


Stop Breathe Believe® & Dianne Morris Jones Present

**Listening
Through
the
lens
of
a
Camera**

A white swan is swimming in a body of water. The water is dark with many bright, shimmering reflections of sunlight. The swan is positioned in the middle ground, facing right. The overall scene is peaceful and serene.

Listening

Some things, my friend, are difficult—

Divining the truth,
Showing your hand,
Seeing a blind spot,
Taking a stand.

Truly, most difficult it is to listen—

Paying attention,
Listening for your voice,
Stilling my heart,
Being present my choice.

While my inside critic cries out—

It's blaming others,
and shaming me,
Making harsh comments,
So hard to flee.

Yet will I strive—

To give you audience
to devote my mind
to tune out noise
your soul to find.

~ Roger Jones

Listening Through the Lens of a Camera

Day 1: “Photography as a spiritual practice combines the active art of image-receiving with the contemplative nature and open-heartedness of prayer. It cultivates what I call sacred seeing or seeing with the ‘eyes of the heart’ (Ephesians 1:18). This kind of seeing is our ability to receive the world around us at a deeper level than surface realities.”

- Christine Valters Paintner

How could I listen more deeply as I see the world in a new way?

Day 2: “Like every gift given, this one returns as a gift to the giver: when we learn how to listen more deeply to others, we can listen more deeply to ourselves.”

- Parker Palmer

What does deep listening look like? How does it feel when I am deeply listened to?

Day 3: “Being heard is so close to being loved that for the average person, they are almost indistinguishable.”

- David Augsburger

What does love and listening have to do with each other? How can I be more intentional in listening to those I love? How can I love myself in a “listening to my heart kind of way”?

Day 4: “Part of doing something is listening. We are listening. To the sun. To the stars. To the wind.”

- Madeleine L’Engle

What would a contemplative image look like for me today as I reflect about listening?

Day 5: “Adopt the pace of nature: her secret is patience.”

- Ralph Waldo Emerson

What would it look like for me to slow down our pace? How could I practice slowing down to listen today?

Day 6: “Generative listening is the art of developing deeper silences in yourself, so you can slow your mind’s hearing to your ears’ natural speed, and hear beneath the words to their meaning.”

- Peter Senge

How can I slow down to develop a deeper silence within myself? What differences do I notice?

Day 7: “To pay attention, this is our endless and proper work.”

- Mary Oliver

Paying attention is mindfulness. How can I be mindful in listening today? What could be an image that I could take to remind me of the listening practice from today?

Day 8:

“Sit and be still
Until in the time
Of no rain you hear
Beneath the dry wind’s
Commotion in the trees
The sound of flowing
Water among the rocks
A stream unheard before
And you are where
Breathing is prayer.”

- Wendell Berry

How can I go out in nature today and embrace the beauty, the stillness, the lesson I might learn if I could be still and listen?

Day 9: “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

Who am I seeking to understand? In which facet of my life do I desire to be more fully understood?

Day 10: “The most effective way to show compassion to another is to listen, rather than talk.”

- Thich Nhat Hanh

If I intentionally and gently close my mouth, how could my ears be more receptive? What image of being still and being quiet could I take today that would capture the intention?

Day 11: “It takes two to speak the truth —one to speak and another to hear.”
- Henry David Thoreau

Who do I need to listen to today? Is there someone I need to be honest and authentic with?

Day 12: “Listening is a gift of spiritual significance that you can learn to give to others.”
- H. Norman Wright

Who might I give the gift of listening to today? In asking for what I need, who has earned the right to hear my story that I could reach out to and ask them to listen to my heart?

Day 13: “There is a difference between truly listening and waiting for your turn to talk.”
- Ralph Waldo Emerson

Have I caught myself lately in a conversation when I was too eager to talk? Do I find it difficult to listen deeply?

Day 14: “Listening is a form of spiritual hospitality by which you invite strangers to become friends, to get to know their inner selves more fully, and even to dare to be silent with you.”
- Henri J. M. Nouwen

Who could I be hospitable with today? What would it look like to be silent with myself today? What would it look like to be silent with others today?

