

STILLNESS: Slowing down and being present

“There is a lot of stillness that I ask people to sit in when I’m making their portrait.... (Tintype photography) slowed me down. It made me more present when I was taking images, instead of kind of hitting a button over and over again.” ~ Carla Rodriguez

conversation skills you will practice:

- stillness
- attentiveness
- deep listening
- being present

Set aside 15 minutes for the following two activities:

1 LISTEN

To help you develop comfort with **stillness** and experience what you are more **attentive** to when you’re still, we invite you to **listen** to the following guided meditation (10 minutes): tinyurl.com/Meditation-Stillness (enter this URL in your computer’s browser)

2 JOURNAL PROMPTS

- As you **listened** to the meditation, how did it feel to be still?
- How did **stillness** influence your ability to focus your **attention**?
- What is your relationship with **stillness**?
- How might having a regular practice of **stillness** – taking time each day (even as little as three minutes) to sit in silence and focus on your breath – allow you to hone this level of **attention**?

Want to do more with this activity? If so, add the next few steps.

3 Invite a friend to listen to the meditation and complete the reflections above. Share your responses with one another. What did you find similar or different in your reflections?

4 Sit in **stillness** everyday (three minutes or more) for a week, connecting with your breath and noticing what you hear – both internally and in your environment. After the week, reflect on how you **listen**, how you hear, how you direct your **attention**, and how you observe as you move throughout your day. What changes do you notice from the first time you **listened** to the meditation?

CONVERSATION CONSIDERATIONS

How might practicing **stillness**, becoming **attentive** and **listening deeply** to what is happening within you and around you affect your ability to stay **present** and aware when an interaction becomes difficult?

