



Experiencing Awe

Savoring

 Intervention

 15 min

 Client

 Yes



Author

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Goal

The goal of this tool is to help clients evoke and savor the feeling of awe.



Advice

- As the optional step 3, the practitioner may work with clients to come up with their most preferable way to diarize awe moments. For instance, whereas some clients might like to print out copies of the 'My Awe Diary' template provided (see the Appendix), others might prefer to document awe moments digitally using their phone or computer.
- Advise clients that every day presents opportunities for them to savor and enjoy awe moments, though a level of mindfulness is required to take these opportunities. Without some degree of mindfulness, they are unable (or at least much less likely) to notice an awesome experience, let alone bask in it.



- Some clients mistakenly believe that awe can only be experienced in great, life-changing events. For these clients, it is important to understand that awe can be found in everyday commonplace things. The practitioner may provide some personal examples that illustrate this point.
- This tool may be particularly valuable for clients who are feeling overwhelmed by everyday stress or negative affect. Research has shown that evoking awe has a way of lifting people outside of their usual selves and connecting them with something more substantial and more significant. Taking the time to reflect on past experiences of awe (Steps 1 and 2) can help people develop a broader sense of connectedness and purpose and help them relieve negative moods and improve happiness.



References

- Keltner, D., & Haidt, J. (2003). Approaching awe, a moral, spiritual, and aesthetic emotion. *Cognition & Emotion*, 17, 297-314.
- Rudd, M., Vohs, K. D., & Aaker, J. (2012). Awe expands people's perception of time, alters decision making, and enhances well-being. *Psychological science*, 23, 1130-1136.



Experiencing Awe

Introduction

This exercise involves tapping into the emotional experience of awe. Awe occurs in response to experiences that we perceive to be vast and amazing. This sense of vastness can be physical, such as a sun setting across the ocean, or psychological, such as a brilliant idea. Simply put, an awe-inspiring moment is a moment that made you say “wow!”

Step 1: Recall a recent awe experience

Think back to a time when you felt a sense of awe regarding something you saw or experienced. Perhaps you witnessed something special in nature, observed an overwhelming act of kindness, or had a critical lightbulb moment. For this exercise, try to think of the most recent experience you’ve had that involved the feeling of awe. Allow yourself to relive this moment of awe by closing your eyes for a few minutes and remembering as much about the experience as you can.

Step 2: Describe the awe experience

In the space below, describe this experience (Step 1) in as much detail as possible, including what thoughts went through your mind at that moment and what feelings and emotions arose at the time. Include any positive thoughts and/or feelings that have shown up now as you have relived this excellent experience as well.

Optional Step 3: Create an awe diary

As you may have just experienced (Steps 1 and 2), reliving awe moments allows us to re-experience some of the positivity that they initially evoked in us. Taking a moment to document awe moments not only allows you to savor and enjoy the experience for a little longer, but it also allows you to store the memory so that you can recall and re-enjoy the awe in the future. As an optional next step, begin to diarize moments of awe by describing and reflecting on them in your ‘awe diary’ (see the Appendix).

