



I awoke  
this morning  
with  
devout  
thanksgiving  
for my  
friends,  
the old  
and  
the new.

Ralph Waldo Emerson  
(1803 - 1882)  
Essayist

Awe is the first language our spirit learns. We experience the grand, the unexpected, the beautifully subtle and our spirit pauses to absorb the moment. In awe, we see it all. We know ourselves more clearly as we access that which is greater than us and are instantly, often joyfully, right-sized.

Words are our second language; they guide how we live.

Words shape our identity. With words we describe ourselves to ourselves. We take that which we encounter, give it language, and then name who we are. We articulate our most important passions and detail our emerging character. Our words can limit us or liberate us. What we say about ourselves shapes the people we become.

Words mold our relationships. With words we define our connections with others. We meet those around us and use words to fashion the nature of the bonds we form. We keep things light or take things deep. Our words can delight or discourage, can hurt or heal. Words are a conduit for passing kindness, or callousness, or tenderness between us and others. Using words we can express gratitude for our shared life, and love for our friends.

Words inspire our best living. With words – even unspoken ones – we voice where we are headed. We stand firmly in the present and sketch the outlines of our tomorrows. Words express our personal needs and dreams; they set forth how we might respond to the hungers and hopes of our community. We locate ourselves in the journey that will become our history by declaring what we seek and encouraging those with whom we travel.

In the end, two words say it all: thank you.

*What words do I want to use more often in the coming year? How might I more fully experience awe?*