



He who has ears to hear, let him hear. —Mark 4:9

When all is quiet and we are small and the night is dark, may we hear the tender breathing of all who lie awake with us in fear, that together we may gather strength to live with love, and kindness, and confidence. —Jane Ranney Rzepka (When all is quiet and we are small and the night is dark)

Listening is such a simple act. It requires us to be present, and that takes practice, but we don't have to do anything else. We don't have to advise, or coach, or sound wise. We just have to be willing to sit there and listen.  
—Margaret J. Wheatley

When you talk to yourself, at least you know that someone is listening. —Craig Bruce

The first duty of love is to listen. —Paul Tillich

When you talk, you are only repeating what you already know. But if you listen, you may learn something new.” —Dalai Lama

“Never miss a good chance to shut up.” —Will Rogers

Listen in a manner that People would want to speak to you and Speak in a manner that People would love to Listen to you.” — Malika E Nura

No one is as deaf as the man who will not listen. —Proverb

“We have two ears and one mouth, so we should listen more than we say.”  
—Zeno of Citium, as quoted by Diogenes Laërtius

“You're short on ears and long on mouth.” —John Wayne

## Resources on Listening (December 2018)

"The word 'listen' contains the same letters as the word 'silent'." — Alfred Brendel

"The most basic of all human needs is the need to understand and be understood. The best way to understand people is to listen to them." — Ralph G. Nichols

"Friends are those rare people who ask how we are, and then wait to hear the answer." — Ed Cunningham

The Moments of My High Resolve by Howard Thurman

In the quietness of this place, surrounded by the all-pervading Presence of the Holy, my heart whispers:

Keep fresh before me the moments of my High Resolve,  
That in good times or in tempests

I may not forget that to which my life is committed.

Keep fresh before me the moments of my high resolve.

At a certain point, you say to the woods, to the sea, to the mountains, the world, Now I am ready. Now I will stop and be wholly attentive. You empty yourself and wait, listening. After a time you hear it: there is nothing there. There is nothing but those things only, those created objects, discrete, growing or holding, or swaying, being rained on or raining, held, flooding or ebbing, standing, or spread. You feel the world's word as a tension, a hum, a single chorused note everywhere the same. This is it: this hum is the silence. Nature does utter a peep - just this one. The birds and insects, the meadows and swamps and rivers and stones and mountains and clouds: they all do it; they all don't do it. There is a vibrancy to the silence, a suppression, as if someone were gagging the world. But you wait, you give your life's length to listening, and nothing happens. The ice rolls up, the ice rolls back, and still that single note obtains. The tension, or lack of it, is intolerable. The silence is not actually suppression: instead, it is all there is."  
— Annie Dillard, *Teaching a Stone to Talk: Expeditions and Encounters*

## Resources on Listening (December 2018)

Race Relations by Carolyn Kizer

I sang in the sun  
Of my white oasis  
As you broke stone

Then I sang and paraded  
For the distant martyrs  
Loving the unknown

They lay still in the sun  
Of Sharpeville and Selma  
While you broke stone

When you fled tyranny  
Face down in the street  
Signing stones with your blood

Far away I fell silent  
In my white oasis  
Ringed with smoke and guns

Martyred in safety  
I signed for lost causes  
You bled on You bled on

Now I recommence singing  
In a tentative voice  
Loving the known

## Resources on Listening (December 2018)

I sing in the sun  
And storm of the world  
To the breakers of stone

You are sentenced to life  
In the guilt of freedom  
In the prison of memory

Haunted by brothers  
Who still break stone  
I am sentenced to wait

And our love-hate duet  
Is drowned by the drum  
Of the breakers of stone.

A Strange Freedom by Howard Thurman in For the Inward Journey

It is a strange freedom to be adrift in the world ... without a sense of anchor anywhere. Always there is the need of mooring, the need for the firm grip on something that is rooted and will not give. The urge to be accountable to someone, to know that beyond the individual ... there is an answer that must be given, cannot be denied. ...

To be known, to be called by one's name, is to find one's place and hold it against all the hordes of hell. This is to know one's value, for one's self alone. ...it is to bow before an altar that is one's very own, it is to worship a God who is one's very own.

It is a strange freedom to be adrift in the world ... to act with no accounting, to go nameless up and down the streets of other minds where no salutation greets and no sign is given to mark the place one calls one's own.

## Resources on Listening (December 2018)

Hush (#1040 in Singing the Journey)

Hush, hush, somebody's callin' my name.

Hush, hush, somebody's callin' my name.

Hushg, hush, someboy's callin' my name.

Oh my Lord, oh my Lord, what shall I do?

Sounds like freedom, somebody's callin' my name.

Sounds like justice, somebody's callin' my name.

Hush

By Kimberly Quinn Johnson

Hush:

Somebody's calling your name—

Can you hear it?

Calling you to a past not quite forgotten,

Calling us to a future not fully imagined?

Hush, hush:

Somebody's calling our name.

What shall we do?

Listening Is an Act of the Heart

By Leslie Takahashi

One: Listening is not an act of the ear, listening is an act of the heart.

Many: In these times when so much speaks: outrage, anger, disillusionment.

One: Rage is a constant cry. Derision has found his voice. The despair of the fair and faithful speaks fast and often. The whisper of despair grows into a keening lament.

Many: Open our hearts to the real fears of those who have known hate because they are our guides to its insidious expansiveness.

One: Open our memories to those ancestors of our spirits who were love-seekers, peace-makers, truth-guiders, system-questioners. And listen, because—

## Resources on Listening (December 2018)

Many: Listening is an act of our hearts.

One: Do not ignore the soul pain of the ones who move through the hardest nights, who face the denial of their rights and the desecration of their humanity. Do not forget those too dispossessed of a language of mastery and the countless forms of life who do not count humanity as their family and yet who are within our larger circle of interdependence.

Many: Open our hearts to the true threats that many feel.

One: Open our minds to the anguish of those who need accompaniment.

Many: Open our memories to those who came before us and taught us how to create new forms of love out of the old worn patterns.

One: And listen, because—

Many: Listening is an act of our hearts.

Listening is an act of our hearts.

Questions for reflection:

Describe a time when you have felt listened to? What were some of the qualities associated with that?

What gets in the way of really listening to someone?