

The Beauty of a Silent Walk



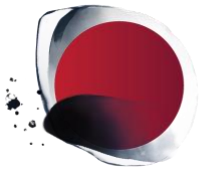
Introduction

“Silence is golden” is a quote often heard. Let us investigate just what that means.

Question

Most of our talking is simply unnecessary and distracting. What is the value of allowing moments of silence? How can this be applied to our communication with ourselves and with others?

“Staying alone and silent for a while with yourself is an extraordinary method of gaining important insights into the state of your business” — (Roach, 2000, p. 119).

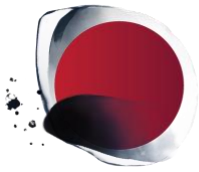


Research

“In entering solitude, one does not necessarily find silence. At first solitude can be noisy, filled with the conflicts of the body and the mind’s ongoing commentary that Chogyam Trugpa called ‘subconscious gossip.’ Meditation practices help us to find a way to genuine stillness. In them we find that there are many levels to silence. The first is simply external silence, an absence of noise. Then there is the silence of the body, a growing physical stillness. Gradually there comes a quieting of the mind. Then we discover the silence that comes as a witness to all things, and then twenty other levels of silent absorption in prayer and meditation. Still deeper we come to the indescribable silence beyond the mind, the silence that gives birth to all things. To enter silence is a journey, a letting go into progressively more profound levels of stillness until we disappear into the vastness.” (Kornfield, 2000, p. 83)

Experiential

“Silence is certainly not always golden. Sometimes it’s more like lead. The longer an uncomfortable silence goes on, the harder one scrambles to figure out how to get out from underneath this weight which is getting heavier by the second. Invariably, whatever lifeline one throws themselves to escape the uncomfortable silence is never “true”. Usually, it’s just something...anything said to break the wall down in an attempt to rebuild rapport. Compare this with welcomed silence. The silence of a couple or perhaps a group of people secure enough in their relationship with each other to allow silence to comfort like a blanket, only peeking out from the covers to relate something truly relevant. This is the most wonderful silence. However, this silence is achieved only with a truly “co -created” relationship that encompasses trust between the participants. With clients I have rarely found this type of silence. Usually, the silence with clients is more of an obvious tool to let ideas and concepts “sink in” with myself as the breaker of the silence when it seems necessary. I remember one time in a car with a client I tried to not force conversation with a relocation client as I toured him around areas of the state. We genuinely liked each other,



so I did not want to risk "insulting" him with pre-fabbed conversational topics, so I let the silence enter the car. After about 10 minutes of silence, I felt I should break it (though it was refreshing) and as I looked over to him to remark on the water view out of his window, I realized he had fallen asleep! Not many easy answers to this question!" (Epstein, Rich, 2004)

Article: The Beauty of a Silent Walk

By [Christina Caron](#)

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"No talking. No podcasts. No music. Just some time alone with your thoughts.

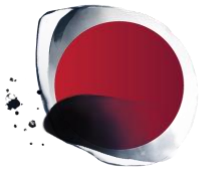
In a TikTok [video](#) that has now amassed nearly half a million views, the influencer Mady Maio describes taking a walk. But not just any walk: a silent one.

For her, the 30-minute stroll was revelatory. No podcasts, no music. Just "me, myself and I."

She was resistant at first. (It was her boyfriend's idea.) "My anxiety could never," she said in the video.

Ms. Maio described the first two minutes as mental "mayhem" that eventually gave way to a "flow state." Her brain fog lifted. Ideas started popping into her head because she was "giving them space to enter."

The silent walk is TikTok's latest wellness obsession, a blend of meditation and exercise that aims to improve mental health. Unlike the similarly trendy "[hot girl walk](#)," a four-mile odyssey that requires goal-setting and giving thanks, the silent walk does not involve



multitasking. There is no agenda other than to set one foot in front of the other and take note of the world around you.

Walking in silence is an ancient tradition rooted in mindfulness, a form of meditation that helps people focus on the physical sensations, thoughts and emotions of the present moment, without any judgment.

