

Friends of Silence

Vol. XXXIII, No. 8

+ + + + +

September 2020

“Is there enough Silence for the Word to be heard?”

Dear Friends ~ I was standing motionless in the kitchen, completely absorbed by the articles and apps open on my phone one recent morning, when my six-year-old entered the room for his breakfast and requisite morning hug. He was chattering and asked me a question that didn't register in my distracted state, and frankly agitated me because at that early hour my mind already was stretched in countless directions and tormented by emotions about people and places far from our kitchen. Perceptive to my anxious state (and undeterred by my obvious mood), he sidled up next to me, craned his neck to see the phone screen and asked, “Mom, what are you looking for?”

Pause. “That’s a great question, buddy. I’m not really sure.” I put down the phone.

What are any of us looking for when we turn and re-turn to our distracting compulsions? Maybe answers. Or hope. Or reassurance. Or healing. Or love. But as Barbara Brown Taylor helpfully reminds us, “*The treasure we seek requires no lengthy expedition, no expensive equipment, no superior aptitude or special company. All we lack is the willingness to imagine that we already have everything we need. The only thing missing is our consent to be where we are.*”

One of the most powerful medicines for our anxious, agitated hearts can be found in the small, daily moments that make up a life. When we attune ourselves to the gifts that surround us, we have abundant opportunity to connect, create, receive and give--to allow ourselves rest from tiresome striving and appreciate that in actuality we live steeped in “enough”. ~Joy



It's hard to let go anything we love. We live in a world which teaches us to clutch. But when we clutch we're left with a fistful of ashes.

~ Madeleine L'Engle in *A RING OF ENDLESS LIGHT*



Unsplash Images

I taught myself to live simply and wisely,
to look at the sky and pray to God,
and to wander long before evening
to tire my superfluous worries...

~ Anna Akhmatova

from “I Taught Myself to Live Simply”



Unsplash Images

Those who dwell, as scientists or laymen, among the beauties and mysteries of the earth are never alone or weary of life. Whatever the vexations and concerns of their personal lives, their thoughts can find paths that lead to inner contentment and to renewed excitement in living. Those who contemplate the beauty of the earth find reserves of strength that will endure as long as life lasts. There is symbolic as well as actual beauty in the migration of the birds, the ebb and flow of the tides, the folded bud ready for spring. There is something infinitely healing in the repeated refrains of nature--the reassurance that dawn comes after night, and spring after winter.

~ Rachel Carson in *THE SENSE OF WONDER*



**Be happy in the moment, that is enough.
Each moment is all we need, not more.**

~ Mother Theresa

As you open yourself to your soul, a calming sense of peace and connectedness develops within you. This peaceful feeling deepens your levels of thought, releases the innate healing powers of your body, reminds you to be grateful for all the gifts of life, and broadens your perspective, so that you can be at peace with the way things are.

~ Jack Canfield from *"Rekindling the Fires of Your Soul"*

This is a wonderful day.
I've never seen this one before.

~ Maya Angelou

There was another life that I might have had, but I am having this one.
~ Kazuo Ishiguro in *CONVERSATIONS WITH KAZUO ISHIGURO*

**"It's better to know one mountain
than to climb many."**

~ Native American Proverb

I want to be famous to shuffling men
who smile while crossing streets,
sticky children in grocery lines,
famous as the one who smiled back.

I want to be famous in the way a pulley is famous,
or a buttonhole, not because it did anything spectacular,
but because it never forgot what it could do.

~ Naomi Shihab Nye from *"Famous"*

To live content with small means.
To seek elegance rather than luxury,
and refinement rather than fashion.
To be worthy not respectable,
and wealthy not rich.
To study hard, think quietly, talk gently,
act frankly, to listen to stars, birds, babes,
and sages with open heart, to bear all
cheerfully,
do all bravely, await occasions, hurry never.
In a word, to let the spiritual,
unbidden and unconscious,
Grow up through the common.
This is to be my symphony.

~ William Ellery Channing from *"My Symphony"*



Getty Images

It is no bad thing to celebrate a simple life.

~ J.R.R. Tolkien