

The Ice Cube Experiment: Diary of a Glaciologist

Goal: bring the bigger situation closer.

Method: go to the freezer, get an ice cube from freezer, put ice cube in clear glass, start stopwatch, watch it melt, take notes, experience the moment, measure quantity of liquid/time it takes to melt. Compare. Summarize observations.

Before I begin:

House temp: 22 degrees

Estimated time for ice cube to melt based on professional opinion of temporary glaciologist: 22 minutes

Note: I have no idea how or why those two things would be directly numerically related. Just my glaciologist instinct.

9:02 pm Nov 2 2022

Set up: glass with ice cube skewered with a stick suspended above

Observations.

I see: opaque/clear/matte/whiteish

I hear: nothing, stillness

I smell: nothing

I touch: cold, wet to the touch

9:12 pm

I have been watching the ice for 12 minutes

A small puddle is starting to form around the icecube (on stick)

I see: drops, water, melting, more shiny/clear as it melts

I hear: ice dripping, small teardrops; the ice cracking, it sounds empty like TV static, cracking

I smell: coldness

I touch: coldness, wetness, more wet as it melts

I feel: emotional, cold and empty

9:25 pm

We have pass the 22 minute mark, my expert opinion on ice-melting time has proven to be incorrect

9:28 pm

The ice is taking longer than expected to melt and my patience seems to be dissolving even faster

9:31 pm

I'm getting very bored. MAKE THIS END.

9:38 pm

I just heard a big crack. I have this vivid picture in my mind of a huge amount of ice sliding off an icesheet into the sea, falling faster than tears down a cheek

I'm reminded of the numbers. The scary fucking numbers and amount of ice being lost. I feel more connected. I feel more scared.

Observations continue: drops, more drops, drops becoming closer together, drops becoming bigger, ice becoming smaller. Less ice. More water. More fear.

9:45 pm

It has fallen off the stick and is considerably smaller.

I see: time slipping away

I hear: time slipping away

I touch: time slipping away

I feel: time slipping away

9:53 pm

Ice is gone. Only a thin puddle left, a small reflection/indication of what the ice once was.

Final observations:

It feels like even the biggest numbers can't communicate this feeling. Time is melting away.

I can't process the big numbers, big feelings.

I feel scared and vulnerable.

I feel hopeful and motivated.

Time it took for ice to melt: 51 minutes

Total quantity of melted ice: 1 tbsp

Total quantity of ice lost in Greenland in the time it took for my ice cube to melt: 27168975 tons. That number in tablespoons is too big for my calculator to compute.

Final remarks; time is ticking. Ice is melting. Action now.

Random thoughts:

Before freezers, they used to ship ice from glaciers to rich people so that they could have iced tea.