

“It was something most people forgot as they grew into adults.” - Robert McFarland

INTRODUCTION

Curiosity and wonder drive and allow our investigation and appreciation of mysteries, but are themselves mysteries which are relatively understudied. In 2017, I read the above quote from *The Wild Places* by Robert McFarland. It inspired me to ask: why are curiosity and wonder so easily forgotten?

BACKGROUND

Curiosity is an information-seeking behavior leading to an experience. Wonder is a reaction to an experience. Scientific literature often views curiosity and wonder individually, studying how they work in the brain. Popular literature approaches them together, describing their collaborative function in our lives.

METHODS

Under the *a priori* hypothesis that curiosity and wonder can be retained and nurtured, rather than lost in adulthood, I reviewed scientific and popular literature, interviewed individuals, and collected first person narratives detailing personal experiences of curiosity and wonder.

This project is my journey to study, document, and cultivate curiosity and wonder.

RESULTS

Narratives of Curiosity and Wonder

“We have exposure to glorious beauty even in the most ordinary settings, and I think that’s magnificent.”
- Katie, Campaign Marketer

“Curiosity alone doesn’t describe the feeling. It’s almost like these places become part of you and experiencing them helps make me feel whole.”
- Jake, Student

“Wonder - what a complex and interesting concept that we, human beings, have the ability to practice when we encounter true beauty or even in the midst of unclear ‘darkness.’”
- Adam, Student

“I encourage you to stop, and let your gaze drift along with the waves. If you do, I guarantee you’ll get a small taste of the amazing world I try to immerse myself in every single day.”
- Iman, Researcher, Fish Enthusiast, Baker, Student

“It can be a challenge to have a sense of wonder. As we grow older, we lose the appreciation and the magic of things around us that may have filled us with curiosity and child-like amazement in the past.”
- Nathan, Aspiring Vagabond

“We have the power, and the inherent decision to make as to whether or not our curiosity will multiply or be silenced.”
- Peter, Follower of Jesus, Husband, Dad

“I am alive, and every moment is an opportunity to recognize the wonder in existence that never truly leaves us, but simply lies in wait for us to remember how to claim it.”
- Patrick, Student

THEMES

1

Curiosity and wonder are good, beneficial, and enjoyable. They begin in childhood as innocent, open, and pure characteristics. They are important characteristics of healthy minds.

2

Modern culture presents many barriers, and in adulthood, our curiosity and wonder easily decay or seem to disappear completely.

3

Curiosity and wonder must interact together. They begin inside you, not in your surroundings. Slow down, search for beauty, and make the decision to develop your curiosity and wonder.

“But how exactly do you ask someone to be curious?” - Marco Livio

When mature, curiosity and wonder are gifts which allow us to uncover beauty and value in places where they appear absent. We can do this by accepting that the curiosity and wonder we experience is our personal responsibility and need not be dependent on our surroundings. When something does not quickly cater to your curiosity and wonder, do not assume there is no wonder to be found. Be generous with your curiosity. Give too much wonder, rather than too little. Begin today with this:

What is something you have always wondered about, but have never taken time to deeply appreciate?

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