



BECOMING WHOLE

HEART
MEDITATIONS

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PART 1

MEDITATIONS TO CONNECT TO THE HEART

The heart is the lotus. Every sense is just the opening of the lotus, the petals of the lotus. Try to relate your senses to the heart first. Secondly, always think that every sense goes deep down into the heart and becomes absorbed in it. When these two things become established, only then will your senses begin to help you. They will lead you to the heart, and your heart will become a lotus. — OSHO



For 15 years, I ran a three-day group process called Opening to the Heart. I used the following meditations. It's good to read them all, but, while some can be practised as you read the chapter, others will be more effective if you allow separate time to read and go through the meditation. Each meditation brought a great deal of heart opening to each person who has used them.

The most important action in this meditation sequence is to begin to connect all our senses — those perception centres we generally use to connect to the outer world — to the heart. This is my recommended sequence for all the meditations, so you receive the maximum benefit — they build on each other.



CONNECTING THE SENSES TO THE HEART

The senses — sight, sound, touch, taste and smell — are available to us to greater or lesser degrees. We all have a primary sense through which we perceive the outer world. Some of us are more visual, some are mainly kinaesthetic in that we are aware of physical sensations, touching and sensing, others tend to be more aware of what they hear. Taste and smell are generally secondary senses.

A key to being able to develop the senses to perceive the inner world is to not force anything. Start with what is easy and, like any other practice, you'll get more skilful. Opening our hearts isn't supposed to be hard work. It is all about relaxing.

The following meditations will mainly cover linking the heart to listening, looking and feeling. One each covers the sense of smell and taste.

When you start experimenting, some meditations will work for you and some won't. Pick the ones that suit you.

DOING THE MEDITATIONS: FIND SPACE AND TIME

To begin, find a place where you can relax and give yourself the time to truly enter the meditation. Notice if, when you begin, you're making an effort, pushing or forcing some connection to come. If you are, take a deep breath and consciously relax as much as possible. The more you practise these meditations the more finely tuned your senses will become. Remember a saying I was given at the ashram: 'Easy is right and right is easy'. That is part of the wisdom of the heart.

The following two meditations are about shifting from the head to the heart to prepare you to connect the senses to the heart. Read the instruction for each meditation and then, give it a go.



SIGHING OR YAWNING: SHIFT WORRIES

This meditation is very helpful to shift any worries of the mind. We will use something we all know how to do — a sigh.

Imagine yourself at the end of a long day, a long work project. Take a few deep breaths and on the out breath let out the sound 'Aah'. Allow any stress or tension you carry to be released on the out breath.

The more you relax, the more you are in your heart. When you are totally relaxed, you are in the core of your heart.

You can also do this meditation using a **yawn**. Yawning opens your heart, brings oxygen into the body and is a great meditation to relax your mind. Take a note of how you feel by just breathing a little more, sighing and yawning. Has it changed the feeling in your physical body?



TAKE OFF THE HEAD: BECOME PLAYFUL

This next meditation uses the playful creative part in us that can imagine anything — just as we would have when we were playing as kids. We could fly to the moon; we were princesses or warriors. It's that same playfulness and creativity that we use to take off the head.

Imagine your head is fixed to your physical body in some way you can identify. It might be a mechanism like a zip or a button which can be undone. In a moment you will take your head off.

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Find the mechanism and undo the buttons, open the zip, make sounds... Use your hands and play with this. Make it as real as possible.

Keep loosening your head off. Use your hands and make sure it's possible — you are able to take your head off.

Keep preparing, as you'll use your physical hands to take your head off. Be careful, you are dealing with a very precious object.

On the count of three you will gently take your head off, lift it off and hold it in front of you.

What is your first impression when your head is off?

What's happening to your heart right now?

What do you feel? Cool? Space? Relief? Free?

Visualise and feel yourself without your head. Even imagine walking without your head.

Start breathing into the heart space.

What is it like with your heart at the centre, not the head? Allow yourself to feel whatever you are feeling right now. Confusion? Feel like giggling?

What could it be like if life was not ruled by the head? What could it be like when the heart becomes the centre?



LISTEN FROM THE HEART — IN PARTNERS

Working with a partner, each of you can imagine you are sitting there without your head. The focus of your attention is on the heart.

Opening your heart is about feeling acceptance.

If you are in your head, you're concerned with judgment and division. When we say something is good, something is bad, that is a judgment and comes from the head.

The heart, in its core, accepts everything about ourselves. Opening into the heart is learning to embrace and open into our wholeness, to hold the parts of us that we feel aren't okay with gentle love and kindness.

STEP 1

Imagine your ears are fixed on your chest; it might be one huge ear or two ears on either side of your chest. When you listen straight from your heart, you're by-passing the judgmental, censoring mind.

