

# My 3C's Programme 6 week Self-Care Components

## 2 SILENCE

The meaning of the word **SILENCE** is absence of sound.

What do I mean by silence and how are we going to practice it?

Firstly I want to say here, that I am not an expert on how we are going to use SILENCE — I am a student of using it to help with my mental health.

I am of course talking about meditation ... which can take different formats depending on what you want to achieve from it and how best it works for us as individuals.

For example, there is Transcendental meditation which takes the form of mantra, chanting.

But meditation can be active, guided and autogenic.

Autogenic is aimed at achieving deep relaxation and reduce stress — I often do a little of this at the end of class when I focus on breathing and silently saying to each part of the part to relax. The aim is definitely to promote relaxation and reduce stress and tension in the body.

Guided meditation can be lead by a Mindful Meditational practitioner such as Wendy who is producing a guided meditation for us for this programme. Guided meditations tend to be used for specific purposes and there will be a meditation for areas such as bereavement and grief, or relationships or ....

Active meditation can be found through walking, being outside with nature — and this is often quite a popular route into meditation. I know that if sitting still is difficult then a more active form of meditation may be more suitable.

I am sure there are other formats but as I have already stated I am not an expert at all, and simply a student learning and curious to know more, as are you.

But for this week I want us to look at using SILENCE. Silencing the internal chatter.

*Taking any number of minutes in a day to simply relax and be without thought is good.  
It's better than good*

**Brian J Grasso**

And this is true, however when we first start to meditate it can often feel like we are “doing it” without actually “doing it” ... which means that we could sit down, lie down, and appear to be calm, but we aren't actually engaging in a meditative state.

Using silence is about remaining conscious, focused, but empty of thought all at the same time — so it takes work — just like engaging our core, breathing and moving takes work. It

takes practise and patience for us to feel the full benefits, just like Pilates. But once you start using it, it is well worth the journey.

Guided forms of silence are really beneficial to begin with, to start practising taking some silent time.

### **HOW TO DO IT?**

For 10-15 minutes every day, find a quiet space, where you feel comfortable and unlikely to be disturbed, lie on your bed, or sit in a chair ... any position that is best for you.

The idea with silence is to keep your conscious attention towards a focal point, an anchor and allow your mind to empty all other thoughts.

Breathing, the flow of your breath is often a great focal point to start with. The inhalation and exhalation provide a rhythm that can easily be the point for concentration. Sometimes focusing on specific areas of the body, colours or even words can also work as focal points.

Think of SILENCE as a gift to yourself, to your mind, body and soul. Once you start to practise and make it a regular practice you will start to feel the benefits. However, I do want to point out that it is one of the most challenging things you can do. Often people will give up practising daily because it feels too difficult ... but it's just because we aren't used to it.

### **WHY TO DO IT?**

I have spoken about this before, the benefits of practising regular silence are far reaching. It can aid stress reduction, help with injury rehab, healing of illness, it can help improve athletic performance, and help to increase productivity.

You may have heard me talk about the sympathetic nervous system which is where we spend most of our time in this world the we live in. This is the fight or flight response which IS necessary for survival BUT it is not a state we are meant to stay in for long periods of time, and when we do this is when stress builds, anxiety can kick in and various issues can arise with our physical health as well as our emotional and mental well being. We can and will feel exhausted by spending too much time here.

Silence triggers the parasympathetic nervous system, which works to calm, destress and relax us and it is here that we can then restore, renew, and repair.

Silence can help the mindset as it can restore creativity and focus.

We are learning to minimise conscious brain chit-chat when we start to practice SILENCE. This then assists in all aspects of our mind that become clouded by the never-ending noise that we suffer on a daily basis.

We can find the answers within us, clarity instead of confusion, empowering and inspiring rather than fear, self-doubt and limitations, we are capable NOT incapable.

### **WHEN TO DO IT?**

It can be practised at any time during the day, however, I am finding the evening works best for me. Ten minutes ... Work towards it and use the guided meditation that is provided by Wendy to help.