

SOUND & SILENCE: The Lost Art of Listening

by Maria McGonigal

When we lived closer to Nature, listening was a necessity. The rustling of leaves could indicate wind bringing rain or the approach of a predator. We needed our sense of hearing, literally, to survive.

The nourishing, stimulating and healing sounds of Nature: birds singing, brooks gurgling, coyotes howling, have mostly been removed from our lives. We have lost our ability to listen in our over stimulated modern culture.

Constant noise from cars, horns, planes, digital devices, etc., leave us few opportunities to be silent and listen. Noise can negatively affect our brains and profoundly affect our health.

Living in a city and being constantly exposed to noise, night and day, may induce chronically elevated levels of stress hormones.

Technology has given us the ability to text, so we are disconnecting from one another's voices as we lose our ability to listen.

When we communicate silently through texting we are not stimulating our ears to listen and appreciate the subtle nuances and colors of telling a story. On the other hand we are listening to music at decibel levels that are damaging our ears.

Nature, sound and silence can restore those states of grace where we can truly listen.

Sound and silence are intimately related.

In fact one cannot exist without the other.

When I immerse myself into Sound, whether playing an instrument or toning, I deeply appreciate the silence that envelops me afterwards. In this silence, my ability to listen increases exponentially.

Herman Melville stated, "All profound things and emotions of things are preceded and attended by silence."

So, even when we explore ancient sites to gain knowledge of our ancestors, we interpret our findings by filtering through our beliefs.

We are our stories...and our stories are what we leave behind... in the memories of humans... in the memories of stones.

If we choose to listen with grace, the stones will sing.

Ancient Secrets Present Alchemy ~ Conference Article by Maria McGonigal