

Wonder: A Definition

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won·der (wun´der): An inspired sensibility or emotion; part mystery, part magic, part hope amidst mortal sorrow. The word is indefinable, inexplicable, and unmeasurable. However, a few more conventional attempts at definition follow:

nouns: 1. miracle, as in: *Such a wonder, the butterfly's transformation!* 2. marvel, as in: *the wonder of a dawn's rays on the redwood.* 3. something worthy of awe, as in: *It's a wonder that even the youngest child carries cosmic dust from the oldest star.* 4. surprise, as in: *She embraced me, the wonder of it all.*

verbs: 1. to speculate, as in: *I wonder how large is the universe.* 2. to feel awe, as in: *How, she wonders, could that accomplished adult have once been just a child in my womb?* 3. to doubt, as in: *I wonder whether such a great tree really sprouted from so small a seed.*

related uses:

sense of wonder: Present in the completeness of now; awareness of miracles; passion for life, brief though it is; appreciation for all that cannot be bought, sold or reproduced.

spirit of wonder: A child watches a butterfly emerge, wet-winged, into the light. (See the Greek mythological name Psyche, meaning both *butterfly* and *soul*.) Or: an elder appreciates the long journey of migrating salmon, swimming across vast stretches of open ocean.

absence of wonder: Imagine a world of entirely artificial materials; no stars visible on high and no phases of the moon; no tides upon the tattered shore; no taste of snowflakes on your tongue; no scent of lilacs or apple blossoms on a spring morn; no wind to rustle the willow leaves; no strolling barefoot on a stream bank; no wild hawk, soaring on the swells; no spiraling song of the meadowlark; no newborn babe in your arms.

origins: Merging of *One*, as in the one spirit that connects all living creatures; and *Dur*, as in enduring qualities, lasting memories. From *wundurra*, derived from the Old Tongue of Avalon and Fincayra, meaning both *mystery* and *inspiration*.

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