**Silence**

**Who is he that will contend with me?  
For now I will keep silent and be at rest.  
(Job 13:19)**

**The first movie to win the Academy Award as Best Picture was Wings, in 1928. It was a silent picture (the only silent movie ever to win the Oscar), and it was about air battles in World War I, with spectacular sky scenes. (Charles Reichblum, in Knowledge in a Nutshell , p. 46)  
John Wesley one day said to Dr. Clarke, “As I was walking through St. Paul’s church yard I observed two women standing opposite to one another. One was speaking and gesticulating violently, while the other stood perfectly still and in silence. Just as I came up and was about to pass them, the virago, clenching her fist and stamping her foot at her imperturbable neighbor, exclaimed, ‘Speak, wretch, that I may have something to say.’” “Adam,” said Mr. Wesley, “that was a lesson to me; silence is often the best answer to abuse.” (Current Anecdotes)It takes a baby approximately two years to learn to talk and between 60 and 70 years to learn to keep his mouth shut. (Paul Lee Tan, in Encyclopedia of 7700 Illustrations)**

**Evidently barbers have always been great chatterers. In the 2nd Century, Plutarch reported that when a certain gentleman was asked by a barber how he wanted his hair to be cut, the man replied, “In silence.” (Donner & Eve Paige Spencer, in A Treasury of Trivia , p. 266)**

**Thus, in the presence of one who is ill or who is sorrowing in heart, at the bedside of one who seems near the border, more may depend on the reserves that speak or that are silently effective than on anything we seek to do in an overt way. (Horatio W. Dresser)**

**Good week for: Blessed silence, after 13 DMV offices in Oregon canceled their $160-a-month subscriptions to a Muzak service due to complaints from customers about the insipid background music. (The Week magazine, March 19, 2010)**

**Every time you say something, your blood pressure goes up. *(L. M, Boyd)*  
The Admiralty Building in London was built from the plans for a lunatic asylum in 1887. Its architect was suddenly summoned to submit the Admiralty plans to Queen Victoria, by error, showed her his designs for an asylum -- and after her enthusiastic praise was afraid to reveal his mistake. (Ripley's Believe It or Not!: Book of Chance, p. 331)Language of the African Bushmen depends as much upon gestures and grimaces as upon words. And Bushmen don’t talk a lot after dark. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**Stan Rolfsrud once candidly told readers why his column in the Carver County, Minnesota, Herald was missing. Under the usual heading was this statement: “Stan Rolfsrud has nothing to say this week.” (Associated Press)  
Silent Cal Coolidge was just that as far as the telephone was concerned. The former president refused to use it. (Jack Kreismer)**

**The heights and recesses of Mount Taurus are said to be much infested with eagles, who are never better pleased than when they pick the bones of a crane. Cranes are prone to cackle and make a noise and particularly so while they are flying. The sound of their voices arouses the eagles, who spring up at the signal, and often make the talkative travelers pay dearly for their impudent chattering. The older and more experienced cranes, sensible of their besetting foible and the peril to which it exposes them, take care before venturing on the wing to pick up a stone large enough to fill the cavity of their mouths, and consequently to impose unavoidable silence on their tongues, and thus they escape the danger. (Paul Lee Tan, in Encyclopedia of 7700 Illustrations) The quietest place on earth is the “dead room” in the Bell Telephone System Laboratory at Murray Hill, New Jersey. The room is 35 feet by 28 feet, and inside it, 99.98% of all reflected sounds are eliminated.  
(Paul Lee Tan, in Encyclopedia of 7700 Illustrations , p. 1280)  
Which of the seven dwarfs couldn't talk? Trick query. If you mean Dopey, that's wrong. He could talk. He just didn't. Nothing to say. (L. M. Boyd)**

**Thomas Alva Edison’s first attempt at marketing an invention was an offer of a new stock ticker he had devised to the president of a large Wall Street firm. Edison wanted to ask $5,000, but he was only twenty-three and completely inexperienced, and his nerve failed him. He asked the president to make an offer, and the president offered $40,000. (Isaac Asimov)  
Albert Einstein was four years old before he could talk. *(Russ Edwards & Jack Kreismer, in The Bathroom Trivia Digest, p. 98)***

**What makes electric cars dangerous to pedestrians, it's claimed, is that said cars run so silently. (L. M. Boyd)**

**To my great fortune, a herd of 147 elk (I had plenty of time to count them) wandered into the very field where I was sitting. To see on elk is exciting; to watch 147 elk in their natural habitat is enthralling. But I soon learned that to watch 147 elk for two hours is, to put it mildly, boring. They lowered their heads and chewed grass. They raised their heads in unison and looked at a raspy crow. They lowered their heads again and chewed grass. For two hours, nothing else happened. No mountain lions attacked; no bulls charged each other. All the elk bent over and chewed grass. After a while, the very placidity of the scene began to affect me. The elk had not noticed my presence, and I simply melded into their environment, taking on their rhythms. I no longer thought about the work I had left at home, the deadlines facing me, the reading that Brennan had assigned. My body relaxed. In the leaden silence, my mind fell quiet. *(Philip Yancey, in Christianity Today)***

