

Our Innate Wholeness of Being

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The practices of meditation in general, and iRest Yoga Nidra as a specific application of meditation, are designed to help you experience within yourself what's already whole, healthy, and harmonious; what doesn't need changing, and is already and always OK, just as it is; just as you are.¹

Wholeness is our essential nature. But when we don't recognize our basic wholeness, we feel that something's amiss in our life. When we realize our wholeness, we recognize an indestructible resource that allows us to weather every challenge we face in life.

We discover our wholeness through experiencing the simple feeling of *being*, which is a universal *felt-sense*, or non-verbal inner knowing, that we all experience. Being is a quiet background presence that's always with us but that can go unnoticed until it's directly pointed out.

Notice where and how you experience the felt-sense of being in your body. Mindfully and somatically experience your felt-sense of being as you read the following words that others have used to describe their felt-sense of being.

*Peaceful. Calm. Everywhere. Indescribable.
Warm. Undeniable. Nowhere specific. Safe
Heart-centered. Presence. Loving.
Connected. Refuge. Sanctuary. Well-being.*

Five Special Messengers

When you forget your felt-sense of being, you can easily lose touch with your non-separate wholeness. Fortunately, when you lose touch with being, *five special messengers* surface to help you recover your wholeness (See Table 1).² These are natural processes within your body and mind that include your gut feelings, emotions, thoughts, and mental images. Each messenger can arise in either a negative or positive form to guide you back to experiencing your essential wholeness.

¹ This article is adapted from: Miller, Richard. 2015. *The iRest Program for Healing PTSD*. New Harbinger Publications. CA.

² The Śiva Sutras refer to these as *kañchukas*: coverings that inhibit or enable our nondual Essential Nature of Wholeness.

Messenger #1

“I feel contracted and limited” versus “I am spacious and whole”

(Kalā versus Sarva-Kartṛitvam)

When you forget being, you believe you need more space in order to feel whole again. The solution is to ask yourself: “*Where am I when I'm simply being?*” Then, experience your basic feeling of being that reveals your *spacious wholeness*.

When you're simply being, how would you describe your felt-sense of location? Where are you when you're simply being? When I posed these questions during a class, one woman responded, “*As being, I feel myself as an indescribable presence that's everywhere and nowhere in particular.*”

You can't deny the feeling of being. But being doesn't have a distinct location with a defined center or boundary. It's a boundless field of presence. It's everywhere and nowhere specific. So, one description of being is that: *You're an undeniable presence that's spacious, unlimited, and whole.*

Messenger #2

“I feel limited by time” versus “I am timeless and whole.”

(Vidya versus Sarva-Jñātvam)

When you forget being, you believe you need more time in order to feel whole again. The solution is to ask yourself: “*When am I when I'm simply being?*” Then experience your basic feeling of being that reveals your *timeless wholeness*.

When you're simply being what's your relationship to time? When are you when you're simply being? A man in the same class answered these questions with, “*Time? Who cares?*”

Isn't it interesting how, when you're experiencing being, thinking settles down, self-consciousness disappears, and with it your sense of time ceases? Time is irrelevant when you're just being. When you're being, you're outside of past, present, and future, which are concepts that are dependent upon thinking. As you settle into being, thinking and time slow down and may even stop. So, another description of yourself as being is that: *You're an undeniable presence that's timeless and whole.*

Messenger #3

“I feel that I’m lacking and flawed” versus “I am harmonious, perfect and whole.”

(*Rāga versus Pūrṇatvam vairāgya*)

When you forget being, you believe you’re lacking and need to acquire something in order to feel whole again. The solution is to ask yourself: “How am I when I’m simply being?” Then experience your basic feeling of being that reveals your *perfect wholeness*.

When you’re just being, is there anything that you need, that will make you any better or more perfect than you already are, as being? How are you when you’re simply being? People everywhere respond similarly to this question. They report that when they’re absorbed in being, they don’t feel that they (as being) are lacking or flawed. They feel perfect just as they are as being. When you’re simply being can you feel the harmony and perfection of being, just as it is, just as you are?

Can you feel how trying to acquire something can take you away from the feeling of being? So, another description of yourself as being is that: *You’re beyond need and beyond feeling either flawed or lacking. You are harmonious and perfect wholeness just as you are.*

Messenger #4

“I feel confused and disconnected” versus “I am connected and whole.”

(*Kāla versus Nityatvam*)

When you forget being, you feel confused and disconnected. You believe there’s something you must understand in order to feel whole again. The solution is to ask yourself: “What am I when I’m simply being?” Then experience your basic feeling of being that reveals your *connected wholeness*.

