

In this class, you will learn how to cultivate an inner resource, an internal experience of well-being. Connecting with your inner resource is an essential part of your iRest practice because it creates a transition between whatever is happening in your outside life and the practice. Opening every practice by connecting with an inner resource cultivates a sense of internal safety or easefulness—a knowing that you are secure so you can be set free to explore what is present during the meditation. An inner resource also provides a safe haven that you can return to at any time both during the iRest practice and in daily life if you start to feel upset or out of balance. The more you define, grow, and expand your inner resource in your life, the more it will help anchor you to a sense of well-being during those inevitable moments in life when times get tough.


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## Benefits of Developing an Inner Resource

- Thankfully, most of us are not living in immediate danger. That said, we all have fears that cause very real reactions in the body and mind. Every day holds stressors that may cause fear, insecurity, anxiety, and tension. It's important to look at what may trigger us to fall away from a feeling of well-being so we can directly address how to use our inner resource to bring us back.
- Triggers that cause you to lose your peace might include hearing a siren while driving, receiving a call from the doctor with your test results, and even watching the news. Behind each of these triggers is an underlying fear. These fears can show up in our emotions, beliefs, and day-to-day thought patterns. Think about all of the fears that shape our reality—fear of experiencing a challenging emotion, fear of failure, fear of judgement, fear of betrayal, fear of being seen as our

true selves. All of these fears can take us away from a sense of well-being.

- There are biochemical reasons why certain things trigger a fear response in our bodies and minds. Fears are born from past experiences that are stored as memories in the brain. Our brains have evolved over thousands of years to scan for potential threats. Once we've experienced something that threatens our sense of well-being in any way, such as a car accident or a challenging work experience, that experience creates an impression in the brain.
- When we find ourselves in a similar situation, that impression, when triggered, sounds an alarm in our system that alerts us to the presence of potential threats. A cascade of feelings, emotions, thoughts, and beliefs unfold. This response is a natural part of how the brain functions; it is how we have evolved and survived as a species.
- Yet, despite the evolutionary value of this response, we do need to recognize a potential pitfall. The impressions created in our brains over time shape our current experience of reality. And when we are living from a place of fear instead of a place of well-being, it can affect our sense of self-worth, confidence, motivation, and ability to take action in the world. These impressions kick us out of our sense of well-being and make us feel insecure—even threatened.
- Living from a fear-based paradigm can leave us shut down from our body, our emotions, the people in our lives, and the world around us. Living from a place of fear causes us to miss opportunities—and even turn and run in the opposite direction of what we truly want in life.



According to a University of Cincinnati study in which participants wrote down their fears over an extended period of time, about 85 percent of their fears never ended up coming true. And for the 15 percent of fears that did come true, researchers found that 79 percent of the participants were able to handle the fear better than expected or learned something from the experience of the fear coming to fruition.

- This happens all the time when people avoid asking for a promotion or don't let that special person know how they feel. These situations require us to be vulnerable and to step into the ring with things that may make us feel uncomfortable. However, it's hard for us to step into the ring when we aren't feeling a sense of well-being. This is why there is benefit to developing an inner resource.
- Just as feeling unsafe is in many ways learned over time through our varied experiences, learning to feel safe comes from an internal experience that is practiced over time. Our experience of well-being can be external, such as not being in harm's way or always having enough money to pay your bills, but crucially, it can also be internal, such as having positive thoughts and affirmations or an inner resource that helps cultivate feelings of safety or relaxation at a moment's notice.
- There are tools we can use to empower ourselves—tools that help us access an internal place of safety and well-being

that is not dependent on the outside world. We can actually create a sense of security and easefulness within ourselves—from a source that’s always accessible, always present.

- The benefits of accessing this inner resource are immense. When we feel safe and secure in life, we’re able to be creative, inspired, energized, and much more alive. We live life closer to a full expression of our true selves. A solid sense of well-being allows us to stay connected to what is real and true in our lives. Being deeply connected to our inner resource helps us observe when we go away from our inner truth. It makes us more likely to stay peaceful and happy, even in the midst of adversity.

## Establishing Your Inner Resource

- Before beginning your iRest practice, it’s important to establish an inner resource—a haven of inner peace, safety, stillness, and serenity. It’s a felt sense of well-being—a multilevel, multisensorial experience deeply rooted in the body.
- For some people, just hearing the words “Tap into an inner resource, an internal experience of well-being” will naturally evoke a feeling of easefulness throughout the body and mind. However, if that experience of inner resource does not arise naturally for you, it may be helpful to think about a real or imaginary place that evokes a feeling of well-being. This can be a place in nature, a favorite childhood place, or perhaps a place in your home where you feel secure and peaceful.
- Your inner resource can also be accompanied by people or animals—perhaps a spiritual figure you connect with, a beloved family member, or a favorite pet. This place can also include objects you love, such as a favorite stuffed animal,

picture, or sacred object. Other people prefer an imaginary inner resource, such as floating on a cloud or being seated in the heart of God.

