

Awe and Resilience

Presentation for the Awe Project

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Key Findings from *Awakening to Awe*
[Awe defined as the humility & wonder;
sense of adventure toward living]

- Drew from nine interviewees and historical data
- Select conditions that favor awe: **time to reflect (be *present*); capacity to slow down; capacity to savor the moment; a focus on what one loves; capacity to see the big picture; an openness to the mystery of life; an appreciation for the fact of life; an appreciation of pain as a sometime teacher; an appreciation of balance (btw fragility & boldness); contemplative time alone; contemplative time in nature; contemplative time with close others; in-depth therapy or meditation; an ability to trust the evolving nature of conflict (“This too shall pass”); an ability to trust the evolving nature of life; an ability to give oneself over—discerningly—to the unknowable; an ability to trust the ultimately unknowable.**

Exemplars of Awe-Based Consciousness

- Viktor Frankl Finding a “Why” for Living in the Death Camp
- Stephen Hawking Connecting with the Cosmos in the Face of ALS
- Maya Angelou Linking Up with the “More” of life through Reading
- How can we all tap into the *constructive vs. defensive* “more” of life, when we feel reduced? *Presence* is key

One Awe-Based Way to Cope with Cultural & Political Polarization

- The six phase **Experiential Democracy Dialogue** (Described in detail in ***The Depolarizing of America: A Guidebook for Social Healing***)— stressing **Ground Rules of curiosity vs. presumption or dictation**
- **1) Mindful visualization** of dialogue partner; opening to their humanity beyond stereotypes and labels
- **2) Sharing stories of how each partner grew up, and how the “other”** (whoever that “other” is in the topic of conversation) **was treated** by their family/cultural system.
- Then four more (relatively) safe, structured phases: **3) Description of Stance; 4) a Stereotypes Exercise; 5) Asking a Policy Question; & 6) Discovery/Results—Potential for Common Ground**

References

Braver Angels Website: <https://braverangels.org>

Schneider, K. (2020). **The Depolarizing of America: A Guidebook for Social Healing.** University Professors Press.

Schneider, K. (2013). **The Polarized Mind: Why It's Killing Us and What We Can Do About It.** University Professors Press.

SHP TV (2016). **Experiential Democracy Project: An "I-Thou" Dialogue on Racism and Policing** (Full Video) [Youtube](#) [Older version of EDD].