



Soul Matters

Living Love Through The Practice of **Deep Listening**



**Companion Resources
October 2024**



Welcome to the Practice of Deep Listening

*This is your chance to listen carefully.
Your whole life might depend on what you hear.*
- [Joyce Sutphen](#)

Listening helps us find our way. The listening of therapists allows us to navigate our way through life. We turn to prayer to hear God's guidance. We listen to experts so we can get ahead. Like a flashlight that leads us through the darkness, listening helps us stay on course.

And yet maybe there's more to it than that. What if listening doesn't just guide us through the world, but also *creates* our world.

Just think about why you listen to those close to you. Is it really just to gather information? To hear the other clearly? Or is it because you've discovered in those rare moments of deep listening a space suddenly opens up between and around the two of you? A space that is radically different than the space you inhabited a few minutes prior. A space that feels sacred. A space that, once you've experienced it, you never want to leave.

This is why the flashlight way of understanding listening is so limited and limiting. Listening's value isn't just instrumental. It doesn't just help us collect and clarify information. It's not just a tool.

It's a place!

That sacred space of being deeply listened to isn't just calling us home; it *is* home. We don't have conversations; we are our conversations. Listening literally constructs the world we live in. And whom we become.

Consider the old story about the cricket and the coins. Two people are walking down a busy city street. Everyone is rushing to and from their work, trying to get ahead. One of the friends turns to the other and says, "Do you hear that? It's a cricket!" The other friend responds with skepticism, but after focusing his attention finally hears it. "Wow," he says, "How did you hear that cricket with all the noise around us?" His friend responds, "It's all about how I was raised, about what I was taught to listen for." He goes on, "Here, I'll show you something." The friend then reaches into his pocket and pulls out a handful of coins - nickels, quarters, dimes - and he drops them on the sidewalk. Everyone who was rushing by stops... to listen.

One wonders if this is why the poet says, "Listen carefully. Your whole life might depend on what you hear."

Again friends, we must remember this: We don't have conversations, we are our conversations. Who and what we listen to is who and what we become.

May this month help us take one more step toward listening our way home.

Calendar Connections: October 2024

View our full-year calendar [HERE](#)

Interfaith

- [Rosh Hashanah](#) - Jewish New Year - Evening of Wed, Oct. 2, 2024 - Evening of Friday, Oct 4, 2024
- [Yom Kippur](#) - Jewish Day of Atonement - Oct. 11 & 12, 2024
- [Feast of St Francis of Assisi](#) (Christian) - Oct. 4
- [Sukkot](#): Feast of Tabernacles (Jewish) - Oct. 16 - Oct. 23, 2024
- [Ayudha Puja](#) (Hindu) - Oct. 12, 2024 (more [here](#))
- [Samhain](#) (Pagan/Wiccan) - Oct. 31 - Nov. 1 ([more](#))
- [Diwali: Festival of Lights](#) (Hindu) - Tue, Oct 29, 2024 - Sun, Nov 3, 2024

Unitarian Universalist

- Birthday of [e e cummings](#) - Oct. 14
- [Michael Servetus](#) burned at the stake in Geneva - Oct. 27 (1553) (more [here](#))
- [UU Merger Vote](#): Unitarians and Universalists, meeting separately in Syracuse, NY, voted to proceed with consolidation - Oct. 31, 1959. (*The official consolidation, [UUA Founding Day](#), happened in 1961 on May 12.* - more [here](#))

National & Cultural Holidays

- [LGBTQ History Month](#)
- [Hispanic Heritage Month](#) (Sept. 15 - Oct. 15)
- [Bullying Prevention Month](#)
- [ADHD Awareness Month](#)
- Birthday of Mohandas Gandhi - Oct. 2 (1869)
- Thurgood Marshall sworn in as the 1st African American justice of the U.S. Supreme Court. - Oct. 2, 1967
- Ruth Bader Ginsburg joins the U.S. Supreme Court as its second woman Justice - Oct. 4, 1993
- [Sisters in Spirit Vigils](#) (Canada) - October 4, 2018 : Honoring the lives of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG)
- NASA launches first peopled mission, Apollo 7 - Oct. 11 (1968)
- [Indigenous Peoples Day](#) / Columbus Day (U.S.) - Oct. 14, 2024 (second Monday of October) - more [here](#)
- [National Coming Out Day](#) - Oct. 11 (more [here](#))
- Thanksgiving Day (Canada) - Oct. 14, 2024 (second Monday in October)
- [Intersex Awareness Day](#) - Oct. 26
- Halloween, All Soul's Eve - Oct. 31

For Fun and On the Fringe

- Country Music Month (designated Oct. 1970 [by Richard Nixon](#)) more [here](#) and [here](#)
- World Vegetarian Day - Oct. 1
- [World Smile Day](#) - Oct. 6
- Apple introduce new iPod - Oct. 13 (2005)
- [Clergy Appreciation Day](#) - Oct. 13, 2024 (second Sunday of October)

Your Question

This list of questions is an aid for deep reflection. How you answer them is often less important than the journey they take you on.

