



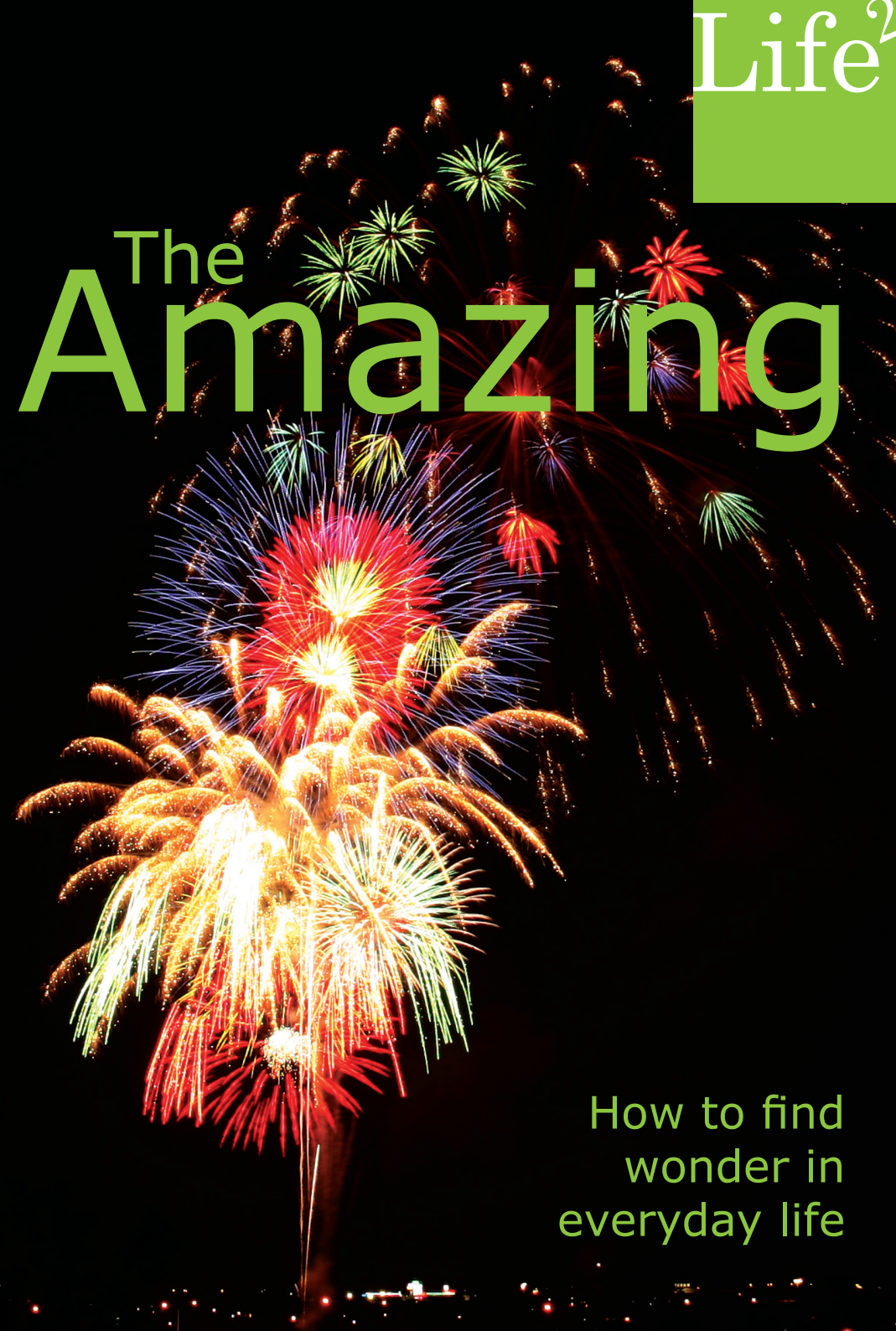
The Amazing

How to find wonder in everyday life

Many of us spend our lives trying to find experiences that take us 'above' everyday life and remind us just what a profound experience it is to exist. This booklet argues that our lives are peppered with such experiences – we just need to know where to find them. It also shows how we can identify them and make sure our lives are as full as possible with The Amazing.



The Amazing



How to find
wonder in
everyday life

This booklet is one of a series by Life². Our booklets explore important topics and ideas, and provide practical suggestions on ways you can improve your life.