- Honor what arises for you and know that what feels safe to you may evoke the opposite response in someone else, and that's perfectly okay. No one can tell you where or how you feel a sense of well-being.
- Once you've established your inner resource, it's important to feel it as a heartfelt, embodied experience. Open up your five senses—notice any sounds, smells, tastes, images, or textures. Use as many sensory modalities as possible when assembling this inner sense of well-being. This makes each sense a tool you can use to connect with your inner resource at a moment's notice. What your inner resource looks like, smells like, tastes like, sounds like, and feels like is completely up to you; what's important is that when you focus on your inner resource, it evokes the feeling of being secure and at ease throughout your body and mind.
- As you access your inner resource, pay close attention to the psychological and emotional sensations that are present. Beyond the five senses, connecting with your inner resource can also be accompanied by feelings of peace, love, serenity, and safety. As you spend more time developing your inner resource, it evolves from being something specific into a general sense of being or well-being. Images may fade and get replaced with an abstract feeling of peace, relaxation, warmth, and ease.
- Over time, your inner resource may shift and change. Avoid locking onto a specific place or image with the intent that the visualization will be your inner resource forever. Instead, allow your inner resource to shift and change naturally, as

you become accustomed to resting in a heartfelt sense of well-being.

- ◉ Additionally, as time passes, you may find that you don't need any imagery or memories to evoke this feeling of well-being. It is often said that at first, you remember your inner resource, and then eventually, it remembers you.
- ◉ Establishing an inner resource becomes particularly important when using iRest Yoga Nidra to heal from traumatic situations or events that have left you with unresolved beliefs, emotions, and memories. Your inner resource is a powerful tool for moving through the healing process.
- ◉ It can take a long time to cultivate your inner resource. For some people, imagining and sensorially experiencing something that provides a felt sense of well-being is unfamiliar. In that case, explore different options for cultivating your inner resource. This experience may start by just feeling okay, and then perhaps easeful, and then maybe secure—and maybe, eventually, a whole-bodied experience of well-being.

It is said that wellness can be measured by the space between our contradictions. Connecting with your personal core values can help evoke an experience of well-being by helping you focus on what is most important to you.

- ◉ An alternative to focusing on a specific image may include feeling into a general sense of well-being or into qualities about yourself that make you feel well and provide you a sense of safety. For example, you may want to sit with your core values, which may include times when you have been

trustworthy, patient, compassionate, or truthful, and let that connect you with a sense of well-being.

- As you establish your inner resource and develop it over time, it's important to remember that your inner resource is not an escape. It shouldn't be used to prevent yourself from feeling or experiencing something within your life. Instead, your inner resource is a means of coming back to a feeling of peace that is always within you. When you return to this peace, you return to security, safety, and groundedness, where you can experience everything in life, just as it is, without it disturbing your peace.

## Using Your Inner Resource during iRest

- It's important to take time at the beginning of every iRest Yoga Nidra practice to recall and nourish your inner resource so you can evoke it at a moment's notice. Your inner resource should be vivid enough that it can immediately encounter and neutralize even the strongest reaction or emotion you may experience during an iRest practice.
- If during a practice you begin to feel overwhelmed by an emotion, memory, or belief that's arising in your awareness, you can immediately return to your inner resource and rest there until you've gained a sense of security, confidence, and safety. Once you feel secure and grounded, you can then return to the practice and continue with whatever is arising.
- You will also discover while practicing iRest that the inner resource is used at the beginning and end of the practice as a transition into and out of meditation. Peace can be hard to access in the midst of ever-changing circumstances, some of which are less than peaceful. Our inner resource provides the

bridge between accessing the ever-present peace inside all of us and bringing it into our meditation and day-to-day lives.

- Once you identify your inner resource and begin to develop it into a fully felt experience, you will be asked to set it aside as you continue with the next stage of the iRest Yoga Nidra practice. But you can always revisit your inner resource at a moment's notice, whenever you feel unsafe or seek a sense of well-being and ease.
- By incorporating this step into your iRest practice and your daily life, you're creating a sense of safety within yourself that helps you deal with the circumstances of life. As difficult situations arise in your life, you will be able to handle them with grace and ease, knowing you have an inner resource that will support your security and well-being.

This class ends by guiding you through a short meditation that is designed specifically to help you start to develop your inner resource.

## Identifying Your Inner Resource

Keep this worksheet and add to it as more details come to mind. Your inner resource will evolve over time. The more details you add and the more you use it, the more helpful it will be.

- Bring to mind places, people, activities, and objects that make you feel secure, at ease, calm, happy, nourished, and safe. Write these down: \_\_\_\_\_

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2. Choose one from above that feels particularly strong for you and write it down: \_\_\_\_\_

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3. Add as much detail as possible:

Visual image: \_\_\_\_\_

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Smells, touch, taste, sounds: \_\_\_\_\_

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Feelings or emotions: \_\_\_\_\_

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Words or phrases: \_\_\_\_\_

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Body sensations or energetic experiences: \_\_\_\_\_

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