So, read through the list of questions 2-3 times until one question sticks out for you and captures your attention, or as some faith traditions say, until one of the questions "shimmers."

Then reflect on that question using one or all of these questions:

- *What is going on in my life right now that makes this question so pronounced for me?*
- *How might my inner voice be trying to speak to me through it?*
- *How might Life or my inner voice be trying to offer me a word of comfort or challenge through this question?*



1. Thinking back to your childhood, what did you learn about listening by watching your parents interact with each other?
2. Have you ever heard the ocean or the woods or the sky speak? If so, how might their words still be relevant for you today?
3. If you could go back to a conversation and correct how you listened, what conversation would that be?
4. Have you checked in with your longings lately? What might they be asking of you?
5. If I were to put my ear down to the ground of *your* life, what questions would I hear bubbling beneath the surface?
6. How have your wounds and losses altered the way you listen?
7. What if prayer is really about listening until you hear a voice that says "You are beloved"?
8. If you asked Love "Where do you need me to direct my attention?", how might it answer you back?
9. What would the world sound like to you without the noise of worry in your head?
10. What noise gets in your way the most: The noise of self-doubt? Striving? Scarcity? Jealousy? Regret? Something else?
11. How good are you at listening compassionately to yourself?
12. There are those who say that listening to the wisdom of the unprotected, marginalized and silenced is the only way that the path to justice becomes clear. What is one step you could take this month to hear those voices?
13. Has being listened to ever felt like being loved?
14. **What's your question?** Your question may not be listed above. As always, if the above questions don't include what life is asking from you, spend the month listening to your days to find it.

Recommended Resources for Personal Exploration & Reflection

The following resources are not required reading. Nor are they intended to be analyzed in your group. Instead they are here to companion you on your personal journey this month, get you thinking and open you up to new ways of embodying the practice of deep listening in your life.

Word Roots & Notes

Listen comes from the old English, *hlysnan*, meaning both "attend to" and "obey."

"Silent" and "listen" are anagrams. They have all the same letters in a different order!

Wise Words

The first duty of love is to listen.

Paul Tillich

Being heard is so close to being loved that for the average person they are almost indistinguishable.

David Augsburger

When someone deeply listens to you it is like holding out a dented cup you've had since childhood and watching it fill up with cold, fresh water. When it balances on top of the brim, you are understood. When it overflows and touches your skin, you are loved.

[John Fox](#)

Our listening creates sanctuary for the homeless parts within the other person.

Rachel Naomi Remen

To listen is very hard, because it asks of us so much interior stability that we no longer need to prove ourselves by speeches, arguments, statements, or declarations. True listeners no longer have an inner need to make their presence known. They are free to receive, to welcome, to accept.

[Henri Nouwen](#)

Questions that have no right to go away are those that have to do with the person we are about to become; they are conversations that will happen with or without our conscious participation.

David Whyte

Sainthood emerges when you can listen to someone's tale of woe and not respond with a description of your own.

Andrew V. Mason

One of my patients told me that when she tried to tell her story people often interrupted her to tell her that they once had something just like that happen to them. Subtly her pain became a story about themselves. Eventually she stopped talking to most people. It was just too lonely.

[Rachel Naomi Remen](#)

Interrupting sends a variety of messages. It says:

"I'm more important than you are."

"What I have to say is more interesting, accurate or relevant."...

"This isn't a conversation, it's a contest, and I'm going to win."

[Dianne Schilling](#)

There is something in every one of you that waits; so listen for the sound of the genuine in yourself. And if you cannot hear it, you will never find whatever it is for which you're searching. And if you hear it, and then do not follow it, it was better that you had never been born... you will, all of your life, spend your days on the ends of strings that somebody else pulls.

[Howard Thurman](#)

We have, at least a lot of us have, awesome instincts. If we listen hard enough to our own hearts, we notice when the whispers become fervent little screams: "That! That! That's what I want more of. That's what I crave to understand. That's the kind of person/mountain/book I want to be near. That's the way I want to feel."

[Courtney E. Martin](#)

First, learn to listen.
Not only for enemies around
corners in hidden places,
but for the faint footsteps
of hope and the whisper of resistance.

[Rev. Sean Parker Dennison](#)

If one really wishes to know how justice is administered in a country, one does not question the policemen, the lawyers, the judges, or the protected members of the middle class. One goes to the unprotected—those, precisely, who need the law’s protection most!—and listens to their testimony. Ask any Mexican, any Puerto Rican, any black man, any poor person—ask the wretched how they fare in the halls of justice, and then you will know, not whether or not the country is just, but whether or not it has any love for justice, or any concept of it.

