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# Got Gravity?

Shane Raleigh

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# **Got Gravity? ~ By Shane Raleigh**

Some people believe that the world would be a better place if gravity didn't hold them down to the earth. However, gravity is an essential factor in most every aspect of life! Gravity is more than a force that pulls people into their shoes; gravity is a force that pulls two objects together. One may think that gravity can only really go so far as to keep our solar system together, but in all actuality, the entire Milkyway Galaxy is held together by a black hole, a huge sphere of super-condensed matter. Gravity is important for many things, such as holding in our atmosphere, keeping our moon in place, and holding us in our solar system.

Our atmosphere is composed of gases and vapors which we breathe to stay alive. This air is made up of molecules, and molecules have mass. Mass is attracted to more mass, which means that the earth, a very large mass, is holding in the air, a still large but less dense mass. If the earth didn't have gravity, then we would suffocate due to lack of oxygen because all of it would float away. Also important is the atmosphere's ability to hold in the heat of the sun. Without an atmosphere, the earth would be very hot during the day and extremely cold at night. Our atmosphere even protects us from meteors and harmful UV rays. The rocks falling from the sky burn up due to friction, and most of the sun's UV rays are absorbed by ozone molecules (Rodriguez 1).

Sure, it is fun to have oxygen for the birds, but gravity does much more than hold things together. In the instance of the moon, gravity prevents the axis of the earth from tilting. Without the moon, Earth's rotation pattern would be unpredictable (Foing 7-8). Mars, a planet with two very small moons, has a very unstable axis. It has been observed that the polar icecaps of Mars have actually been shifting around, sometimes being found on the planet's

(Continued on page 53)



equator. Another amazing factor about the moon's gravity is that it tugs on the ocean. Without the moon's push and pull, the ocean would no longer have tidal zones for intertidal animals to live in. Like children are attracted to candy, the seas will shift closer to the moon.

The moon may prove useful in many ways, but the sun's gravity, which is extremely important to our solar system, does much better by far. Just as a heat lamp warms eggs, the sun provides energy for the earth. But without the sun, how would this planet fair? Without the sun, the earth would literally be a chunk of ice, perpetually drifting through space, plunged into permanent darkness because the universe is expanding. The other galaxies and stars are skittering away, and we don't have the necessary speed to catch up to them. If there was still life on sub-zero earth, then it would have to shovel frozen gases into a fire just to have air to breathe!

The earth is an amazing place, but none of it would be as beautiful as it is without gravity. This planet would be a dull world without the vivid colors, but thankfully, there is such a thing as gravity. Rejoice in this! Be joyful in the fact that ground travel is even possible! Pause to smell the rosy scent in the crisp air, to splash in the high tide of the deep, blue ocean, to bask in the warmth of the blazing sunlight. The world is a grand place with grand people, and it is all held together by the force exerted by mass. There is one downside to gravity, however; falling and bashing a knee on the sidewalk.

#### Works Cited

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