How to Use

Use the cards to deepen your students’ learning...

★ As pre-film warm-ups to introduce the topics and themes
★ As catalysts for post-film discussions
★ As writing prompts for personal reflections or essays
★ To spark ideas for action or class projects

Preparing the Cards

1 With a straight edge knife and a ruler, cut along the pink dashed rules.
2 Score along the vertical blue rule and fold.
3 Close with double sided tape or glue at the corners.
Describe a time where a sound changed or impacted your point of view. What was the sound? What impact did it have in your life?

“It’s hard to imagine that a sound could transform someone’s life.”
—Gordon Hempton, *Sanctuaries of Silence*

What might distinguish a valuable sound versus one that is not valuable?

“Too often the sounds people make are just waste products of their activity, discarded like trash with no regard for the environment.”
—Gordon Hempton, *The Sun Magazine*
Write down your definition of listening. In a small group, compare your definition to two others. What are the key similarities and differences?

“There are many definitions of listening, but no one that is generally agreed upon.”
– Belle Ruth Witkin, Journal of the International Listening Association

“Silence is the moonlit song of the coyote.”
– Gordon Hempton, One Square Inch of Silence: One Man’s Search for Natural Silence in a Noisy World

Describe an image that captures silence from your perspective.
What might be the dangers of not listening to each other? To nature?

“Noise detaches us—not only from our surroundings but from each other.”
– Gordon Hempton, The Sun Magazine

Unless we listen with attention, there is a danger that some of the more delicate and quiet sounds may pass unnoticed by numbed ears among the many mechanized voices of modern soundscapes.”
– Hildegard Westerkamp, Composer & Musicologist

Go on a “sound walk.” Make a list of human sounds, mechanized sounds, and nature sounds that you hear. Compare and contrast your findings with others.

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“The land is speaking.”
–Gordon Hempton, Sanctuaries of Silence

What do you think Hempton means by this? Describe how the land speaks. What might the land be saying?

“Silence isn’t the absence of something, but the presence of everything.”
–Gordon Hempton, Sanctuaries of Silence

Find the quietest place you can and sit in silence for 3 minutes. What do you notice? How might silence have a presence? Use your own words to describe “presence.”
Describe a situation where silence provided a gateway to inspiration and reflection.

“A quiet place is the think tank of the soul, the spawning ground of truth and beauty.”
–Gordon Hempton, One Square Inch of Silence: One Man’s Search for Natural Silence in a Noisy World

How might the act of listening lead to change? Describe a time in your life, or one you have witnessed, where this could be true.

“If you are going to listen, you have to be willing to change.”
–Gordon Hempton, TEDx talk

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“Listening is unique!... We all listen through a set of filters and these filters are not the same for any two people because they are shaped by our life experience and by our character.” –Julian Treasure, How to be Heard: Secrets for Powerful Speaking and Listening

Describe your own unique “listening” skill. What aspects of your character or life experiences might determine your ability to listen?

“Silence is the poetics of space, what it means to be in a place.”
–Gordon Hempton, Sanctuaries of Silence

Sit for three minutes in two different quiet locations. Write a short paragraph describing the ways in which the silence of those places influence your experience there.
Resources


Julian Treasure, How to be Heard: Secrets for Powerful Speaking and Listening (Florida: Mango Media, 2017).


Share your experiences with us on how you used the conversation cards as well as your thoughts and impressions.

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