James Baldwin

Now if you listen closely
I'll tell you what I know
Storm clouds are gathering
The wind is gonna blow
The human race is suffering
And I can hear the moan,
'Cause nobody, but nobody
Can make it out here alone.

[Maya Angelou](#)

My friend, Agape, says it like this: “Hear the Biography, not the ideology”... When you find yourself in disagreement, just ask one question: “Will you tell me your story? I’d love to know how you came to this point of view.”

[Benjamin Mathes](#)

The forest breathes. Listen. It answers...
If what a tree or a branch does is lost on you,
You are surely lost. Stand still. The forest
knows

Where you are. You must let it find you.

[David Wagoner](#)

The real “work” of prayer is to become silent
and listen to the voice that says good things
about me,...
and calls [me] beloved... To pray is to let that
voice speak to the center of your being, to your
guts, and let that voice resound in your whole
being.

Henri Nouwen

The silence of the morning includes you.
The wildflowers in the pasture welcome you
looking...

The noise of the city is not mindless but
pleading.

Hear the world calling to you,
neither an emperor nor a beggar
but a lover, a spouse, calling you to come
home.

[Steve Garnaas-Holmes](#)

Places sing calling songs. Just now, they might
be missing their people. We might learn that by
allowing ourselves to miss them... In our bone-
deep missing, and in our willingness to
remember ourselves as worthy of being missed,
we could begin to hear [their] songs.

[Adam Wilson](#)

Our bodies are telling the stories we have
avoided or forgotten how to hear - and
sometimes our inability to feel our feelings (the
messages that precede the alarm bells) means
that our bodies have to scream in order to get
some attention.

[Hillary L. McBride](#)

I sometimes wake in the early morning & listen
to the soft breathing of my children & I think to
myself; this is one thing I will never regret & I
carry that quiet with me all day long.

[Brian Andreas](#)

Speak as if God is listening. Listen as if God is
speaking. Speak as if Spirit is speaking through
you. Listen as if Spirit is listening through you.

[Alexandra Bell](#), on *Quaker Practice*

Before I can tell my life what I want to do with it,
I must listen to my life telling me who I am.

Parker Palmer

Music

Click [here](#) for our Spotify playlist on Deep
Listening

Click [here](#) for the YouTube playlist on Deep
Listening

*Remember! [Our theme-based playlists](#) are
organized as a journey, so consider listening
from beginning to end and using the playlists as
musical meditations.*

Videos & Podcasts

Everything is Alive

<https://www.everythingisalive.com/>

If we listen deeply and imaginatively enough, we discover that everything is alive and speaking to us, even that soda can on the shelf or that bar of soap sitting by the sink!

We suggest starting with [this episode](#) and if it hooks you, move on the [this one](#) and [this one](#).

The Story Of John Cage's '4'33"

On listening to the music of silence

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7bGU9NTJIIo>

More [HERE](#) ; One performance of it [HERE](#)

Weightless by Marconi Union

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UfcAVeislrU&t=344s>

A song designed to slow a listener's heart rate, reduce blood pressure and lower levels of the stress hormone cortisol. One set of [neuroscientists](#) have named it the most relaxing and stress-relieving song on earth.

Sanctuaries of Silence - a listening journey

<https://vimeo.com/268526502>

The Power of Walking and 17-Year Vow of Silence

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R4PMfoAK2Ek>

Adam Grant on How to Debate Someone With Opposing Views

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=onwCTtU1Vyc>

Dancing and Listening to Grains of Rice

The instructions for [this art piece](#) as well as [this one](#) were simply "listen to the rice and listen to your partner." Watching them create it can't help but help you listen to yourself!

Articles

Want to Fix Your Mind? Let Your Body Talk.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/18/magazine/somatic-therapy.html>

"Listen" Deeply to a Painting

The New York Times challenges you to [test your deep listening skills](#) by spending 10 minutes with [one painting](#)?

Relatedly, check out the "[slow looking art movement](#)."

How to speak to a hostile crowd

<https://www.planetcritical.com/p/even-the-millionaires-are-fed-up>

On the so-called "radicals" making it possible for the so-called "moderates" to be heard.

On Listening to What's Beneath Our Anger

<https://www.michaelswerdloff.com/anger-secondary-emotion-what-protecting/>

Books

[You're Not Listening](#)

[A Rhythm of Prayer](#)

Movies

[A Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood](#) (Hulu)

[White Right: Meeting the Enemy](#) (Kanopy)

[Zone of Interest](#) (Hulu)

[Harriet](#) (Netflix)

More Inspiration on the Monthly Theme...

on our Facebook Inspiration Page:

<https://www.facebook.com/soulmatterssharingcircle/>

on our Instagram Page:

"soul_matters_circle"



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