

Stressed out by the news? Nature videos will make you happier

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Credit: Wikipedia.

Being out in wild nature has been shown to reduce stress and lift our spirits. But does watching nature documentaries have a similar effect? A study from UC Berkeley and BBC Earth suggests so.

UC Berkeley psychologist Dacher Keltner teamed up with BBC Earth to explore the connection between nature videos and positive emotions.

"I have long believed that nature and viewing sublime and beautiful nature in painting, film and video shifts how we look at the world, and humbles us, brings into focus our core goals, diminishes the petty voice of the self and strengthens our nervous system," says Keltner, who has published numerous studies on the psychological and physiological effects of nature-inspired awe.

"When the BBC approached me about working together, it was a no-brainer," he adds. "I think their video content inspires green tendencies in viewers."

The online study surveyed more than 7,500 people in the United States, United Kingdom, India, Singapore, Australia and South Africa. Participants reported how they felt before and after viewing clips of "Planet Earth II" wildlife footage, popular drama and news coverage.

Compared to news, drama and emotionally neutral footage, video clips of wildlife and nature aroused a distinct uptick in feelings of awe, curiosity, joy and amazement and reduced feelings of anger, stress, low energy and tiredness.

"The importance of the [Real Happiness](#) study is that brief exposures to Planet Earth II content bring greater awe, positive emotion, and wellbeing to people in six countries," Keltner says. "The results also show that younger people are highly stressed out, and that viewing videos about the [natural](#) world reduces their stress, which tells me that we can turn to other kinds of new social media content to find calm during these highly stressful times."

Provided by University of California - Berkeley

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