When you’re just being, is there anything you need to know that would make you any more connected than you already are as being? What are you when you’re simply being? One person replied, “*I don’t need to know anything to know being. I’ve known this feeling all my life. I’d just forgotten it in the midst of my pain.*”

Whenever I open up a great book, whether it’s the *Bible*, *Koran*, *Bhagavad Gita*, or *Jonathan Livingston Seagull*, the message is the same: “*Just be, and know who and what you truly are.*” You don’t need extra knowledge to recognize being. In fact, seeking knowledge takes you away from being. So another description of yourself as being is that:

You’re an undeniable presence and complete wholeness, just as you are.

Messenger #5

“I feel incomplete” versus “I am whole.”

(*Niyati versus Vyāpakatvam*)

When you forget being, you believe there’s something you need to do in order to feel complete and whole again. The solution is to ask yourself: “Who am I when I’m simply being?” Then experience your basic feeling of being that reveals your *complete wholeness*.

When you’re just being, is there anything you need to do that by doing it would make you any more complete than you already are as being? Who are you when you’re simply being? After hearing these questions, most people understand that they don’t need to do anything special to be. They know that they can be at anytime, anywhere. And they feel how being is a powerful source of well-being. Can you feel how being doesn’t need any particular doing to be what and how it is? It’s complete and whole just as it is.

With all sincerity, a woman in a shelter said, “*This practice with the five messengers has showed me my real home. Now I can deal with my homelessness.*” So, another description of yourself as being is that it’s your true home. As being: *You’re an undeniable presence that’s complete and whole just as you are. You need to do nothing in order to be your complete wholeness.*

Human and Whole

These five messengers are the product of your genetic inheritance over millions of years of bio-engineering. Nature has wired these messengers into your nervous system so that you can experience yourself as a unique individual who is not separate from the wholeness of life. These messengers help you recognize that every sensation, emotion, and thought you experience—every fear, anxiety, anger, hurt, shame, depression, or delight that you feel—is a messenger that can reveal your deepest psychological and spiritual health, harmony, and wholeness.

Being and wholeness are basic elements of your being human. Being enables you to discover the wholeness that is your birthright. You discover that, as a human being, you’re:

- *Spacious*, even as your need for affirming healthy boundaries continues

- *Timeless*, even as your psychological need for time continues
- *Perfect*, even as your personal desires continue to arise
- *Connected*, even as your need to obtain objective knowledge and social connections continue
- *Complete*, even as your need for doing continues

Experiencing your basic being and wholeness doesn't depend on changing yourself. Being is already and always spacious, timeless, perfect, connected, and complete. At your core, you're already and always healthy and whole. Experiencing being throughout the day helps you stay connected to yourself, and to your wholeness. The practice reconnects you to yourself and restores your ability to feel connected to others and the world. Through being, you learn to experience yourself as a unique and separate individual who is also not separate from all of life.

Forgetting and Remembering

I've shown you how these five special messengers can reveal your basic being and wholeness. Now, allow me to show you how you forget being and wholeness. The following practice demonstrates how your sense of being can get overpowered, causing you to forget your wholeness. The practice also shows you how to maintain your sense of wholeness.

Take a moment, now, to enjoy the feeling of just being. Welcome and enjoy the felt-sense of spacious timelessness that's present as you're just being, and the felt-sense of feeling perfect, connected, complete, and whole, and the felt-sense of well-being, harmony, and peace that are present as you're simply being.

Now, imagine that you experience a challenging life event. Someone angrily interacts with you. You fall and injure yourself. Or something goes wrong at home, work, or on the street. In this moment you feel contracted and upset. You begin to feel that something's wrong and lose touch with your inner sense of being and wholeness.

Then, suppose that before you're able to recover from this event, life knocks you down again. And, as you're getting up it knocks you down again.

Overwhelmed by the intensity of your experience you lose touch with your inner sense of being and

wholeness. Your ego gets the message that, "*Something's wrong*" and translates it to you as, "*Something's wrong with me. There's something I need to do or know so I can feel whole again.*"

Imagine that you try all sorts of things to feel better, but you continue to feel contracted and confused. Then the thought comes, "*Maybe there's something I need to know.*" So, you start reading books and seeking advice. When this fails, you continue to feel confused and disconnected. Then the thought comes, "*Maybe there's something I need to acquire to recover my inner peace.*" But this fails and you move even farther away from your sense of wholeness. Then the thought appears: "*If only I could have more time and space I could figure this all out.*" When this fails, you feel helpless, lacking, confused, and contracted; that you've run out of time in your ability to heal yourself.