Life² helps people to live well - to live happy and wise lives in the modern world. We aim to provide you with ideas, information and tools to help you get more out of life, see things more clearly and live with greater wisdom.

We offer events, guides, ideas and advice on a wide range of topics, from 'our place in the universe' through to 'how to live the life you want', and from 'the problem with consumerism' through to 'how to be happy'.

For more information visit www.lifesquared.org.uk



Copyright Life² 2009 ©

The Amazing

How to find wonder in everyday life



Contents

Introduction	5
Part 1 - What is The Amazing?	7
Part 2 – How can we find The Amazing?	19
Part 3 – Why does The Amazing matter in our lives?	27
Part 4 – Why do we need The Amazing in modern society?	31
Part 5 - How can we get more of The Amazing?	39
Conclusions	43

Life² would like to thank Jeremy Singer and Tony Rutherford for their help in making this booklet.

Published by Life²
Life Squared Limited
Registration number: 6924570
Registered address: 22 Luther Street,
Brighton, East Sussex BN2 9XA

www.lifesquared.org.uk
info@lifesquared.org.uk

Copyright © 2009 Life². No part of this book may be reproduced in any form without the publisher's permission. Please contact Life² if you wish to syndicate this information.



Introduction

“We can have in life but one great experience at best, and the secret of life is to reproduce that experience as often as possible.” - Oscar Wilde

A few weeks ago I went for a quick walk on the South Downs. I strolled along the footpath at the top of the downs, overlooking Plumpton and the countryside north of Brighton. After a few minutes I decided to lie in the long grass that runs along the side of the downs beside the footpath. As I lay there staring up into the blue sky, with the stalks of grass surrounding my head, I was taken away from myself and my thoughts. For a while I felt peaceful and happy, as I was simply living, simply alive – part of a world of other living things that were also just naturally getting on with the experience of existing. It felt natural and effortless. It was a great experience.

Many of us have experiences like this in life. These are peak experiences; times in which we feel a profound sense of peace, pleasure, immersion in an activity, connection with the world and contentment with our place in the great scheme of things. They can occur during a range of activities and situations, and may differ

for each of us. These peak experiences can be beneficial for us in a number of ways, and not least because they are some of the moments that make life worthwhile. This booklet is about this type of experience, which we will call 'The Amazing'.

The booklet will explore some of the common ways in which we can have these peak experiences – from listening to music to being in nature – and will feature the stories of a few people who have had them.

We will then ask why these experiences matter – and why they particularly matter in the modern world. Although all of us can have these experiences, this booklet argues that very few of us have learnt to recognise them or fully appreciate the pleasure, meaning and other benefits they can bring us. If we can learn how to identify these experiences, what it feels like to have them and how to find them, we might be able to get more out of the peak experiences we have and find more of them in our lives. Overall, it could lead to us getting more pleasure, fulfilment and meaning out of our lives.

Part 1 – What is The Amazing?

To begin, we need to clarify what we mean by The Amazing. The phrase covers any experiences that transcend our normal experience of daily life; these are often referred to as 'peak experiences'. Although peak experiences may vary, many of them share some common characteristics, which we will explore later.

To help us understand what these experiences are like, let us hear from someone who has experienced them.

The music lover

"I'm a musician. I tend to listen to a lot of music every day too, just going about my business. It's a constant presence in my life.

I love having music around, but there are certain moments in music that take me to a different place and do more than just provide a nice backdrop to what I'm doing. These are rare moments, and they could be as simple as a chord change or a vocal phrasing, rather than an entire



piece of music. They are small moments where you're just focussed on the music and everything else is filtered out.

Yesterday, I was listening to a CD I'd just got. I wasn't paying much attention – I was reading. And at some point I guess I heard something in the song – it was a combination of things that coalesced – the tune, the production, the song itself. I just snapped out of what I was reading and became immersed in the tune itself. I don't even know if it was a conscious thing - the act of

listening just seemed to merge me with the music – made me at one with it.

When this happens, it's a very quick transition. You can't really concentrate on extraneous stuff – you get drawn into the music and become one with it. You lose a sense of self – you're so engaged with the piece that you're not really conscious of anything else. You're moved to the point of tears or joy or both. It's really difficult to describe, but it's a feeling that's just welling up inside. Hope is the wrong word.... maybe possibility....maybe joy – joy that it exists.

