

5.8 Silent Date

Spend quiet time with someone you care about.

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There are times when you may want to spend time with your partner but, for one reason or another, you don't want to make conversation. Perhaps you've had an argument, and the atmosphere between you is tense. Perhaps you haven't seen each other for a while, and you want to reconnect slowly. Perhaps you're both stressed and exhausted, and you crave the comfort of one another's presence without the effort of communicating.

The motivation can be positive as well as negative. Maybe you're both introverted people, and explicit permission to be silent helps you feel closer. Maybe removing the distraction of words allows you to see one another more clearly. Maybe you enjoy the experience of flirting in silence, using gestures and body language. Whatever your reasons, a silent date differs from simply hanging out without speaking. It's a mutually agreed-upon commitment to refrain from speaking.

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- If emotions are running high, agreeing not to speak can sometimes soothe the situation and allow you to feel closer.
- Being with someone you know well in silence can give you a whole new perspective on who they are.

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- It can be tempting to break the silence. At times, this may be appropriate, but it can be hard to set guidelines beforehand.
- There's a risk that your mood (or your partner's) could shift toward coldness or resentment, as opposed to warmth.

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This tool is similar to some experiences at mindfulness retreats (see Tool 6.3: Retreats). You can turn it into a meditation, although that's not essential. The fundamental idea is simple: you make an agreement with another person to be silent for a particular amount of time.

There are almost no limits to the ways you can apply this tool. You may choose to partake in activities together or do different activities in the same room simultaneously. You can even sit silently at separate laptops, both working on projects. You can face one another and look into each other's eyes or curl up on the couch and cuddle. You can share a meal in contemplative silence. You can watch TV, dance to music, or listen to a podcast. Whatever you choose, try to remain mindful of and connected to the other person, as opposed to slipping into self-distraction.

It's a good idea to anticipate situations that might require you to speak and create some guidelines before entering into silence. For example, you may want to allow technical talk, such as "I need to

use the bathroom,” or employ a safe word in case the emotional experience becomes overwhelming.

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1. <https://brides.com/story/why-silence-is-great-for-your-relationship>.
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