

Inner Work Guidebook
ACTIVITY: SILENT RETREAT
Description and Detail of Activity

What is a silent retreat?

Typically, it is a time (usually more than one day) away from normal surroundings in which a person spends the time in quiet. If others are present, the individual refrains from conversation. A silent retreat works best when standard routine is set aside.

Why do it?

There may be a variety of reasons for going on silent retreats – rest, sleep, time in nature, spiritual insight, guidance, journaling, etc; but the underlying idea is to take time away from the hectic, noisy, and distracting activities of life to recollect oneself and seek quiet and peace.

How to do it?

There are many ways to take a silent retreat, but one of the best is to schedule time at one of the many retreat centers that specialize in this area. A person can attend an individual or a group silent retreat, depending on how much structure is desired/required. If you choose to set up your own retreat, it is good to make the meals simple, so that you are not spending a lot of time with food preparation or clean up. The solo retreatant can also schedule time at a retreat house. Often this type of retreat allows one to participate in spiritual direction once or twice a day, during which silence will be broken.

You may also use “wandering in nature” as silent time, and can incorporate this in a “Death Lodge” ritual, in which silence is maintained throughout the day and into the evening hours when the ritual action would take place.

Materials needed

Mainly what is needed is your presence, and the intention to let go of distractions and to focus on the matters at hand. Materials might include your journal, bible, spiritual reading or poetry, a meaningful ritual object, symbol or icon which might be needed for self designed rituals. The locale and facility will dictate others items. For example, if outside, or camping, all appropriate equipment would be needed. In a retreat house many, if not all, of your needs will be met except for the personal items mentioned.

Suggested Resources for this Activity

<http://itotd.com/articles/235/silent-retreats> <http://www.silentinsight.com/consider-a-silent-retreat>