The feeling is in the stomach – butterflies sometimes. Sometimes it's actually a feeling of shivers - but that's kind of rare. It's brain chemistry too."

The music lover's experience seems to take him 'above' his normal, everyday experience of life and he appears to get completely absorbed in the music he's listening to. His mind is focused on the music and other thoughts, worries and anxieties disappear. It's clearly an incredibly pleasurable and profound experience for him.

The nature lover

Another common way in which people experience The Amazing can be through exposure to nature. When



Charles Darwin was exploring South America he had the type of experience that you may recognise when you've been in a beautiful natural setting:

"In my journal I wrote that whilst standing in the midst of the grandeur of a Brazilian forest, 'it is not possible to give an adequate idea of the higher feelings of wonder, admiration and devotion which fill and elevate the mind'."

Darwin seems to be describing the experience of realising he is a very small part of a vastly bigger thing (the

universe and the natural world), as well feeling a sense of connection with this broader universe. Not only this but he is appreciating the beauty and size of the forest (and the natural world in general) surrounding him.

We can now hear from someone else who has experienced The Amazing – this time through a completely different activity – owning and learning to ride a motorbike.

The biker

"It's euphoria really. Not quite unbridled ecstasy, but that little moment of feeling content – feeling that I've spent a lot of money on this and I've put a lot of hard work in to get to this point and now I can't believe how much I enjoy it."

The achievement is an important part of it. I'm really proud of myself for having done it [i.e. learnt to ride the motorbike]. It's one of the hardest things I've had to do. I'm concentrating so hard on predicting what someone's going to do [on the road] – who's coming up in front of me or if someone's going to do something stupid - that my mind is emptied of anything else. You can't think about anything else, or you're going to run someone over or someone's going to pull into you. I'm not thinking words...."



Again, this person's experience of The Amazing involves complete absorption in an activity, which enables him to clear his mind of all other thoughts. This particular experience is enhanced further by a sense of achievement and fulfilment at having worked hard to learn a new skill.

Summarising The Amazing

How, then, can we summarise what the experience of The Amazing consists of? Let's bring together some of these examples in order to set out some of the key characteristics of peak experience. We can support these with research carried out in this area by psychologists in recent decades.

The founder of much of the modern scientific exploration of peak experiences was the psychologist Abraham Maslow. He described some of the characteristics of peak experiences as follows:

- **Awesome** – there is a sense of awe, wonder and humility within the experience.
- **Timeless** – the person having the experience can lose track of time, and become oblivious of his or her surroundings.
- **Rich** – the perception of the object in the experience (if there is one - such as a picture, piece of music or view) can be richer in a peak experience.
- **Egoless** – you may be so focussed on the experience that you lose track of your worries, fears and concerns, and you lose your sense of 'self' during the experience.

- **Valuable in itself** – many of the things we do in life are means to some other end – for example, getting a job so that we can earn money to buy food to help us survive. Some peak experiences however can be seen as ‘ends in themselves’ – we do them because they are valuable in themselves and can even be said to make life worthwhile by their occasional occurrence.
- **Perspective** – the experience generates a type of perspective – the person is able to “perceive the world as if it were independent not only of them but also of human beings in general”. In other words, they are able to see the world from a position beyond simply human interests.
- **Complete** - the object or the experience is felt to be all there is in the universe – to be synonymous with the universe itself.

Another characteristic we could add to this list is that many peak experiences are immersive - the person is completely absorbed and immersed in the experience.

You may be able to recall some experiences in your own life that have included some of these characteristics. These descriptions we’ve given above of some peak experiences might seem to be very strong and almost spiritual (we will come back to this word later) but don’t allow this to make you think that you have not had such

experiences or are unable to have them. One of the aims of this booklet is to show that most of us have peak experiences in our lives, and to help us identify them more easily.

Written descriptions of these experiences can sometimes be unhelpful because they can make us feel that such experiences are out of our reach, when we read strong language like ‘absorbed’ and ‘immersed’, but if you were to think back and consider some of your own experiences, you might well use this language to describe them. Let’s try doing this now.

Exercise 1 – remember what The Amazing feels like

In this exercise you’re going to identify a time you’ve had a peak experience and remember what it felt like. Firstly, try to recall an experience you’ve had that was special or where you were really concentrating on something and you felt great. This experience doesn’t have to fulfil all the characteristics of peak experiences listed above – these are not strict criteria.

