

UUC Covenant Groups Topic
SILENCE
December # 2

Light the Chalice
Opening Words

Every day
I try to expand my horizons
Inwardly,
In silence.

Sri Chinmoy

Read our Covenant
Check in

Topic Introduction

In many ways, silence is not valued in the hustle and pace of our culture, and experiencing silence in a setting with others can feel uncomfortable, even threatening. We usually feel under some pressure to think or say something, even when assured that it is not expected. Yet, there is power in silence and through silent moments we can come to awareness and understanding that we cannot obtain in other ways.

“The power of silence lies in its emptiness. Silence is a receptive space. It creates a sacred void, an opening through which you can receive: truth, perspective, strength, healing, revelation. In silence, you transcend words and contact the wordless. You fill up with a peaceful knowing. Silence is not the same as prayer. Prayer is a way of directing your feelings and thoughts, focusing them and sending them toward a source. Silence is listening, receiving, being. One is trying to reach the source of communication with it; the other, silence, is allowing yourself to hear the source within yourself, to become one with it In prayer, you are the sender; in silence, you are the receiver.” (From Real Moments by Barbara De Angelis)

We can also come to experience compassionate silence, a silence that surrounds the prayer and reflection that we can share with others. Compassionate silence can help us connect with each other, to be respectfully present, and “to touch and be touched by truths that evade all words.” (Palmer, P: A Hidden Wholeness)¹

Questions for Discussion

- How may the experience silence connect you with the deeper ground during this Holiday season?
- How does silence connect you with the present now?
- In what ways have you found silence to be helpful in your spiritual or religious growth?
- Are there ways you have used silence as a tool for being with others?
- How is silence a part of our listening together?
- What does it mean to be respectfully present?
- What do you see as benefits/drawbacks of these silent times?
- How does the framing of silence as emptiness, as presence, as receptive space, contribute to your spiritual understanding?
- How do you feel about DeAngelis’ distinction between prayer and silence?

Check out
Closing Words

To drink deeply of the silence,
Inhale the quiet,
Lose myself in timelessness . . .
That is soul-space. (From Soul-Making by Edward Sellner)

¹ Palmer, Parker. A Hidden Wholeness