



Five Inquiries of Being

Non-separate 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 unchanging resource that allows us to weather every challenge we face in life.

We discover 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, recognized, and experienced. Notice where and how you experience the felt-sense of being in your body. Experience your felt-sense of being as you read the following words that others have used to describe their felt-sense of being.

Indescribable. Undeniable. Peaceful. Calm. Everywhere. Nowhere specific. Warm. 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. They're 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.

Messenger #1: "I feel contracted and limited" versus "I feel spacious and whole."

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 and undeniable 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 feel timeless and whole."

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 at the same homeless shelter 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 feel perfect and whole."

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 to make you any better or more perfect than you already are as being? How are you when you're simply being? Everyone responds similarly to this question. They all say 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 perfection of being, just as it is? 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 feeling flawed or lacking. You're perfect wholeness just as you are.*

Messenger #4: "I feel confused and disconnected" versus "I feel connected and whole."

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 can take 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 feel whole."

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 any time, 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 our genetic inheritance over millions of years of bioengineering. Nature has wired these messengers into our nervous system so that we can experience ourselves as unique individuals who are not separate from the wholeness of life. These messengers help us recognize that every sensation, emotion, and thought we experience—every fear, anxiety, anger, hurt, shame, depression, or delight that we feel—is a messenger that can reveal our wholeness.

Being and wholeness are basic elements of our being human. Being enables us to discover the wholeness that is our birthright. As a human being, we're:

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

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

Forgetting and Remembering

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

Take a moment 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.