

Reach Out



FINDING YOUR PLACE IN THE COMMUNITY

Week 13: Quiet Time

If you stop and think through the events of your average day, how often (aside from sleeping) do you find yourself in silence? You get ready for school while listening to music and checking texts and Facebook to make sure nothing new has happened while you were sleeping. You get to school and move from class to class surrounded by teachers teaching, students talking, and overhead announcements. Lunch is spent surrounded by people. The afternoon is more of the same, and rehearsal is filled with accepting direction, singing, dancing, and acting. You get home and eat, maybe in front of the television, maybe with your family, talking about your day. You sit down to do homework, listening to music and texting your friends while checking your Snapchat and Instagram. When you finally go to bed, you do so to music. Does this description seem to match your average day?

In today's world, we are constantly connected to other people, in reality and in cyberspace. We have become addicted to filling the silence and down-time with technology and seeing what other people are doing. The problem is that our brains are wired to need down-time and silence, real disconnected silence. When we listen to music or look at a screen, we are stimulating our brain and requiring it to respond. Think of it like being with a person who continuously asks questions but never gives you a moment to respond. Your brain needs time free from outside stimulus to just process.

Some cultures call this quiet time meditation, a term that carries a bit of a negative stereotype. You don't have to sit in the lotus position and chant "ohm" to meditate. It can simply be sitting in silence, clearing your thoughts and worries, and breathing deeply to allow your mind and body to relax.

Some people call this quiet time prayer, a time to connect with their creator and offer their worries and concerns up. Like meditation, prayer is often misunderstood, too; it doesn't have to be done on your knees, vocalizing your thoughts to God. It can be done by simply quieting your world and just listening.

The long and short is that quiet time is necessary and an excellent way to relieve stress and bring peace and productivity into your life. Many great minds of the past have removed themselves to quiet places to rejuvenate, to observe, and to reconnect. Taking the time to be quiet every day will make you a much happier person.

Challenge: Quiet Time

Find at least 15 minutes during your day to put your phone away, turn off your computer and your tv, and find a place to be alone in complete silence with nothing to stimulate your senses but your own thoughts. It may feel awkward and boring the first couple times, but I guarantee that you will be less stressed and happier if you find the time to be silent every day.