



## **Whole No Matter What**

After years of walking this path, I've learned that some questions never finish with you. "What does it mean to be whole?" is one of them. I've sat with it many times, and it still asks more of me than I expect.

Ernest Holmes said early on: "our word does not restore wholeness; it reveals it." I've come to know that is true. There is nothing broken in me that needs fixing. There are simply choices I've made that I like or don't like the results of. There is no lost piece of me floating somewhere out in the world, waiting to be found. I came into this life already complete. Wholeness was never a destination. It is, and always has been, a remembering.



And yet, even knowing that, I don't always feel whole. Experience has taught me not to be surprised by this, and not to be discouraged by it either. Feeling and truth are not the same thing, and the practice is in returning to the truth again and again.

I know now why the not-whole feeling shows up. Long ago, I learned to hide. As a child, I noticed which parts of me were rewarded and which were shunned, so I tucked the unwelcome parts away. I built masks. I've spent a good part of my adult life noticing those masks, naming them, and setting them down. It takes real effort, and it is ongoing. I no longer expect to finish it.

These days, when an old part surfaces, the inner critic, the anxious one, I don't fight it the way I once did. I've learned that fighting only feeds it. Instead, I get curious. I ask what it has been protecting me from. Richard Schwartz says there are truly no bad parts, and decades of my own practice have shown me he's right. Still, every season seems to introduce me to a part I hadn't fully met before. There is always more.

That inner work changes how I meet other people. I've learned to treat my relationships as mirrors, and to trust what they show me. The more honestly I take off my own masks, the more clearly I see the Divine at the center of whoever is in front of me. Authenticity, as Prentis Hemphill teaches, is the root of vulnerability, intimacy, and real connection. I've lived long enough to know that is true.

And the circle keeps widening. Living the truth of one global family is not a lesson I've completed; it's a discipline I keep practicing. I still catch myself, in quiet moments, leaving someone out of that community. Belonging without creating "us" and "them" takes ongoing attention, and I would not claim to have mastered it.

The work also asks something of my hands, not just my heart. Building a world that works for everyone, a world that includes the planet and all life on it, calls for personal responsibility, curiosity, healthy boundaries, and the willingness to see and be seen. I know the risks by now. I also know the rewards are greater.

Here is what I know to be true. I am not broken needing to be put back together, I only need to remember the truth. I am whole, right now, exactly as I am. So is everyone I meet. When I leave anyone out of that equation, when I deny someone's wholeness, I deny God. That is not a beginner's insight; it's a truth I keep choosing, on purpose, every day.

So this July, I'll do what I've done for years, with no illusion that I've arrived. I'll honor my parts, set down my masks, widen my circle, and tend the bridges. There is always more work, more awareness, more depth waiting. I welcome it.

I am glad to keep walking this path alongside you.

**Living in gratitude,**

~ Rachael

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