As you identify with these feelings, you experience yourself as broken, separate, isolated, confused, and powerless in your failures to experience the well-being that you once knew. You're exhausted from looking everywhere for healing and not finding it anywhere.

Then, one day, shattered and weary, you collapse into your chair. Having tried everything, you give up and unexpectedly fall into the experience of simply being. In this moment of being, your judging mind slows down. Your sense of wholeness breaks through, and you experience the felt-sense of being within yourself that is spacious, timeless, perfect, connected, and whole just as it is, just as you really are as your essential wholeness of being.

You find yourself "home" again. Resting as being and experiencing your wholeness, you reconnect to your sense of peace and harmony. Now you remember. Resting here, you feel powerful again as your ego lets go of identifying with the thought, "*Something's wrong with me.*" As you remember your felt-sense of being, you take time to rest—as being—feeling your underlying wholeness. With this feeling of wholeness, you know that you can now turn your attention to healing what's wrong from the place within yourself that's perfectly right.

So, take a few moments now to fully relax into being. When you feel refreshed, maintain your felt-sense of being and wholeness as you move back into your daily life.

Being Home

The tools of iRest meditation help you come home to your self. They teach you how to welcome the ‘what is’ of each moment. The practice of welcoming empowers you to experience your natural state of being and wholeness. Trying to fix and change what’s wrong without first experiencing being and wholeness is like rearranging the furniture on the Titanic. You might look and feel better on the surface, but you’ll continue to suffer. Your ship is still going down! Welcoming and experiencing the five special messengers of being help you awaken from your slumber of separation, pain, and confusion. These messengers are here to help you recover and experience your natural state of interconnected wholeness.

At first, you may think this approach is too simple. Everyone I’ve worked with says the same thing when they recognize the healing power of being. One veteran said, “It’s so simple. Why didn’t they

give us this sooner? I wish I’d gotten this program when I first started my journey of healing.”

Conditioning and habitual ways of living can cloud your ability to recognize being. The practices of iRest are designed to help you gain access to those doorways and overcome your conditioning, habits, and symptoms. These practices support you to remember being in the midst of your daily life, while eating, talking, playing, working, and even sleeping. Being and doing exist at the same time. But conditioning can make your experience of being and wholeness feel nonexistent. When you lose touch with being, you lose touch with other essential aspects of yourself such as love, kindness, compassion, joy, and peace. The practices of iRest enable these aspects to blossom again, along with your underlying wholeness, as natural expressions of your being human. Welcome home.

Table 1.

Messenger #1		
Limited	Self-Inquiry Question	Spacious
“I feel contracted and limited.”	“Where am I”	“I feel spacious and whole.”

When we forget our basic being, we believe we need more space to feel whole again. The solution is to inquire: *Where am I when I’m simply being?* Then, experience the basic feeling of being that reveals our *spacious wholeness*.

Messenger #2		
Time-Bound	Self-Inquiry Question	Timeless
“I feel limited by time.”	“When am I”	“I feel timeless and whole.”

When we forget our basic being, we believe we need more time to feel whole again. The solution is to inquire: *When am I when I’m simply being?* Then experience the basic feeling of being that reveals our *timeless wholeness*.

Messenger #3		
Lacking and Flawed	Self-Inquiry Question	Perfect
“I feel I’m lacking and flawed.”	“What am I”	“I feel perfect and whole.”

When we forget our basic being, we believe we’re lacking and need to acquire something to feel whole again. The solution is to inquire: *How am I when I’m simply being?* Then experience the basic feeling of being that reveals our *perfect wholeness*.

Messenger #4		
Disconnected	Self-Inquiry Question	Connected
“I feel confused, disconnected.”	“Why am I”	“I feel connected and whole.”

When we forget our basic being, we feel confused and disconnected. We believe there’s something we must understand to feel whole again. The solution is to inquire: *What am I when I’m simply being?* Then experience the basic feeling of being that reveals our *connected wholeness*.

Messenger #5		
Incomplete	Self-Inquiry Question	Complete
“I feel incomplete.”	“Who am I”	“I feel whole.”

When we forget our basic being, we believe there’s something we need to do to feel complete and whole again. The solution is to inquire: *Who am I when I’m simply being?* Then experience the basic feeling of being that reveals our *complete wholeness*.