

## 2.10 Silence

Sometimes, it's useful to let awkward silences happen.

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When a break occurs in conversation, it's common for people to try to fill the empty space by speaking, even when they don't have anything particular to say. For example, let's say someone has asked a question and the other person hasn't answered right away. It's common for the asker to jump in and provide an answer themselves. In this scenario, however, if the asker can hold their tongue, the other person will have time to provide a fully formed, authentic response.

Another scenario when this tool could be useful is during emotional conversations. You might get triggered and feel the need to answer right away. If you hold your tongue and take some time to process, you might find a response more aligned with your whole self.

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- People have the time to fully express themselves.
- Removes pressure to artificially fill the conversational void.
- Leaves room for people to think and feel.

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- People often feel responsible for keeping the conversation alive.

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Learn to be quiet until there's an authentic need to speak. This requires being in touch with yourself and identifying whether your reason for talking serves you at that moment. If you feel uncomfortable with the silence and notice thoughts such as "It's my turn to say something—it will be weird if I don't," or "I'm boring the other person," that's a good sign that your desire to speak might not be serving a deeper need. If your reason to talk comes from an intention to deepen the conversation or share something personal, that's a good cue to share.

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