Once you've done this, try to recall how you felt when you had the experience – did you feel immersed in it? What emotions did you feel? Did you have any thoughts at all? Try to re-imagine how you felt (including the sense of well-being) during the experience.

One of the aims of this booklet is to help people identify the peak experiences they have had and remember how good it feels to have them. When you find yourself having an experience like this in the future, try to recognise it when it happens and savour it.

Sometimes, you may feel that you are unable to put an experience into words, as they can't accurately reflect it – perhaps because the experience were so strong and profound as to be almost indescribable. In these cases, if you can't describe the experience, just try to recall how you felt.

It's not necessarily about religion

It is impossible to discuss the topic of peak experience for very long without encountering the issue of religious or other mystical experiences.



Advocates of religious or other ideas may feel that religious or other mystical experiences cannot take place without some sort of supernatural inspiration or intervention (for example, from God), but we suggest that these types of experience are actually broadly the same as the peak, transcendent experiences that we

are discussing in this booklet and share the same sort of characteristics. In other words, they are profound, life-affirming experiences but they take place within the human mind and human experience, and do not need supernatural explanations of how they are caused.

We therefore suggest that there is a naturalistic explanation for every form of peak experience, and this reflects one of Maslow's aims – to 'naturalise' those experiences which have generally been identified as religious experiences or "to demonstrate that spiritual life has a naturalistic meaning, that peak experiences are a basic fact about the human mind".

Some people may feel that religious experiences are stronger than other experiences they have had, but this could be due to the sense of mystery and religious meaning they have attached to them – in other words, they are already attaching a sense of importance, awe and wonder to the experience before they've even had it. As we will see in later sections of this booklet, we can enhance our own peak experiences by being aware of their importance and profundity, but without having to invoke ideas of the supernatural. So, you don't need to be a believer in mysticism or religions to have a particularly profound and strong peak experience, either.



Part 2 – How can we find The Amazing?

Everyone can find The Amazing in their lives. In this section we will explore some of the activities or situations in which people have reported having peak experiences. These range from being in nature to listening to music. We will also encourage you to look for other activities and situations in which you might have a peak experience.

We should note that different people will find The Amazing in different activities, places and situations.

The suggestions presented here are therefore simply a range of illustrative examples to get you thinking.

