Wonder, Entry 1 of 1

The sense of wonder we experience in our own lives—as if we were seeing them for the first time—brings an array of feelings.

—Living Clean, Chapter 7, “Living Our Principles”

Active addiction is a grind, leaving most of us jaded by the time we get to NA. We stay coolly distant from other humans and much of life in hopes of avoiding those pesky feelings. We think or say “Who cares?” a little too often, even for our own taste. Cynicism and apathy had worn away any optimism we once had. But then we get clean, and what we learn in recovery challenges this entire mindset.

Experiencing the world with a sense of wonder is one of the fringe benefits of working an NA program. Some of us stumble on a new positivity when we start stringing together days clean. Others warm up to a new way of responding to the world over time or encounter wonder in sporadic bursts. But, regardless of the timeline or intensity, we recognize that feeling of awed respect and the newfound appreciation it brings.

When we find ourselves thinking or saying “Wow!” it’s a good indication that we’re experiencing a sense of wonder. “Wow!” is a prayer unto itself in the minds of some NA members. It captures what it means to embrace wonder as a spiritual principle, complete with awe, connection, impact, and reverence in the space of three letters.

Nature is kind of a show-off when it comes to inspiring wonder. Of course, we don’t have to travel far to be wowed by a sunrise or sunset. But beyond nature—and perhaps more importantly for us in recovery—we find a sense of wonder in everyday life if we’re open to it and paying attention. Moments of clarity—the clean kind—allow us to see our lives anew. Each time we take a moment to appreciate our growth, admire what’s right with us and the world, delight in new insights, or feel all our feelings is an invitation to practice wonder.

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I will challenge myself to look at life and recovery with curiosity and enjoy a sense of wonder wherever I may find it.