

The Tip #4

We live in times where there is an abundance of information but a scarcity of attention.

Leave the phone at home (or in your bag) when you go for a walk, go to a restaurant, at the dinner table or most importantly, when you talk to your children.

The Tale #4

Silence really is Golden

If there is one thing I enjoy (ironically when I have time) it is sitting on a beach staring out looking at the ocean. When I first lay back in the sand, I generally have the ‘to do’ list running through my head and the clutter jangles mercilessly but after a while something changes. After some time, I find myself drifting off to a different kind of thinking. Not having interruptions helps. The staring out to the horizon creates the s-p-a-c-e and reflective time to give proper thought to issues and better still, problem-solve more effectively from the sand than from the desk. (If you read the work of Daniel Kahneman’s *Thinking, Fast and Slow* it will resonate).

I wouldn’t know one way or another if this falls into a category of meditation but I do become aware of how the mind clears – like fog lifting – and how a clearer way of thinking emerges. Ideas become less inchoate and more crystallised and I often arrive at solutions more creatively and joyously. Naturally, part of the success in this approach hinges on the need for silence – uncluttered silence.



If the thought of sitting and meditating is too much to bear, simply committing to a period of silence could help you sort out one’s stressed head. In the modern world, we pride ourselves on being ‘busy’. Ask anyone how they’ve been and there’s a good chance they’ll tell you they’ve been “crazy busy” running between work and social events and the gym and parenting duties. ‘Being busy’ is now the standard response and for some, is worn as a badge of honour. Most people will tell you they “don’t have time” to stay silent because there are too many ideas/plans to communicate.

However, as writer Tim Kreider [wrote](#) in *The New York Times*, “the space and quiet that idleness provides is a necessary condition for standing back from life and seeing it whole, for making unexpected connections and waiting for the wild summer lightning strikes of inspiration – it is, paradoxically, necessary to getting any work done”.

Mental health experts agree that scheduling periods of silence could be a wonderful antidote to the chaos of life. Many people are confronted by the idea of silence. We are used to being so 'on', so 'connected' and having access to so much that stimulates us. If you can take regular breaks from talking to just be with your thoughts, you'll find everything slows down a bit and it can also give you a different perspective. Regular silent periods also help you think differently. There is a correlation between periods of silence and stimulating creativity.

When we give our brains that time to rest and 'reset' we access a different form of thinking. It's not the prefrontal cortex, busy, solutions-focused thinking, it's more intuitive. You certainly don't need the transformative benefits of a 10-day India silent retreat and in any case, researchers say you don't have to go so long without talking. If you feel confronted by it, start small. Here's four ways to easily incorporate silence without feeling overwhelmed by the idea:

Start your day with silence.

This doesn't mean racing around the house with a mouthful of toast while doing your make-up for work without talking to your family or housemates. It needs to be intentional. Acknowledge you are going to try and wake up five minutes early and spend it in silence.

Take a walk.

As great as podcasts or new music might be, researchers say there is a lot to be said for taking a walk in silence. The interesting thing that occurs for me is that it's often the time that I am at my most creative. (And you benefit from the walk!)

Get close to nature.

If you find it hard to sit in silence and do nothing, go down to the beach and sit on the water's edge and just watch the waves rolling, or lie on the grass under the trees and watch the movement of the leaves or the clouds. These can be good ways to connect with silence and not feel totally confronted by it.

Meditate.

If you're overwhelmed by the idea of being silent and getting close to your suppressed thoughts, then using a formal meditation technique, such as focusing on your breath or a mantra, can help give you a focus. It's not for me (I find meditation as useful as a fish snorkel but some love it and see its transformative effects).

Are you getting the silence you need? Are you finding the right balance? Coaching/Mentoring (Moaching) can help. Call +61 410 586 700 **Be and Become.**