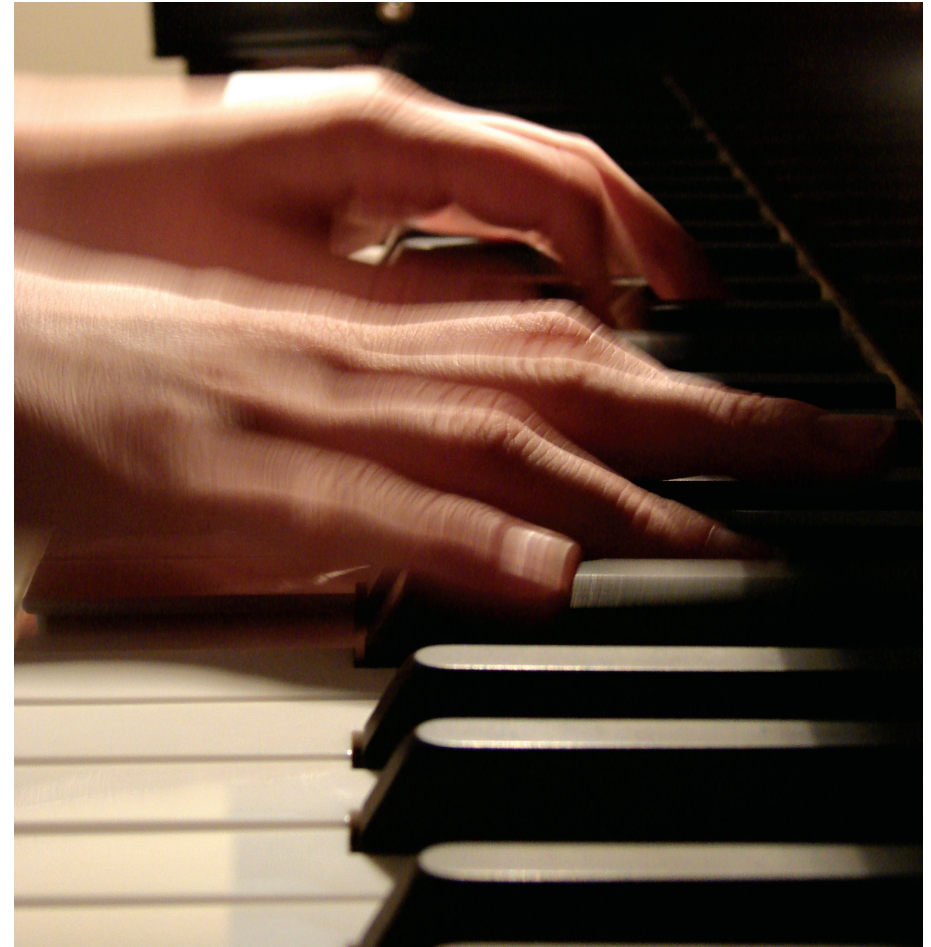
Nature

As has been already noted, some of the more frequently occurring peak experiences in the author's life have occurred when he has been out in the countryside and absorbed in the natural world. Jonathan Haidt, in his interesting book *The Happiness Hypothesis*, notes one explanation for this:

“Something about the vastness and beauty of nature makes the self feel small and insignificant, and anything that shrinks the self creates an opportunity for spiritual experience.”

Immersive activity

Some activities are automatically immersive, requiring concentration to undertake them successfully or remain safe doing them – for example, doing a crossword, singing, playing the piano, riding a motorbike or playing a sport. Activities that require practice and effort to be able to learn the skills to do them can provide an additional sense of fulfilment and pleasure when carrying them out.



Creativity and inspiration

Creative acts such as painting, writing, creating a song or cooking can also be immersive and have the potential for producing peak experiences. Another area that is thought to regularly yield peak experiences is scientific



achievement – making a discovery or solving a complex problem after a long period of time. Very few people are great scientists, but the general areas of problem solving and generating ideas could be possible sources of peak experiences for many people.

Arts

Another area in which people have reported peak experiences is in appreciating art. This can be art in any form, including viewing a great picture, listening to a piece of music or hearing beautiful singing. We can now return to the music lover to hear how and where he finds The Amazing in music.

“Certain types of music can inspire an emotion, but these profound moments are not restricted to a particular genre. The only thing they have in common is that they move me in some way. A couple of the songs that give me these moments are:

- *‘In My Area’ by The Fall – the point at which there’s a guitar solo with 2 guitars, with drums doing rolls over the top, and Mark E Smith shouting over it.*
- *‘I’m Never Gonna Live it Down’ by The Knight Brothers — duelling male vocals, getting more climactic.*

My listening experience can be different in certain situations – for example, if I’m wearing headphones, I can’t ignore the music or just treat it as a background thing.”

Meditation and relaxation

This area includes a general set of activities in which the participant is encouraged to relax in peace and calm their mind. These are activities in which one is encouraged to slow the river of one’s thoughts and just ‘be’ without thinking of anything. They could include yoga, reflection and meditation – the latter being an activity that some people undertake specifically to reach a state of peak experience, or something similar to it.



Summary

In this section we have provided just a few illustrative examples of situations or activities in which people might have peak experiences. There are many other areas we've missed out, including listening to a great speaker, religious events, love and sex.

The important point – worth repeating here – is that we all have the potential to have peak experiences, and it will be a personal matter as to which activities and situations might bring them to you.

As to how to find peak experiences, the advice on this is the same as that one might give to someone seeking happiness – don't seek it! Don't undertake activities simply because you feel they might bring you peak experiences, but just relax and do the things you enjoy that give you immersion, fulfilment and pleasure and if you get an occasional peak experience out of them, then great!

Exercise 2 – identify some possible sources of The Amazing

Think about where else you might be able to find The Amazing in your life. Think about some of the times you've had special or peak experiences (what were you doing? What state of mind were you in?), and where else you might find them. Also, continue to do the things you enjoy that give you immersion, fulfilment and pleasure – they may generate peak experiences too.

Part 3 – Why does The Amazing matter in our lives?

Peak experiences can make a great contribution to our lives. To understand what they can bring, let us revisit the biker and the music lover to see what these experiences mean to them.

The biker

“I don’t think I would have got through this year with my sanity, because we’ve been so busy at work. It’s been very stressful.

