

Friends of Silence

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"Is there enough Silence for the Word to be heard?"

Dear Friends ~ Right now, as you are reading these words, take a breath. Let yourself arrive where you are.

The contemplative path begins in presence—rooted in the body, open in the heart, quiet in the mind. These three movements form one inner work: to awaken fully to the moment we are living. Silence and solitude are not escapes from life. They are deep forms of participation. They allow the soul to breathe, to respond rather than react, and to discover that prayer and love mature slowly through fidelity and surrender.

When we grow still, we begin to see differently. Trees, people, and moments simply are what they are—each carrying its own grace. We learn that all places are sacred, that nothing lies outside the circle of belonging. In this awareness, the present becomes our teacher, repairing the past and preparing the future.

To live this way is to trust the slow work of transformation, to rest in the truth that God has never been absent.

Pause for a moment. Feel your breath. Let silence speak. ~ Bob



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A contemplative life is not withdrawal. It is an active engagement born of stillness. Contemplation allows the soul to breathe and to meet the world with presence rather than reaction. Silence is not empty, it is full of answers if we care to listen.

~ Francis Weller in *IN THE ABSENCE OF THE ORDINARY*

One of the dysfunctional patterns of the mind is the assumption that the Now needs to be filled with something all the time.

~ Eckhart Tolle in *THE POWER OF NOW*

Meditation is taking a brief vacation from yourself. The spiritual journey is a process of dismantling the monumental illusion that God is distant or absent.

~ Thomas Keating in *OPEN MIND, OPEN HEART*

When you go out into the woods, and you look at trees, you see all these different trees. And some of them are bent. You sort of understand that it didn't get enough light, and so it turned out that way. And you don't get all emotional about it. You just allow it.

The minute you get near humans, you lose all that. And you are constantly saying "You are too this, or I'm too this!" That judgment mind comes in. And so I practice turning people into trees. Which means appreciating them just the way they are.

~ Ram Dass in *BE HERE NOW*

*I don't know, but maybe
it has something to do
with sitting on the roof
and watching what's left
of the lunar eclipse while
crickets sing silence
into ecstatic buzz
and joy spills into my cells
till the idea of self washes away.
Or, when I'm shucked by loss.
The self in tatters. Raw.
Naked. Unable to know.
Utterly flayed. Then.
That's when I pray.*

~ Rosemerry Wahtola Trommer,
"When She Asked Me About Prayer"
on her blog *A HUNDRED FALLING VEILS*



Make a place to sit down.

Sit down. Be quiet.

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.

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, "How to be a Poet" in GIVEN: POEMS

*There's so much you want to say,
but time keeps taking time and all
your words away. How to say—amid
this flood of gratitude and grief—
"Thank you!", or "How beautiful,
how grand!", or "I don't know how
I survived", or "I miss you so," or
"I was changed forever the day
we two joined hands."*

*As you reach for your last words,
you realize this is it—this ebbing tide
of language called your life, words
trailing into silence, returning to
the source—this unfinished poem
you would have writ, had you not
been awash in wonder, grateful
to be living it.*

~ Parker J. Palmer, "The Poem I Would Have Writ"

Prayer is easy only for beginners and for those who are already Saints. During all the long years in between, it is difficult. Why? Because prayer has the same inner dynamics as love, and love is sweet only in its initial stage, when we first fall in love, and again in its final, mature stage. In between, love is hard work, dogged fidelity, and needs willful commitment beyond what is normally provided by our emotions and our imagination.

It's when I say, "I don't know how to love," and, "I don't know how to pray," that I first begin to understand what love and prayer actually are.

~ Ronald Rolheiser in PRAYER: OUR DEEPEST LONGING

One way to work on your self is by being present in the body.

Another way is by expanding the heart. A third way is by quieting the mind. The wise person finds a way to work on all three at the same time.

~ Russ Hudson & Richard Riso in UNDERSTANDING THE ENNEAGRAM

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~ Eckhart Tolle in THE POWER OF NOW

Solitude is one of the most precious things in the human spirit. It is different from loneliness. When you are lonely, you become acutely conscious of your own separation. Solitude can be a homecoming to your own deepest belonging. One of the lovely things about us as individuals is the incommensurable in us.

In each person, there is a point of absolute nonconnection with everything else and with everyone. This is fascinating and frightening. It means that we cannot continue to seek outside ourselves for things we need from within. The blessings for which we hunger are not to be found in other places or people. These gifts can only be given to you by yourself. They are at home at the hearth of your soul.

~ John O'Donohue in ANAM CARA

During the past era our focus has been on a transcendent, often disembodied spirituality. As a result we have forgotten the very practical nature of our true self. In the dimension of oneness everything is included. There is nothing higher or lower, nothing that is not sacred. Spiritual knowledge belongs to the whole of life, to each cell of creation. The soul is present within the whole body of each of us and also within the body of the earth. Spiritual principles offer us a very practical way to work with the energies of life.

~ Llewellyn Vaughan-Lee in AWAKENING THE WORLD

It's said that the journey to God has an end, but the journey in God is endless.

All of reality is simply zero blooming into infinity.

~ Jory Pryor in BECOMING ALL LIGHT: THE NON-DUAL HEART OF CHRISTIANITY