

Mindfulness – The Power of Silence

The power of silence has always been recognised but it has never been needed more than today. Our world is noisier than ever – we have headphones permanently in and we incessantly interact with the world through social media. Although these technologies have their benefits, they can also serve as distractions and give us ways to just avoid being with ourselves. Staying silent and setting aside the distraction of reading and interacting with others can be liberating. We are freed from the need to make conversation or to assume a particular personality, and silence allows us to notice more acutely both what is happening inside us and in the world around us. Our senses are heightened and our experience is sharper, richer and more intense.



TRY THIS:

Being in complete silence can be difficult and daunting, however it is possible to be silent while doing a short activity, such as eating a meal or going out for a walk. You can deliberately switch off any gadgets. Experiment by starting with a short period that feels manageable and extend it when you can. You never know, you may even enjoy it!

-GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR SILENCE-

- No speaking (although if you come across someone else who is not aware that you are remaining silent, it is fine to exchange necessary words!)
- No reading, listening to music or watching television
- Sometimes no eye contact is suggested too, to avoid distraction
- Writing is sometimes discouraged but silence can also open up a well of creativity or help you to focus, so it is a personal choice.

You may want to jot down everything you must remember to do or are worried about in order to engage more deeply in periods of silence so as not to spend the whole time trying to remember things.



REMEMBER!

When in silence, it is fine to continue with routine activities, such as homework, cleaning your room, walking and so on. You could also allocate the time to rest – be still and reflect in silence. Persevere with it and you will be surprised!

-BE AWARE-

Dropping into silence is an opportunity to experience how our 'weather' changes from one moment to the next. When we are silent, we notice how desperately we crave stimulation as we become engrossed in, say, reading something. We might do everything more slowly, as we are no longer rushing on to the next thing or we might experience a burst of restlessness as the stillness grates. We become aware of our situation and thoughts.

When you have been in silence for a while be careful to ease yourself back into the noise of everyday life, especially when safety depends on your reflexes, as these may be slower than usual at first.

Being in silence for several hours is not always easy or enjoyable but it is always invaluable.