When you listen in this way, you are not commenting and there's no feedback; there's just listening. This simple technique is powerful and can resolve lots of relationship issues. If there is tension in your primary relationship or in a friendship, this meditation is an effective way to overcome struggles.

Choose who is going to listen first and who is going to talk first.

If you're the one listening, sit back, rest in your heart space. Be silent and present and interested. You don't have to sort anything out or help.

If you're the one sharing, allow five minutes to share anything that is important to you right now. Feel what it is like when your partner truly listens.

Your eyes can be open or closed. After five minutes, swap over without talking about what has been shared.

STEP 2

You'll do another series of five minutes each again. This time, experiment and take a bit of a risk. When you are the one talking, talk about something you usually don't like to talk about, something for which you expect to be rejected or judged. You could, for example, talk about anger or something in a relationship that annoys you.

With your five minutes try to find where you could stretch your old boundaries of safety and comfort?

Without commenting or talking about what has been shared, switch over again.

When you are done, thank each other and talk about the experience.

How was it to be listened to from the heart?

How was it to listen from the heart compared to listening from the head?



GROUNDING OF THE HEART

The heart chakra is associated with the air element. As that might suggest, air can be a bit floaty or spaced out. So, there's a danger that when you begin to open your heart, you can start feeling ungrounded.

While it's wonderful to open your heart, even feel blissful, spacious, free as a bird, it's not useful if you have to do something. Even something as simple as crossing a street and not being aware of the traffic. You could blissfully cross the street without looking and have an accident.

With this meditation, you're allowing the heart to get roots down into the earth. To do that we need to move the physical body.

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STEP 1

To begin, stand, close your eyes and bring your awareness down into your feet. Sense them on the ground, feel the contact of your feet with the floor.

Let your attention and your in breath flow all the way down to your feet. Gently start moving your feet in any way that feels right to you. Imagine the soles of your feet softening, relaxing, opening to contact with the ground.

STEP 2

You can deepen the experience by imagining roots coming out of your feet the same way flowers and trees grow roots into the earth. You might even feel gravity pulling you down. As you're not in outer space, where there's no gravity, let yourself feel the force of gravity. Feel the pull of the earth that keeps us connected to it.

STEP 3

Play a piece of music for this part.

Now, become aware of your legs. All the way up to your hips. Begin to move in any way that feels right to you, becoming more aware of your foundation; of your feet and legs that carry you every day. Begin to dance but be led by your legs and feet instead of your head. Don't let the head tell you how you should be moving.

Feel your feet and legs and let them move the way they want to.



OPEN INTO FEELINGS

The next meditation is a breath meditation using simple and effortless breathing. It opens your heart more to feelings — the water element. It can be done with soft relaxing music that touches your heart.

You will need your towel or a yoga mat and a pillow. Create a space in the room where you can lie down. Recommended length 10 to 20 minutes.

*Imagine lying down with all your awareness in your chest.
You are not aware of or using your head. If it helps you,
bring one hand to your chest to direct awareness into the
heart.*

*As you breathe in consciously, feel the movement of your
breath, the physical movement. Feel the heart expanding on
the in breath and falling deeper into the centre, on the out
breath. Whatever arises in that space, in that awareness, is
perfect. There is no goal, no specific outcome. Anything you
are feeling, is what you are meant to be feeling.*

*On each in breath give yourself permission to feel, not what
you should be feeling, but what you are feeling.*

*If you just relax, that is perfect. If an emotion comes up,
perfect. Observe it and let it go. If you see any images,
perfect. Notice them and let them go. This is about being
present to yourself.*

*Give yourself this gift, to just be with yourself with what is
real and true for you.*

At the end of your 20 minutes, simply rest in the centre of your heart and notice whether there's spaciousness or peace. Whatever beautiful quality might be there.



LOOK AS A WHOLE

Normally, when we look at something, a person, an event or object, we perform a collection exercise — try to get as many details about the item, as possible. When we look from the heart or look as a whole we're doing a different form of information gathering.

I recommend practising this meditation using a bunch of flowers.

STEP 1

Choose one flower and study it. Look at individual leaves, take in the colour, the shape, notice as many details as possible.

STEP 2

Now close your eyes and when you open them again, look at this bunch of flowers as a whole — this way of looking can feel unfamiliar in the beginning. Relax your eyes this time and don't focus on any specific detail. It helps to consciously relax all the muscles around your eyes as much as possible. So, this time, you'll be using peripheral vision in which you take all the details in simultaneously.

