

Awe Walk

Time Required

15 minutes

How to Do It

With the right outlook, awe can be found in almost any environment, turning a mundane experience into a flight of inspiration and wonder. It is most likely to occur in places that have two key features: **physical vastness** and **novelty**. These could include natural settings, like a hiking trail lined with tall trees, or urban settings, like at the top of a skyscraper.

You're more likely to feel awe in a new place, where the sights and sounds are unfamiliar to you. That said, some places never seem to get old.

No matter where you are, the key is to be in the right frame of mind. This practice is designed to help you get there—to turn an ordinary walk into a series of awe-inspiring moments, filled with delightful surprises.

To get started, turn off your cell phone. Cell phones (and other gadgets) can be distracting and draw your attention away from what's happening around you. Even better, don't bring your phone with you at all so that you won't be tempted to check it.

During your walk, try to approach what you see with fresh eyes, imagining that you're seeing it for the first time. Then follow these steps:

1. Take a deep breath in. Count to six as you inhale and six as you exhale. Feel the air move through your nasal passages and hear the sound of your breath. Come back to this breath throughout the walk.
2. As you start to walk, feel your feet on the ground and listen to the surrounding sounds.
3. Shift your awareness now so that you are open to what is around you, to things that are vast, unexpected, things that surprise and delight.
4. Take another deep breath in. Again, count to six as you inhale and six as you exhale.
5. Let your attention be open in exploration for what inspires awe in you. Is it a wide landscape? The small patterns of light and shadow? Let your attention move from the vast to the small.
6. Continue your walk and, every so often, bring your attention back to your breath. Count to six as you inhale and six as you exhale. Notice—really notice—the multitude of sights, sounds, smells, and other sensations that are dancing through your awareness, usually undetected.

Once you get in the habit of taking walks like this, you may be struck by how frequently you have opportunities to experience awe—they are practically infinite.

As you move through your day, take note of the moments that bring you wonder, that give you goosebumps: These are your opportunities for awe. They may be in city areas, in front of art, listening to music, or connecting with others. Go out and find your awe moments and listen to them carefully; see where they guide you. As they stir humility and wonder, you may discover that they point you toward what you're supposed to do while you're here on Earth.

Here are some more specific ideas for where to take an awe-inspiring walk.

Natural settings:

- A mountain with panoramic views
- A trail lined with tall trees
- The shore of an ocean, lake, river, or waterfall
- A clear night when you can see the stars
- A place where you can watch a sunset or sunrise

Urban settings:

- The top of a skyscraper... or look up in an area dense with tall buildings
- A historic monument
- A part of your city that you've never explored before
- A large ballpark or stadium
- A city art walk and explore different galleries
- Botanical gardens or a zoo to see plants and animal species you've never seen before
- Walk around with no destination in mind and see where it takes you

Indoor settings:

- A planetarium or aquarium
- A historic mansion, cathedral, or opera house
- Walk slowly around a museum, giving your full attention to each piece

Link: https://ggia.berkeley.edu/practice/awe_walk

Article: to cultivate awe -

https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/how_to_cultivate_awe_walking_meditation

Source: Greater Good In Action, University of California, Berkeley

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