I’ve had the bike to concentrate on as the big thing outside work. It’s been a thing that’s turned up in my life as a really unexpected source of pleasure and if I didn’t have it I’d be devastated.”

The music lover

“These moments of complete immersion in music mean everything to me. If I didn’t have them, it would be one less thing to be excited about.



You always strive to be totally conscious and engaged in something, and this allows you to do that. We always have thoughts popping into our heads, thinking about the future, past and many other things. We're too conscious of ourselves, and once we can suppress or ignore the ego, life is better.

What we're searching for – and sadly it's all too rare – is engagement in something; losing one's sense of self. I get this from music, so it means everything to me.

It's what I want from every experience in my life, 24 hours a day, whether it's in relationships, going shopping or whatever. I want to be engaged. I want to be in touch with my emotions."

As these stories demonstrate, these experiences can be profoundly moving and mean a great deal to the people who have them. Maslow notes that people report these experiences 'not only as valuable intrinsically, but as so valuable that they make life worthwhile by their occasional occurrence.' Overall they seem to give us an experience that is life-affirming – one in which we see what it is like to hit the heights of being alive. Perhaps we owe it to ourselves to have these experiences.

Not only do we value these experiences as things in themselves, but they also contain some characteristics that



can have positive effects on our lives. These can be seen from some of the characteristics of peak experiences that we discussed earlier – for example, the ability to see the world from beyond human interests can help people realise

that their own life is just a small part of a massive universe, which may bring them a sense of calm and wisdom in knowing that they're not the centre of everything.

So, aside from the profound pleasure of the experience itself, peak experiences can bring a heightened sense of awareness, insight and understanding to people that might not otherwise have these things. This could be seen as a form of wisdom, and has the potential to bring us greater calm, and an outlook that has more perspective and is less self-centred.

Maslow suggests there might even be some positive after-effects of a peak experience. Some of the possible effects reported by the participants in his research include:

- They change the person's view of themselves in a healthy way.
- They change the person's view of the world, other people and their relation to other people.
- They give the person greater potential for spontaneity, creativity and expressiveness.
- The person may feel that life in general is more worthwhile, even if it is usually dull or painful, as the experience has shown them that meaning, excitement, goodness and other positive things do exist.



Part 4 – Why do we need The Amazing in modern society?

It is therefore clear that peak experiences matter a great deal to us individually and can add great colour and meaning to our lives. This alone is reason enough to justify why they are important. We suggest however that in the modern world there is a particular need for people to become more aware of their 'inner life' and the potential for peak experiences like those we have been discussing. Below we will explore a few reasons why this is the case.

People need to find more meaning in modern society

We live in a complex, busy and pressurised world. Many people are searching for greater meaning in their lives, and they are finding that the consumer society around them is unable to give them the things that they really need in life.

We live in a society with particular values and priorities - for example, we are encouraged to live busy and packed lives, to achieve as much material wealth and consume as much as possible and to desire the new and the novel. In a society driven by these types of values, it can be very difficult for people to realise the value of peak experiences or the exploration of the 'inner self'. This is because the economic and materialistic values of modern society don't regard reflective, experiential or spiritual matters as important and they encourage a particular type of thinking and behaviour that is not conducive to reflection, contemplation or imagination.

As a consequence, many of us seem to have lost sight of the fact that some of the most pleasurable and fulfilling experiences we can have in our lives can be found through very simple means, and peak experiences are a good example of this. Many of these things aren't just simple - they're free - a factor that is important in these times when we are trying to live on less.

In view of the times we live in, it could therefore be of particular value to people to have access to The Amazing, as a means of getting greater pleasure, fulfilment and meaning out of their lives.

The Amazing is not a mainstream concept

Even if values such as materialism and individualism were less prevalent in modern society, we would still face a situation in which peak experience and our 'inner lives' remained merely a fringe issue in society, despite the fact that it is a vitally important aspect of our lives. As a consequence, a large number of people would still be missing out on The Amazing.



This is because responsibility for issues relating to peak experience and our 'inner lives' is still felt to lie with religious organisations, but as these no longer occupy a central role in society, this has pushed the issues themselves onto the fringes.

Religion used to be an integral part of most people's daily lives, and one religion provided much of the guidance and education people received in this country – from moral matters through to exploring their own experiences and inner worlds.