The fact that the silent walk is nothing new has attracted a chorus of critics; “Gen Z thinks it just invented walking,” they say.

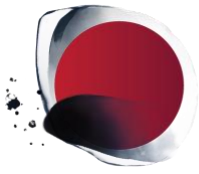
To that, Arielle Lorre, 38, a content creator in Los Angeles, had to laugh.

“Fifteen or 20 years ago, this would not have even been a conversation,” said Ms. Lorre, who has often discussed the [benefits of silent walks](#), most recently [on her podcast](#) and on [TikTok](#). But silent walking feels relevant right now because many of us have become tethered to our devices, she added.

The question then becomes: “How do we counteract that?” Ms. Lorre said.

Walking is a well-established balm for the mind and body. [Research has shown](#) that walking for as little as 10 extra minutes a day may lead to a longer life. And a [2020 study](#) in The Journal of Environmental Psychology found that a 30-minute walk in an urban park reduced the amount of time that people dwelled on negative thoughts. Walking has also been shown to improve [creativity](#) and help [fend off depression](#).

Ms. Lorre, who walks in silence for at least 45 minutes roughly four times a week, said that since she started this practice about a year ago, she now sleeps better, feels calmer and has more consistent energy throughout the day.



But for some people, the idea of a silent walk might seem torturous. One [2014 study](#) found that, if left with no other option, people would shock themselves rather than sit alone with their thoughts.

“Most people seem to prefer to be doing something rather than nothing, even if that something is negative,” the study authors wrote.

Walking, however, can make it more pleasant to spend time with ourselves, experts say.

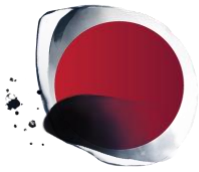
Erin C. Westgate, an assistant professor of psychology at the University of Florida in Gainesville who studies boredom, found [in her research](#) that being in transit, which included walking or riding public transportation, was one of the times when people most often reported having enjoyable thoughts.

Walking “isn’t so demanding that it’s actually taking up a lot of your mental bandwidth,” Dr. Westgate said, which “gives us permission and license to daydream.”

If the idea of daydreaming seems luxurious, it may be because our attention spans have shriveled over the last two decades.

We now spend an average of about [47 seconds](#) on a piece of screen content before switching to another piece of content, according to research led by Gloria Mark, a professor of informatics at the University of California, Irvine, and the author of “Attention Span.” Back in 2004, however, Dr. Mark found that people could spend an average of [two and a half minutes](#) on email before turning to another work task.

Continually flipping our attention from one task to another is draining, Dr. Mark said. But a silent walk can help replenish our “tank” so that we have a greater reserve of mental



energy, she added. In other words, disconnecting for a while can actually help us perform better.

Dr. Mark suggested taking digital breaks at other times, not just when we're walking, and that we think about an emotional goal for the day, not just a list of tasks.

For example, if your goal is to feel calm, you can write that on a Post-it note and refer back to it when thinking about how you'll spend your fleeting free time that day.

"So many of us feel like we're always behind and running to catch up," said David M. Levy, a professor at the Information School at the University of Washington in Seattle, and the author of "Mindful Tech." This can lead to a state of being "so distracted that we aren't present at all."

But in a future-oriented society we need opportunities to be satisfied with the here and now, Dr. Levy said, and drop the pressure to be productive.

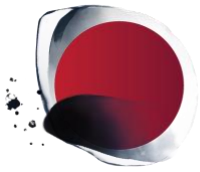
"There is great beauty and aliveness in the world outside of whatever it is we're doing on our devices," Dr. Levy said.

Reference:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/23/well/mind/silent-walk-tiktok-wellness.html>

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The Tim Dukes Method provides an opportunity for self-reflective individuals to cultivate the capacity to receive into consciousness hidden aspects of the self, claiming your unique gifts – ensuring that today's brilliance successfully transitions into tomorrow's wisdom. The Tim Dukes Method is designed and implemented by Dr. Timothy Dukes for determined



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