

# Tap into a sense of unchanging well-being

Meditating on what it means to just *be* can help you feel healthy and whole.

By Richard Miller, PhD

**LIFE, WITH ALL ITS UPS AND DOWNS,** can distract you from experiencing the joy of simply being—a state of body and mind in which you feel whole, healthy, grounded, and deeply connected to yourself and everything in the cosmos, without the need to fix, change, or heal anything. Meditation is designed to help you achieve this state—to look past distractions, and experience what already is and always will be harmonious and peaceful about yourself. In other words, we practice meditation not to become whole, but to connect to our existing wholeness. When you're out of touch with this inner peace, you'll always feel like something's amiss. But when you're in touch with it, you can feel within yourself a constant state of well-being and equanimity.

## Being human

Wholeness is your birthright. You are innately more than a limited individual person; instead, you are spacious, even as you affirm healthy boundaries with yourself and others. And you're beyond the limits of thought and time, even as time and space continue. As wholeness, you can feel complete, even as your desire to obtain knowledge and form social relationships continues. Simply put, it is possible to feel fulfilled, even as you strive to do more.

With a regular meditation practice, you can learn to call upon this feeling amidst your daily life—while eating, talking, playing, and working. Knowing and feeling your innate wholeness, especially in the face of day-to-day tasks, is a doorway to true health and well-being. And when you are in touch with your wholeness, other innate aspects of yourself, such as love, kindness, compassion, joy, and peace, naturally arise.

## How to just be

So, how do you tap into these feelings? The first step is to affirm your intention to do so. The second step is to glimpse the surprisingly accessible universal life force that animates every atom, molecule, and cell throughout your body and the cosmos. (For more, see my

*continued on page 34*

## MEDITATION

continued from page 32

Meditation column in the June issue: No. 283, page 38.) The third step is to practice and nourish the feeling of simply being.

Being is the feeling of presence you experience when you're momentarily still, or when you pause between two thoughts, two breaths, or two actions. It's the wonderful feeling you experience after you've finished a task, before moving on to your next task, or when you sit back and take a timeout to rest, breathe, and experience the delight of having nothing to do. It is when you bask in a deep inner sigh of "Ahhh...." You can use the following two practices to access this feeling.

### PRACTICE 1: THE FEELING OF BEING

Take a moment to relax your jaw, eyes, shoulders, arms and hands, torso, hips, and legs and feet. Then rest your attention on the sensations created by the gentle expansion and release of your belly as breath comes into and flows out of your body.

As you're resting here, between two thoughts or two breaths, notice where and

how you experience the sensation of being. You may experience being as an internal feeling of warmth, or presence in your belly, heart, or other parts of your body. Keep your attention on these sensations as you read the following terms commonly used to describe being. Do any of these words describe your experience?

*Peaceful... calm... loving... secure... heart-centered... easeful... grounded... connected... spacious... well-being....*

Write down words that best describe your own sense of being.

Being is natural to all of us, yet most people never take the time to simply experience the presence and aliveness of being. Taking this time opens a doorway for you to feel unchanging inner peace, calm, equanimity, groundedness, security, joy, compassion, and love. This is because when you're present, negative thoughts and feelings turn off.

### PRACTICE 2: GO DEEPER

There are five special inquiries that you can ask at the beginning of every medita-

tion to help deepen your experience of well-being. These inquiries can reveal your deepest psychological and spiritual health, harmony, and wholeness. Take time to fully experience each inquiry before moving on to the next.

Find a comfortable position, either lying down or sitting. Allow your senses to perceive the sights and sounds of your surroundings, the touch of air on your skin, and the sensations where your body makes contact with the surface upon which you're resting. Then, feel your body as a field of vibrant energy, while enjoying simply being.

**First Inquiry:** *As being, how do you describe where being is located? As being, do you have a distinct center or physical boundary? See if you can feel present in your physical body, yet also spacious and unbounded at the same time.*

**Second Inquiry:** *As being, how do you describe your experience of time? Notice that when you're simply being, your thinking slows down. As thinking slows and even momentarily stops, you may feel yourself*

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momentarily outside of time, without a past, present, or future.

**Third Inquiry:** *When you are fully present, is there anything that will make you any better than you already are?* Notice how, when you are simply being, you're perfect just as you are. Feel how your core being doesn't need or want anything, even as your body and mind crave things.

**Fourth Inquiry:** *Is this feeling of being unfamiliar, or is it something you've always known?* Notice how just being is a familiar feeling that you've always known, although you may have ignored it until now.

**Fifth Inquiry:** *As being, is there anything that would make you more complete than you already are?* As you are able to rest, remaining undistracted for periods of time, it's possible to feel complete and whole, just as you are. It may take a bit of practice, but with time these innate feelings can surface for us all.

After exploring these five inquiries, take a few more moments to simply rest as being. Experience yourself as spacious, beyond time, perfect, connected, and complete—just as you

are. Then, when you're ready, affirm your intention to continue experiencing this innate feeling of well-being, even as you now go about your daily life. ☯

Richard Miller, PhD, is the founding president of the Integrative Restoration Institute ([irest.us](http://irest.us)), co-founder of the International Association of Yoga Therapists, and author of *iRest Meditation* and *Yoga Nidra*. This is his third in a series of 10 columns designed to help you create a lasting and impactful meditation practice.



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