
Consciousness in Everyday Body Language: An Interoceptive View

by Michael Striem

A mild sensation of weakness or lightheadedness on waking offers a simple but instructive example of how consciousness is often grounded in the living body. In contemporary neuroscience, such experiences are commonly understood through the concept of **interoception**: the sensing, interpretation, and regulation of signals arising from within the body. Interoception includes awareness of thirst, hunger, heartbeat, breathing, temperature, nausea, fatigue, and many other internal conditions. It is not only a matter of physiology; it has much to do with the body constantly balancing the physical tension of [entropy](#) (the arrow of time). The relief of tension by finding the efficient path for all metabolic functions is a great joy. These contribute directly to subjective experience. ([PMC](#))

In the work of **Anil Seth** and colleagues, conscious experience of the self is closely tied to the brain's predictive regulation of the body. On this view, the brain does not passively "read" bodily states; rather, it continually generates predictions about internal conditions and updates them using incoming bodily signals. A conscious feeling may therefore be described as an **interoceptive prediction** or **inference** becoming available in awareness. Seth has explicitly argued for an **interoceptive basis for conscious selfhood**, placing the living, regulated body at the center of conscious experience. ([anilseth.com](#))

From this perspective, an early-morning sensation of weakness, slight dizziness, or bodily unease need not be interpreted as an abstract mental event detached from biology. It may instead reflect the conscious appearance of a transient internal condition during the transition from sleep to wakefulness: mild dehydration, a temporary drop in blood pressure on standing, low immediate energy availability, or the ordinary physiological process known as **sleep inertia**. Sleep inertia refers to grogginess and reduced alertness that can occur immediately after waking and may persist for minutes, and in some cases longer. ([PMC](#))

This way of thinking extends beyond unusual sensations. Much of daily life is shaped by similar, often subtle signals: the relief of the first sip of water or tea, the satisfaction of nourishing food, the urge to stretch, the heaviness after overeating, the lift after movement, the tightening before stress, and the bodily softening that accompanies safety, rest, or social warmth. These are not merely background bodily events. They are part of the material from which conscious life is woven. Interoception, in this broader scientific sense, helps construct a subjective representation of bodily condition and supports self-regulation, behavior, and emotional life. ([PMC](#))

A useful conclusion follows. Consciousness is not only the arena of explicit thought, language, and deliberation. It is also the felt dimension of an organism monitoring and regulating itself from within. In this sense guides of everyday experiences may be understood as **body language entering awareness**: signals of need, balance, restoration, or reward that guide behavior before reflective thought fully catches up. This interpretation does not reduce consciousness to chemistry alone; rather, it recognizes that conscious life is deeply embodied, and that the living body is one of its most constant and meaningful sources. ([anilseth.com](#))

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