Day 15: “The art of conversation lies in listening.”
- Malcolm Forbes

What would the artist palette of my conversations look like? Who have I listened deeply to this week? Today?

Day 16: “If speaking is silver, then listening is gold.”
- Turkish proverb

How can I be mindful of my speaking and my listening today? How can I also listen to my own heart today?

Day 17: “Most people do not listen with the intent to understand; they listen with the intent to reply.”
- Stephen R. Covey

What is my intent in my communication today? In my speaking? In my listening? In my emails?

Day 18: “You cannot truly listen to anyone and do anything else at the same time.”
- M. Scott Peck

What is “truly listening”? How do we know when someone is only partially listening?

Day 19: “Listen carefully. The answers to our deepest questions are often whispered.” - Wayne Gerald Trotman

How can I pay attention to the whispers of my heart today? What would my intuition share with me in a moment of quietness today?

Day 20: “You will find something more in woods than in books. Trees and stones will teach you that which you can never learn from the masters.”
- Saint Bernard of Clairvaux

How could I photograph what I have “heard” from nature today? Where can I find a place to be outside in nature? If not outside, how can I bring nature into my world?

Day 21: “We cannot change the world by a new plan, project or idea. We cannot even change other people by our convictions, stories, advice and proposals, but we can offer a space where people are encouraged to disarm themselves, lay aside their occupations and preoccupations and listen with attention and care to the voices speaking in their own center.”
- Henri Nouwen

How can I offer a space for others? How can I love my friends in a “listening kind of way”?

Day 22: “Let no one think it ridiculous to learn a lesson in virtue from birds.”
- St. Cuthbert

What if I listened closely to a bird today, what would I hear? What lesson might I learn?

Day 23: “Life becomes a festival to the senses when we’re mindful.”
- Chris Germer

I love the concept of a festival to the senses. If I am mindful, paying attention to the little things today, what might emerge? What might be in the image if could I take a photograph of that moment?

Day 24: “Life’s beauty is inseparable from its fragility.”

- Susan David

How can those fragile moments of life help us see beauty as we listen to others? When do I see beauty as I am listening?

Day 25: “Listening is receptivity.”

- Natalie Goldberg

When have I felt openness in conversations today? With myself or with others?

Day 26: “Both art and spirituality are truly about tending to the moments of life: listening deeply, holding space, encountering the sacred, and touching eternity.”

- Christine Valters Paintner

Where do I see moments of listening deeply in my life? How can I cultivate a practice of listening deeply?

Day 27: “The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes but in having new eyes.”

- Marcel Proust

How can I be adventurous in exploring new landscapes? What would “new eyes” look like in my listening?

Day 28: “May the eyes of your hearts be enlightened.”

- Ephesians 1:18

How can I listen to my heart more carefully? What hope could I embrace as I listen to others, to myself, to the Divine?

Day 29: “It is just simple attention that allows us to truly listen to the sound of the bird, to see deeply the glory of an autumn leaf, to touch the heart of another and to be touched.”

- Christina Feldman

How does it feel to truly listen? Simple? Complicated? Can we be beginners at the practice of listening deeply?

Day 30: “The heart of vision is shaped by the state of the soul. When the soul is alive to beauty, we begin to see life in a fresh and vital way.”

- John O’Donohue

How can we listen with our eyes? How can we see (understand) with our ears? How can we “tune in” and listen for beauty? How can we look for beauty? How can we see in a new way?

Day 31: “Listen to your life. See it for the fathomless mystery that it is. In the boredom and pain of it no less than in the excitement and gladness: touch, taste, smell your way to the holy and hidden heart of it because in the last analysis all moments are key moments and life itself is grace.”

- Frederick Buechner

Try exploring all of your senses as we take a contemplative look at life today. What are some key moments for you today?

Bonus Day: “We are created for connection – with all of the parts of ourselves to be whole, with others in community, and with our understanding of the Divine.”

- Dianne Morris Jones, Stop Breathe Believe

How can we connect through listening? How can we view the practice of listening in a new way?