

VOW OF SILENCE

A vow of silence is a decision that somebody makes, in which they decide not to speak. Vows of Silence can trace their history back through many of the world's major religions. Some people view it as a spiritual practice. It is meant to give you a closer connection to God, the environment, the world around you, or yourself. There are many different motivations for taking a vow of silence.

Taking a "vow of silence" is one of the oldest, simplest, and most effective spiritual techniques known. By voluntarily cutting yourself off from communication with others, you quickly remove yourself from the chaos and distraction of the world around you. By stopping communications with others, you create a "sacred container" around you. It gives you time to think.

Keeping silence may make you peaceful. It may allow you to settle into the now, separate from the stress of language. Simply keeping silence can help you to ground, settle, and begin to feel some peace. It allows you to connect more immediately with the world around you. It can even allow you to connect in a much more genuine way with certain people. Furthermore, keeping silence is incredibly simple and can be practiced by virtually anybody.

Gandhi used to take a Vow for a single day every week. He allowed himself to write, but he spent the time alone with his thoughts.

Some people may also take a Vow of Silence as a protest against an issue. A group of students in Canada took a vow of silence for 24 hours to raise awareness for Child Poverty. They were part of a group called Free the Children.

Also, some people take a Vow of Silence in order to make their other senses stronger. They believe that by not speaking, and only listening, they will improve the quality of their thoughts and understand how important listening is.

There is an expression that says, "silence is golden." What do you think? Do you agree?

Advice for taking a Vow of Silence:

1. Decide how long you wish to keep your vow. Some monks have taken vows of silence that last for years, or even their entire lifetime!
2. Let people know that you are taking a Vow of Silence. People might feel insulted.
3. Begin your period of silence by closing your eyes, breathing deeply, and getting clear about your reasons for keeping silence. What do you want to learn?
4. Keep silence. If you feel stressed, move to a place where you can be alone.
5. Enjoy this time alone in your personal space. Enjoy the time spent with *you*.
6. When your period of silence ends, close your eyes again, breathe deeply, and reflect on your experience.