As times have moved on, a greater secularisation of society has occurred – the Christian church now has less influence on the majority of people's lives in this country, and has become more of a fringe organisation, along with the other religions that have blended into the country's culture. Aside from this, a significant number of people are not actively attached to any religious views.

Although the number of non-religious people has increased, their need for some sort of spiritual element to their lives has not disappeared. For some people, new age ideas have moved in to fill the gap left by religions.

Many people are therefore now left with a choice between religious or new age groups for their inner education, and these groups do not appeal to everyone.

Many people may feel that these groups offer a rather simplistic, fanciful or inaccurate view of inner experiences and the world generally, or one that they find unpalatable.

Two large gaps have therefore appeared in modern society as a result of these cultural changes:

1. There are very few avenues that provide spiritual nourishment for the non-religious, in a way that they could identify with. As this booklet has shown, peak experiences and appreciation of our 'inner worlds' can add a massive amount to our lives, so everyone should be given the chance to gain access to them in a way that makes sense to them. As this booklet has also argued, peak experiences are naturalistic occurrences that don't need to be explained in supernatural ways, and are open to everyone, so they could provide the spiritual nourishment many non-religious people need – or at least a good starting point to pursue it.
2. There is also very little discussion within wider society of the pleasures and benefits of exploring one's inner world and reviewing and savouring the amazing experience of living. There is also no common language used to discuss these things. People therefore rarely share their thoughts about these things, or experiences of them, with each other. These things are felt to be



private matters that people should deal with on their own, or that should be dealt with by religions.

Our inner worlds are however very important areas of our lives, and peak experiences are one of the key things that unite us as human beings, regardless of the language we may choose to describe them or the ultimate cause we may attribute them to. We therefore suggest that there should be much more discussion and promotion of peak experience and people's inner worlds in mainstream society, partially because it will make people more aware of these experiences and how to access them, and also because it could make it possible to teach people about how to get more from their inner lives. Another important benefit of this step is that it

could provide a powerful linking point to unite people – both religious and non-religious alike – on the basis of their common humanity and the fact that we all share a profound subjective experience of life.

In the final section of this booklet we will briefly explore some initial ideas as to how these gaps could be filled – a step that could bring some significant benefits to society generally.

We aren't spiritually literate

Maslow claimed that all individuals are capable of having peak experiences. He suggested that virtually everyone has a number of peak experiences in the course of their lives, but that we often take such experiences for granted.

We suggest that most people simply don't realise that some of the experiences they are having are special, as they have had very little training to make them aware of the different types of inner experience they can have. Instead, they will often just remember something as a nice experience without reflecting on how profound it really was. Overall, we suggest that many people today suffer from a lack of 'spiritual literacy' (partially due to some of the circumstances of modern society outlined above), and this could be denying them the chance to have happier, more fulfilled and more meaningful lives.

Part 5 – How can we get more of The Amazing?

In part 2, we explored how we can get more of The Amazing in our own lives. In this final section we will briefly explore some initial ideas of how we can move towards a society in which there is greater appreciation of these experiences and our inner lives, and in which people are encouraged to make more of them.

1. Make The Amazing a mainstream concept in society

We argued in part 4 that the topic of peak experience and our inner lives has become a fringe issue in modern society, and that moving it back into a more central position would bring some important benefits to large numbers of people.

To do this, it would need to be made into a mainstream concept with mainstream language – one that was neutral and not owned by any particular interest group. Existing words like ‘spirituality’, ‘transcendence’ and ‘the divine’ can have supernatural connotations that some people are



uncomfortable with, and can also be woolly and unspecific in their definition, which is a great shame because at their heart are some truths about human experience that could enhance the lives of many people. We should therefore come up with a new language for this that everyone can use – even if they continue to use their own terms within their own groups and communities.

We therefore suggest that the spiritual, the transcendent and other experiences like these could simply be rebranded and repackaged into ‘The Amazing’, and that central voices in society (including the education system) could help to show people that The Amazing is open to everyone. Under these conditions, it would be easy for people to talk about their experiences of The Amazing and understand what each other meant, without having to use particular groups’ phrases and terms, such as ‘spiritual’.

Peak experiences are naturalistic occurrences that don’t need to be explained in supernatural ways, and are open to all human beings, so they could provide the definition of The Amazing that we use, and act as the bond that links it together for people.

