-train. Somebody playing football will also do yoga, swim, lift weights and do field work because it increases their capacity. This cross-training turns out to be really important for helping to increase transformational capacity. Yoga is good for two things. One it's good obviously for stretching the body, but most people forget that yoga, the way it was developed, was part of an eight-step process to unify consciousness.

Unfortunately in the West, it's been reduced to nothing but a physical exercise. I mean, that's fine, but it's just it's a tragic loss of what the practice can actually do. It's part of a series of increasing steps of concentration, up to concentrating and then Samadhi, unitive consciousness. That's almost never ever talked about or used in the standard yoga classes and yoga gyms and so on. That's just unfortunate.

Susannah: Yes, it kind of seems like a disservice to the practice, in some ways.

That being said, there are countless other meditation and contemplation techniques we can pursue. Can you talk about some of the real benefits of using these spiritual technologies to get us into deeper states?

Ken: Certainly, and that's another one of the reasons that truly comprehensive operating systems for human growth and development really haven't existed until just recently. This is a good example. We now have brain mind machines and you can hook the person up to them. By the way, they're relatively inexpensive. Some of the ones that are called binaural beats, can be bought in a simple CD form. They cost no more than a CD.

What we've found is that because every brain state has a corresponding consciousness state -- we saw that with quadrants -- if you get the brain into the corresponding state that goes with a particular spiritual awareness, then the individual hooked up to that brain mind machine and having their brain being put into a particular brain wave pattern, within 10 to 15 minutes will induce the corresponding consciousness state in the individual.

Some of these states, for example, theta states, are very common in dreaming. Of course, dream as you would recall in the traditions. We have waking dreaming, deep formless sleep, witnessing, and non-dual. The dream state has, in the brain, a theta brainwave pattern. It will generally take people a couple of years to learn how to get into a theta brainwave state if they're just using consciousness techniques. But by using a type of binaural beat technology, you can get a person who has never meditated into a theta state in about 15 minutes.

Even harder are delta states. These are of course the states you're in when in deep formless, dreamless sleep. It used to be that researchers thought that the meditative state was an alpha state, which was relaxed waking. Then they thought no, it's theta state, so it got even deeper. Now it more, no, it's delta state. Delta is very, very long slow brainwaves. They're 0.1 cycles per second to 3 - 4 cycles per second. It's at the very low end of the spectrum. It can take five or more years for an individual learn how to get to a delta state.

With binaural beat, it's 15 minutes. Keep in mind that the delta state is now looked up because in the traditions, the delta state is often equated with the witness, with the Turiya. What we were practicing a minute was just pure witnessing and the observing self, and I Am-ness, and the mirror mind. That can take quite a while if you just meditate to learn to do that. But you hook somebody up to a binaural beat machine and again, it's 10-15 minutes and they will have a consciousness state that correlates to the brain state and that brain state correlates to Turiya.

You can get individuals into a very, very profound meditative state using some of those brain mind machines. There are a couple of different types, including ones that use actual electrical current applied to the brain, but binaural beat is probably the most common. We do recommend those. It's still a good idea to do regular meditation, but it's absolutely fine if there are time constraints and other problems, to simply use a binaural beat. There all you do is lie down with your CD or on your mp3, whatever player you have, put the stereo headphones on and simply relax for 30 minutes or so. It will basically get in you in that meditative state for 30 minutes. It can be very, very powerful.

Susannah: Thank you so much Ken. Clearly meditation and contemplation techniques are a unique tool for those of us trying to reach growth stages we wouldn't otherwise be able to achieve. Through applying these spiritual technologies, we can all continue to raise ourselves – and the world – to a higher consciousness, and a brighter future.



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