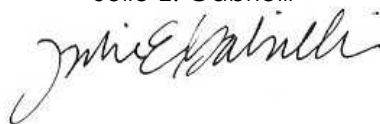


Green from the Inside: 3 Practices to Cultivate Awe and Wonder



By Green Business Mentor
Julie E. Gabrielli



Julie E. Gabrielli, NCARB, LEED
v 410.530.0389
e julie@goforchange.com

Green from the Inside: 3 Practices to Cultivate Awe and Wonder

"Love makes your soul crawl out from its hiding place." Zora Neale Hurston

Why is connecting with our inner wisdom and healing ourselves so important for those who care about sustainability? Interestingly, love is not often talked about in the green movement – even though it's fundamentally about cultivating connection, which is love.

Green from the inside involves awareness and specific practices:

- **Love** - especially self-love, so we aren't beating ourselves up all the time
- **Personal leadership** - it's an "inside job;" be the change we wish to see
- **Increase our compassion**, our patience, hope, and faith through action
- **Gratitude and celebration** - sending powerful vibration to heal the earth and our fellow beings

In the face of all the negative, disempowering messages we get about the state of the environment, how can we tap into a positive motivation and a deep sense of connection with the natural world? Like any spiritually-oriented question, it's a practice, requiring continuous awareness and feedback. It's also a call to be gentle with ourselves as we walk this green path. As Maya Angelou said, "You did what you knew how to do, and when you knew better, you did better."

The environmental movement tends to give us a lot of negative messages about how bad everything is. However, in a long-term change movement, it is far more effective to move towards something we want, than to rail against something we don't want. Think about it. When you are cold, you don't get angry and struggle against the cold; you light a fire, you put on a sweater. You do something in the positive. When it's dark, the way to change that is to turn on a light, not to complain and push against the darkness.

Here are three rich practices that work for my clients. This will help you tap into your inner awareness, sense of connection, and positive motivation. Try them and let me know how they work for you.



The Practices

Practice 1: Gratitude

Here's something we did in a recent "[Green in 15](#)" class. Treat yourself and go for a nice walk. Enjoy the weather, all the glory and abundance of the natural world as it is humming with life. When you come back inside, make a list of everything you're grateful for, right here, right now, today.

This is an excellent practice to draw your attention away from seeing only problems, challenges, and things that are broken and need fixing.



Practice 2: Mission

Why do you care about green? What does going green mean to you, to your personal sense of mission? How is this expressed in your life? What does that mean for you - your sense of purpose, your vision of the future, your values, your influence in the world?

When a recent business client did this, their Green Charter became infused throughout the company, marshalling creativity and accelerating their results. These include tremendous energy and water savings, dramatic reduction of CO2 emissions, reduced nitrates going into the Chesapeake Bay from their operations, and a popular employee challenge program to take similar actions at home.



Practice 3: Networks

Nature is organized in networks of networks, and we are a part of that system. Think of one aspect of your life and make a list of relationships - the people, systems, and technologies that you are connected to. Now, answer these questions:

1. For systems or technologies, how did this get here? (For people, how did we meet?)

2. What did it take to get it to me?

3. What has this connection brought into my life? (What have I brought into this person's life?)

4. What has this connection led to?

5. What might it lead to in the future?

What was your experience in trying these practices? I would love to hear from you.

Visit us on the website or at our [Facebook Fan Page](#), or send me an email (address on next page).

Julie E. Gabrielli is an award-winning architect who was instrumental in starting the sustainable design movement in Baltimore over ten years ago. She has worked with many clients to help them realize their dreams, from concept to construction. As an advisor to the 2007 Solar Decathlon, she helped steer team LEAFHouse to be the top-placing American team, a second-place-overall finish.

Julie sees dismal environmental statistics as a challenge. Surely, with intelligence, creativity, and collaboration, we can do better. She frequently shares her upbeat message on her blog, GOforChange.com, and as an inspiring public speaker.

Julie's expertise is as an industry-changer. She has worked with businesses institutions to develop sustainability initiatives and Climate Action Plans. She now works with small business owners to take their business in a green direction, starting with clear framework and vision, identifying new markets, crafting a green brand and message, developing new products, assessing and reducing their footprint, and giving back.

Her years of competitive sailboat racing taught Julie that when good design is combined with clear vision, steering for changing conditions, and a healthy respect for the forces of nature, great results are possible!

