

# Friends of Silence

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"Is there enough Silence for the Word to be heard?"

Dear Friends ~ When things fall apart, may we learn to embrace the complexity of our lives, befriending our uncertainty and our own lack of control. This is the unwanted doorway to the birth of new life within us.

~ Bob Sabath



Life is a good teacher and a good friend. Things are always in transition, if we could only realize it. Nothing ever sums itself up in the way that we like to dream about. The off-center, in-between state is an ideal situation, a situation in which we don't get caught and we can open our hearts and minds beyond limit. It's a very tender, non-aggressive, open-ended state of affairs.

To stay with that shakiness — to stay with a broken heart, with a rumbling stomach, with the feeling of hopelessness — that is the path of true awakening. Sticking with that uncertainty, getting the knack of relaxing in the midst of chaos, learning not to panic — this is the spiritual path. Getting the knack of catching ourselves, of gently and compassionately catching ourselves, is the path of the warrior.

~ Pema Chödrön in *WHEN THINGS FALL APART*



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*I felt in need of a great pilgrimage.  
So I sat still for three days.*

~ Kabir in *LOVE POEMS FROM GOD*

Stop measuring days by degree of productivity and start experiencing them by degree of presence.

~ Alan Watts in *THE WISDOM OF INSECURITY*

**If I were to begin life again, I should want it as it was. I would only open my eyes a little more...**

~ Jules Renard in *THE JOURNAL OF JULES RENARD*

If the heart wanders or is distracted, bring it back to the point quite gently... And even if you did nothing during the whole of your hour but bring your heart back, though it went away every time you brought it back, your hour would be very well employed.

~ St. Francis de Sales in *INTRODUCTION TO THE DEVOUT LIFE*

What is the relation of contemplation to action? Simply this. He who attempts to act and do things for others or for the world without deepening his own self-understanding, freedom, integrity, and capacity to love, will not have anything to give others.

~ Thomas Merton in *THOMAS MERTON SPIRITUAL MASTER: ESSENTIAL WRITINGS*

*When you touch one thing with deep awareness,  
you touch everything.*

~ Thich Nhat Hanh in *TOUCHING PEACE*



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**The dream of my life  
Is to lie down by a slow river  
And stare at the light in the trees —  
To learn something by being nothing  
A little while but the rich  
Lens of attention.**

~ Mary Oliver from "Entering the Kingdom"  
in *DEVOTIONS*



I love Jesus, who said to us:  
 heaven and earth will pass away.  
 When heaven and earth have passed away,  
 my word will still remain.  
 What was your word, Jesus?  
 Love? Forgiveness? Affection?  
 All your words were  
 one word: Wakeup.

~ Antonio Machado from "Proverbs and Tiny Songs"  
 in *THE SOUL IS HERE FOR ITS OWN JOY*

The hardest spiritual work in the world is to love the neighbor as the self - to encounter another human being not as someone you can use, change, fix, help, save, enroll, convince or control, but simply as someone who can spring you from the prison of yourself, if you will allow it.

~ Barbara Brown Taylor in *AN ALTAR IN THE WORLD*

When we hear the sounds of the Earth crying within us, we're unblocking the channels of felt connectedness that join us to the world. These channels act like a system, opening us up to a source of strength and resilience.

~ Joanna Macy in *A WILD LOVE FOR THE WORLD*

*May God break my heart so deeply  
 the whole world falls in.*

~ Mother Teresa in  
*MOTHER TERESA: QUOTABLE WISDOM*

Sadly, because our culture has devalued the feminine, we have repressed so much of her nature, so many of her qualities. Instead we live primarily masculine values; we are goal-oriented, competitive, driven. Masculine values even dominate our spiritual quest; we seek to be better, to improve ourselves, to get somewhere. We have forgotten the feminine qualities of waiting, listening, being empty. We have dismissed the deep need of the soul, our longing, the feminine side of love.

~ Llewellyn Vaughan-Lee in *LOVE IS A FIRE*

**I will also tell you a secret. We have to will one another:  
 this is the beginning of conscious love.**

~ Maurice Nicoll in  
*PSYCHOLOGICAL COMMENTARIES  
 ON THE WORKS OF GURDJIEFF AND OUSPENSKI*



*Everything in life that we really accept undergoes a change. So suffering becomes love.  
 That is the mystery.*

~ Katherine Mansfield in *THE JOURNAL OF KATHERINE MANSFIELD*



You come to see that suffering is required; and you no more want to avoid it than you want to avoid putting your next foot on the ground when you are walking. In the spiritual path, joy and suffering follow one another like the two feet and you come to a point of not minding which 'foot' is on the ground. You realize on the contrary that it is extremely uncomfortable hopping all the time on the joy foot.

~ John G. Bennett in *TEACHINGS FROM SHERBORNE*