Conversation Cards
The Sanctuaries of Silence conversation cards are organized around the following themes—connection to place, effects of modernization, human connection to the environment, and listening. These themes provide ways for students to engage with the film's content.

How To Use
- 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
“It's hard to imagine that a sound could transform someone's life.”
Gordon Hempton, *Sanctuaries of Silence*

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?
“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

What might distinguish a valuable sound versus one that is not valuable?
“There are many definitions of listening, but no one that is generally agreed upon.”

Belle Ruth Witkin,

*International Journal of Listening*

Write down your definition of *listening*.

In a small group, compare your definition to two others.

What are the key similarities and differences?
“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.
“Noise detaches us—not only from our surroundings but from each other.”

Gordon Hempton, *The Sun Magazine*

What might be the dangers of not listening to each other? To nature?
“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 what you hear, from human sounds, mechanized sounds, to nature sounds.

Compare and contrast your findings with others.
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."

“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, including truth and beauty.

“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*
“If you are going to listen, you have to be willing to change.”

Gordon Hempton

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

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 quietly in two places of your choosing.

Write a short paragraph describing the ways in which the silence of those places influence your experience there.
Resources


We want to hear from you

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

info@globalonenessproject.org

https://www.globalonenessproject.org/library/virtual-reality/sanctuaries-silence

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