

Going into Silence

How to Have a Silent Retreat at Home

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There is an infinite pool of stillness inside all of us. And there are many ways to access this nourishing supply of peace and wisdom, but one of the simplest is by 'going into silence'.

One of the most effective ways of experiencing this is by going on a guided silent retreat. However, with the following tips, taking time to be 'in silence' in your own home, even for an hour or two, can be surprisingly restful and illuminating.

There is a difference between simply being quiet at home and intentionally 'going into silence' with the aim of connecting to the source of our inner peace. Intentional silence has been used as a devotional path by spiritual and religious seekers for millennia, and for good reason.

Time without the distractions of conversation and others' thoughts creates space for your inner wisdom to get through. This infinite source, which some people call God, or the Divine, or the Universal Mind, has access to your soul's journey and knows the bigger picture for your life.

It always knows the highest and best for you, and if you create time and space for the guidance to get through, it can dazzle you with its insights and suggestions for life's problems and challenges. It is like a loving and benevolent guiding hand, showing you the next steps to take, one at a time.

But this quiet and subtle presence cannot get through to us unless we slow down and become still enough to hear, feel and benefit from its gift to us. And now, more than ever, our

fast paced, technological noisy and chaotic world is making it harder to benefit from its loving and nourishing support.

With some careful planning and focused intention it is possible to go on your own 'mini silent retreat' in your own home. At first, even with just an hour you'll notice the difference, but the ideal time is around four hours, as this gives time for the mind to unwind enough for the brain rhythm to drop into a lower and more deeply meditative frequency.

1. Ideally it is best if you can find somewhere where you can be alone and know you won't be disturbed. To get the best results you will need to disconnect from all technology, so before you start, tell anyone who needs to know what you will be doing, and that you will be out of contact for a while.
2. Ensure you have everything you need for your time in silence, such as light refreshments and supplies so you do not need to go and interact with others during your special time. It is helpful to have a journal or notebook to record any insights or realisations.
3. During the time you plan to be in silence, choose activities which will not involve other people's thoughts, or that will take you out of your own inner world (like reading, listening to music or watching TV generally do). You can rest, walk in the garden or park, draw or paint, take a long bath, practice yoga or even clean or tidy a cupboard. Any gentle activity that frees the mind from frenetic activity can be undertaken during your time in silence.
4. Once your phone is switched off and you are ready to begin, take a few minutes to go into meditation or prayer, and ask to be connected to your higher self. You may want to ask for guidance on a specific issue, or you may prefer to keep your intention general and open.
5. Then sit for a while in meditation or simply in contemplation, perhaps just looking out of the window or at a beautiful picture or object, and simply observe what you are feeling and experiencing.
6. At this point I invite you to cultivate the practice of what I call 'following the energy'. One of the many benefits of taking time in silence is that it helps you get to know yourself better. Gently ask yourself 'What do I really want to do right now?' This is precious time - there are no 'oughts' or 'shoulds', only the question, 'What is the most nourishing activity for me right now?' Sometimes, as you begin to slow down, you may feel deeply tired. It's as if all the accumulated tension has risen to the surface and all you really want is to lie down and sleep. If that's the case, then do this. Give yourself complete permission to follow your inner longing. Or you may want to do something else. Simply wait until an inner calling draws you towards moving from one activity to the next.

7. Other times, with all the usual distractions taken away, it can feel as if a void opens up and at first you may just feel bored. This is a gateway to something much deeper, and is an invitation to sit and be still. And in the stillness, whatever is hiding underneath the boredom can begin rising to the surface. Sometimes it can be old, stuck energy such as memories or undigested experiences. Being in silence helps to release these. This energy knows how to pass through, so there is nothing you need to do; simply experience the dissolving and rest until it completes itself. It may be helpful to write down what you experience as you continue deeper into your silence. The longer you are there, the stronger your connection to your inner guidance becomes.
8. Other times, the mind can become even noisier than usual, and this is perfectly natural too. As you deepen into the process, the mind will begin to unwind and slow down.
9. As you move more deeply into a meditative state, you may notice things that you hadn't seen before. Patterns of light, the depth of the colours around you, the shape of an object, or the taste of your tea. All the senses are heightened in silence, and the beauty of nature especially becomes more present than usual. Continue to 'follow the energy' during your silent time, giving yourself permission to slow right down. Trust the process.
10. Half an hour before you are due to finish your time in silence, I recommend recording any final realisations in your journal, and then with your focused intention sit and give thanks to the source of your higher guidance as you 'close' your session in silence for today. Notice how your mind and body are feeling now compared to when you began. Then stretch a little, have a drink and maybe something light to eat as you prepare to connect again with the outside world.

Taking regular time in silence in this way can be such a simple but extremely powerful way of dealing with the stress of modern day life. And it's free!

If you have any questions or wish to share your experience, please email me at
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and to find free guided meditations, other resources and articles about the power of silence,
stillness and self-enquiry, please visit
www.marionyoung.co.uk