

Deep Silence

1 Silence is not an absence of sound, but rather a shifting of attention to the sounds that speak to the soul. **Thomas Moore**

2 Silence is an ocean. Speech is a river. When the ocean is searching for you, don't walk into the river. Listen to the ocean. **Rumi**

3 Silence is the shaft we descend into the depths of contemplation. Silence is the vehicle that takes us to the innermost centre of our being, which is the place for authentic practice. **Elaine MacInnes**

4 A room devoted to silence honors and invites the unknown, the untamed, the wild, the shy, the unfathomable, that which rarely has a chance to surface within us. **Gunilla Norris**

5 Sound is our mind, silence is our being. **Osho**

6 Yoga is the settling of the mind into silence. When the mind has settled, we are established in our essential nature, which is unbounded consciousness. Our essential nature is usually overshadowed by the activity of the mind. **Patanjali**

7 My personal habits are reading, listening to music, and silence. **Edith Sitwell**

8 A soul that has never tasted the sweetness of inner silence is a restless spirit which disturbs the silence of others. **Saint Maria Faustyna Kowalska**

9 Until the mind quiets and comes to rest in the heart, we have not yet honored the Sabbath. **Ivan M. Granger**

10 If we think about the most intimate relationships we have in our lives--our family, our friends, our spouses--we can recognize immediately that the intimacy there is built on years invested in deep and true listening. The depth of listening needs to be on another level all together if we want to achieve intimacy. We cannot just silence our tongues (although this is a start). We must silence the dialogue of our own "ego" which makes us deaf to the underlying needs, desires, and pains of those we love. These are often not even communicated in words, but in actions, facial expression, or even in things left unsaid. Deep intimacy requires deep listening in our personal lives and in our spiritual lives. Let us strive to develop this level of intimacy not just with those we have been blessed with in our lives, but with He who has gifted them to us. In truth, the depth of our intimacy with Him makes us all the more capable of loving those around us

anyway. So what are we waiting for? Let us strive for that "sweetness of inner silence" and bring the fruits of our "gentle peace" to all those around us.

--Catherine Birri

11 How to Be a Poet
(To remind myself)

i
Make a place to sit down.
Sit down. Be quiet.
You must depend upon
affection, reading, knowledge,
skill -- more of each
than you have -- inspiration,
work, growing older, patience,
for patience joins time
to eternity. Any readers
who like your poems,
doubt their judgment.

ii
Breathe with unconditional breath
the unconditioned air.
Shun electric wire.
Communicate slowly. Live
a three-dimensional life;
stay away from screens.
Stay away from anything
that obscures the place it is in.
There are no unsacred places;
there are only sacred places
and desecrated places.

iii
Accept what comes from silence.
Make the best you can of it.
Of the little words that come
out of the silence, like prayers
prayed back to the one who prays,
make a poem that does not disturb
the silence from which it came.

--Wendell Berry

12 Of Being

I know this happiness
is provisional:

the looming presences --
great suffering, great fear --

withdraw only
into peripheral vision:

but ineluctable this shimmering
of wind in the blue leaves:

this flood of stillness
widening the lake of sky:

this need to dance,
this need to kneel:
 this mystery:

--Denise Levertov

For Reflection and Discussion

A What role does silence play in your spiritual life?

B Have you ever been on a silent retreat? What was your experience of silence?

C How do you make space for silence in your life? If you wanted to make more space for silence in your life, how would you do that?

D Has your experience of All Souls had an impact on your understanding of silence and the importance of silence?

--Mary Beth Hatem, for covenant groups at All Souls Church, Unitarian

