

## Henry David Thoreau, *Walden, or Life in the Woods*

Thoreau suggests that we need to read *deliberately*, which means to read with intention and purpose. This exercise is designed to help you practice the kind of meditative reading Thoreau calls for.

***Slowly and carefully read (and re-read) the following quotes from Thoreau's Walden. Then answer the following questions:***

- The millions are awake enough for physical labor; but only one in a million is awake enough for effective intellectual exertion, only one in a hundred millions to a poetic or divine life. To be awake is to be alive. I have never yet met a man who was quite awake. How could I have looked him in the face?
- We must learn to reawaken and keep ourselves awake, not by mechanical aids, but by an infinite expectation of the dawn, which does not forsake us in our soundest sleep.
- I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived.

### Questions:

1. What word(s) or phrase(s) “pop out” at you? Spend some time savoring these words. Try to memorize them. Let them mix with your own thoughts, experiences, memories, and emotions. Try to “listen” to what the words are saying *to you*.
2. What, according to Thoreau, does it mean to be *alive* or *awake*? List as many implications as possible (bullet points are fine.)
3. Think about your own life. Are you “alive” or “awake” in the sense that Thoreau intends? Give some examples.