How To: Take yourself on an Awe Walk

Here's the science:

Dr. Dacher Keltner, a researcher in the realm of emotions, names that awe is necessary for human well-being: from the calming of the nervous system to putting our own worries in a greater perspective, to increasing connection to others and the world around us. While awe may sound like a BIG TRANSCENDENT word, Dach's research shows that simple everyday experiences can cultivate awe: from witnessing an act of kindness to taking in the natural world. Dach suggests one simple way to experience awe: take a walk! Read more of the research & see a video here.

Pick a place to walk.



Our senses and imaginations are most open to wonder and awe in places with two features: physical vastness or novelty. They could be urban or natural, inside or outside. If you are walking in a familiar place, consider turning down a new alley, or reversing the direction you normally walk, or walking at a different time of day or kind of weather.

Ground. Set your intention.

Take a deep breath. Release it slowly, feeling the air move through your nostrils. Take another breath, feeling it expand your ribcage. Release it slowly. Notice how you are standing, how your feet connect with the ground.

Set an intention: I will be open to surprise and delight.

Walk for 15 - 30 minutes.

As you walk, what do you notice? Move your attention between small things and vast things. Pay attention to all your senses. At several points in your walk, pause for those two breaths (noticing the exhale through your nose, noticing the expanding of your ribcage, noticing your feet on the ground).



Awe doesn't have to be silent.

If you are walking with others, point out what you notice. Some folks find that listening to music supports their intention to be open to awe. Some folks like to keep their ears open for the sounds around them.

Awe is shareable!

At the end, pause to notice what you noticed.

At the end of your walk, take a moment to recall what you noticed. If you like to write, maybe jot down a 3 line poem about the experience.

If you'd like, we'd love to hear what you discovered. You could send it to us gatheringround.seattle@gmail.com, or share it with our Facebook or Instagram.

But remember, this experience is really about YOUR sense of wonder.



Do stuff. Reflect. Connect.

Phone: 206-880-3641 | email: GatherinGround.Seattle@gmail.com | Web: GatherinGround.org
Facebook: GatherinGround.Seattle | Meetup: GatheringGround