STEP 3

Now, become curious about what it feels like when you switch to this way of looking — not focusing, staring or analysing. Close your eyes again and sense the difference. Try to shift back and forth a few times. What happens in your body? What is happening inside you? Are you relaxing? Is your breath deepening?

With the first — focused — way of looking, if we consider energy flow, the energy is coming out of our eyes. The looking is directed at the flower. It is an active looking.

The second way — peripheral — is more receptive where the eyes are like windows letting energy come in. Softening the gaze can have a softening effect on the body, it invites expansion and relaxation. This way of looking can be very soothing and allow you to connect more with yourself. And it's called **looking from the heart**.

When you focus on something — when you study or read for a long time — you can feel contracted and tired. Looking from the heart has the opposite effect. It is relaxing and nourishing. It helps you to be more connected to yourself.



LOOK AS A WHOLE WITH A PARTNER

Sit opposite your partner and, to start, keep your eyes closed.

When you open your eyes, look at your partner as a whole like you learnt before with a flower, eyes relaxed, softly gazing.

When you start straining, close your eyes, reconnect and open them again when ready.

Support yourself with your breath. A deeper slower breath can help with the relaxation.

If feelings come up, let them be there. Whether it feels good or strange, allow it. You are practising something new. This is a different way of looking at another. Your eyes are like windows.



LET A FLOWER LOOK AT YOU

This next meditation has three steps and builds on the last meditation: Look as a whole with a partner.

STEP 1

Find any flower and hold it in your hands. Look at the details of the flower.

STEP 2

Look at the flower as a whole.

STEP 3

Imagine the flower is looking at you.

Trust whatever you are experiencing. Ask the rational mind to take a break. Let the flower look back at you. You might be surprised how strongly this can affect you. Imagine you are a child innocently looking at the flower and allowing the flower to connect with you.

How does that feel? What are you experiencing? You might even hear the flower tell you something. If that happens, trust it! Allow yourself to hear it.



HEART FLOWER MEDITATION

This next meditation is another expansion to the two previous meditations.

*Imagine there is a flower growing in the centre of your heart.
If there is, what might it look like?*

*Allow yourself to see the flower in the centre of your heart
with the playfulness of a child. What colour is it? What
shape? Is there just the one flower or many of its kind?
Would the flower have any fragrance or not?*

*When you open your eyes again, have the flower you've been
looking at, look back at you. Let it see your heart flower. If
your heart flower could feel, what would it be feeling?*

LOOK WITH LOVING AND TENDER EYES

I recommend, that in the beginning, you practise this meditation with another person. It calls for you to find compassion and, doing it on your own to start with, can be difficult — we tend to be self-critical. Probably our harshest critics. With another person present, it will be easier to find the compassion for them first. This way you have an experience of feeling the compassion.

Sit quietly and allow your eyes to become soft. After a short moment, open your eyes and look at your partner with tender, loving, compassionate eyes. If you lose the feeling, close your eyes again, open them and try again. Relax your breathing.

Let your eyes be directly connected with the best of your heart. Give yourself permission to look in this way. If that opens your heart and you feel love, let it happen. As easy as it sounds, it can be quite strong.

When you are done, share with each other how this has been. Was it unfamiliar, strange? Or was it familiar, easy? What feelings emerged from the looking?

TURN YOUR LOVING AND TENDER EYES ON YOURSELF

Once you have practised this meditation with somebody else, start visualising looking at yourself in this way. I've practised this meditation often, for many years, and I love its healing power. I regularly teach it to clients because I know how well it works.



BREATHE IN YOUR FAVOURITE FRAGRANCE

Imagine you're breathing in your favourite fragrance. If you have a real fragrance available, use that.

Sense what's happening in your body, when you breathe in the fragrance you like. Let it travel straight to your heart. When we love something, it naturally opens the heart.



ENJOY TASTE

The simplest meditation to connect the sense of taste to the heart is becoming fully present to your favourite meal or drink while you're resting in your heart.



THE GARDEN OF YOUR HEART

Allow yourself to see your heart flower again.

*Can you remember when you looked at a flower and you let
the flower look back at you?*

*Remember that feeling and imagine you can look at your
heart flower right now. See that heart flower looking back
at you with love, gentleness and compassion. Imagine that
flower growing in the garden of your heart. Sense or see
not only this flower but the bigger, beautiful garden of your
heart.*

*Allow your in breath to touch the centre of your heart. Let
yourself be in the garden of your heart — the sacred inner
space that never rejects any part of you.*

This excerpt is taken from the full Heart Meditations Booklet that is a companion to *Becoming Whole*.

The full Heart Meditations Booklet is available as a free gift to purchasers of *Becoming Whole: The Art of Inner Transformation*, available at www.inneralchemy.de/becoming-whole-book or through your favourite book retailer.

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