2. Teach it as a life skill

As part of recognising the importance of The Amazing in people’s lives and moving it into a more central position

in society, we need to make people more aware of it and of how to make the most of it. One component of this should be to bring The Amazing into our state education system and teach appreciation of it in schools as a life skill.

Maslow himself argued that peak experiences should be studied and cultivated, so that they can be introduced to those who have never had them.

3. Change the focus of society

We need to move towards a society that provides an environment in which people can flourish, and that contains values that encourage everyone to develop themselves into wise, vibrant and complete human beings – including exploring their inner lives and subjective experiences of life.

This will be a society with a broader and more nuanced view of what human beings need and want in order to live happy and fulfilled lives, and one in which the economic system is used as a means to this end rather than an end in itself. This must all take place within the carrying capacity of the one planet we have available. This approach to economics is commonly described as ‘New Economics’.



See Richard Docwra's book 'Modern life – as good as it gets?' for a more detailed picture of how we can move towards a less individualistic and materialistic society.

In our own lives

In this booklet we have provided several ideas of how you can experience more of The Amazing in your own life, but as a final point in this section there are some things you can do to support the broader aims above.

For example, you can discuss your experiences of 'The Amazing' more with people. This may seem awkward at first but you might be surprised how much each of you engages in the conversation eventually. Remember, these are some of the most profound experiences we share as humans but that we often just keep locked up inside us. If you both saw a great film, you'd get pleasure from discussing it – so why not do this for your inner experiences too – you might gain even more pleasure from it!

Conclusions

Our lives are peppered with profound peak experiences, yet many of us have not learnt to think of them in this way. Each of us can find these in quite different situations and activities, and in many areas of everyday life. These experiences can add great pleasure and meaning to our lives and can even make us more rounded people.

We could therefore all get much more out of life if we appreciated the profound nature of these experiences and savoured them, as they are our experience of The Amazing in our day to day lives.

We have aimed to show that peak and transcendent experiences are natural experiences common to human beings, and do not require supernatural explanations. They are therefore available to, and beneficial for, everyone – whether they are religious or non-religious people, so there is no reason why peak experiences or the language we use to describe them should have to carry exclusively religious or new age overtones. Such restricted views of peak experience can prevent many people from seeing The Amazing when it is right under our noses in our own lives, and from savouring it when it occurs.

We have therefore argued that we must regain ownership of peak experience, the transcendent and the spiritual for everyone, and not just the few. We must make it make it into a mainstream concept with mainstream language, as to know what it really is and how to get it can truly enhance our lives. We've aimed to start the process of repackaging and rebranding the spiritual, the transcendent and other experiences like these, into 'The Amazing', and show that The Amazing is open to everyone.

We hope this booklet will help you to identify, seek and enjoy The Amazing in your own life. We'd love to hear your stories and experiences of it, so do tell us about them by writing to us at info@lifesquared.org.uk.

Further Reading

Csikszentmihalyi, M. *Flow*. Rider, London, 2002.

Greeley, A. *Ecstasy – A Way of Knowing*. Prentice Hall, Englewood Cliffs, N.J, 1974.

Haidt, J. *The Happiness Hypothesis*. Arrow Books, London 2006.

Keutzer, C. Whatever turns you on: Triggers to transcendent experiences. *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, 1978. 18: 77-80.

Leonard, G. *The Transformation*. Delta, New York, 1972.

Maslow, A.H. *Religions, Values and Peak Experiences*. Viking, New York, 1974.

References

- i From Darwin's Autobiography as quoted in Haidt, J. *The Happiness Hypothesis*. Arrow Books, London, 2006. p.200
- ii Maslow, AH. *Cognition of Being in the Peak Experiences*. *Journal of Genetic Psychology*, 1959. 94: p.45
- iii Maslow, AH. *Cognition of Being in the Peak Experiences*. *Journal of Genetic Psychology*, 1959. 94: p.47
- iv Haidt, J. *The Happiness Hypothesis*. Arrow Books, London, 2006. p.205
- v Haidt, J. *The Happiness Hypothesis*. Arrow Books, London, 2006. p.200
- vi Maslow, AH. *Cognition of Being in the Peak Experiences*. *Journal of Genetic Psychology*, 1959. 94: p.49
- vii Maslow, AH. *Cognition of Being in the Peak Experiences*. *Journal of Genetic Psychology*, 1959. 94: p.65