



**LEAP BEFORE
YOU LOOK**
**72 Shortcuts for Getting
Out of Your Mind and
Into the Moment**

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LEAP BEFORE YOU LOOK

Nature Practice: Open to the Vastness of the View

Level of Difficulty *

While walking in nature
On a trail or in the forest,
When you come to an opening,
Or a sudden drop opening to a vista,
Stop.
Let the vastness of the view pull you into itself
And dissolve you in itself,
And at the same time let the vastness of the view
Enter you completely
And become your inner landscape.
Let the suddenness of the opening
Happen both within and without.

There are many great mystics who have passed through radical awakening while being in nature. In William Wordsworth's long poem "the Prelude," his initiation into his own natural state of limitlessness is mirrored on every page by his experience of nature. The twentieth-century writer Douglas Harding, who wrote the book *On Having No Head*, passed through a radical awakening while hiking in the Himalayas. He had no expectations; he was a major in the British army on leave, thirty-three years old, taking a walk in the mountains.

Suddenly, the path opened up into a vast panorama, so he could see for miles around in every direction. "A very clear still day, and a view from the ridge where I stood, over misty blue valleys to the highest mountain range in the world, made a setting worthy of the grandest vision.... It was all, quite literally, breathtaking. I seemed to stop breathing altogether, absorbed in the Given. Here it was, this superb scene, brightly shining in the clear air, alone and unsupported, mysteriously suspended in the void, and (and this was the real miracle, the wonder and delight) utterly free of "me," unstained by any observer. Its total presence was my total absence, body and soul. Lighter than air, clearer than glass, altogether released from myself, I was nowhere around."

There are many people like Douglas Harding, who have had their heads removed by being in nature, by the vastness of the view. When you are out hiking, be open to nature as the great teacher, the great decapitator.

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