**The story is told of a lady watching a fisherman landing a fish. “O, the poor little fish!” she cried. “Yes,” said the fisherman, “but if he had only kept his mouth shut he would not be on the end of my line.” (Albert E. Cliffe, in Let Go & Let God , p. 47)The damp north wind was blowing a chill off the moors. It would be good to be inside on an evening like this. The American drew his coat collar tighter as he made his way to the home of his Scottish friend.  
Ralph Waldo Emerson and Thomas Carlyle had enjoyed a strong friendship through correspondence for many years before they actually met. Now, after all that time, Emerson had finally come to Europe, making a special journey to Scotland, so that he could at last meet the renowned essayist and historian face-to-face. When Emerson arrived for the momentous occasion, Carlyle greeted him warmly, offered him a pipe, and then lighted one for himself. The great men then sat together in virtual silence until it was time to retire for the night. At that point the two warmly shook hands and praised each other for the fruitful evening they had shared together. (Richard & Mary-Alice Jafolla, in The Quest , p. 127)  
The anatomy of a frog is such that it must close its eyes to swallow, and if its mouth is held open too long it will suffocate. (E. C. McKenzie, in Tantalizing Facts)A Hollywood producer keeps a goldfish bowl on his desk, “Because I like to see something with its mouth open not asking for a raise.” (Los Angeles Herald Examiner)I once gave my homeroom of senior honors students a graduation gift in advance. They were permitted one unexcused absence as long as it didn't conflict with other teachers' schedules. All I asked was that they do something worthwhile and hand in a paragraph sharing that experience. My favorite report was from a young man who wrote: “I went fishing with my grandfather. I listened to him all day long without once saying, ‘Pops, you already told me that.’” (Barbara Scarpato, in Reader’s Digest)**

**You cannot hear a heartbeat. The sound you hear when you listen to someone’s heart is that of the valves of the heart closing. The beat itself is a silent contraction of the muscles. *(Barbara Seuling, in You Can’t Sneeze with Your Eyes Open, p. 35)*You can walk up to a total stranger and say, “I love you.” It's really very easy. You just say it in your heart. It was the most amazing experience. People turned around to smile and say “Good morning." They could feel that “I love you.” Since then I have done this many times. Try it for yourself, it will make you feel wonderful and of course, that feeling will be shared by everyone you meet. (Jack & Cornelia Addington)When Jesus is taken before Herod to be judged, the king would like to see him do “some miracle” and is enraged when Christ replies with silence. (Ernest O. Hauser, in Reader's Digest)  
The actor who became a star without uttering a line, Boris Karloff, achieved stardom in his roles in “Frankenstein” and “The Old Dark House” -- yet he never spoke a word in either. (Ripley's Believe It or Not!: Book of Chance)Carole Landis (1919-1948) had several speaking roles in movies early in her career, but was recognized as having star material only after appearing in “One Million B.C.” -- a film in which she did not say a word. (Ripley's Believe It or Not!: Book of Chance, p. 5)**

**The third most-used language in the United States is American Sign Language. (Kids’ Pages, 2008)**

**Reprieve: Asked what she was going to do while her two small sons were visiting their grandmother during the Christmas holidays, one mother replied, “Something I haven’t done in years – listen to the silence.” (Christine Smith, in Reader’s Digest)  
Israel's Prime Minister Golda Meir turned down an aide's request that she talk to reporters, explaining, “You can't improve on saying nothing.” (As Good As Golda, edited by Israel & Mary Shenker)**

**Recently I spent some time in a monastery in which disciplined silence was required 24 hours a day. At first it was difficult, for much that I was feeling, experiencing, seeing, or reading I wanted to share with the others. And then, slowly and subtly, I discovered that the silence was overwhelmingly blissful. It was almost as though a gentle wave of peace had rolled over me during this quiet period. There was nothing but silence--in me, around me, all through me, and everywhere expanding and reaching out to touch all creation. Those things that touch the heart are frequently difficult to put into words, and this was one of the experiences. I just knew that I loved the silence, reveled in it, wanted to have it always. (Dr. Susan Smith Jones, in New Realities magazine)  
The most expensive silent movie ever made was the 1926 epic Ben Hur, which cost $3.9 million. *(Noel Botham, in The Ultimate Book of Useless Information, p. 17)***

**Mysticism is derived from “myein,” which originally meant “to shut the mouth, to close the eyes”--to be silent, to “just be.” (Dr. Larry Dossey, in Unity magazine)**

**While he was a member of Parliament, Sir Isaac Newton’s only recorded utterance was a request to open the window. *(Noel Botham, in The World’s Greatest Book of Useless Information, p. 142)***

**In 1956, the Oscar for Best Original Screenplay went to the film “The Red Balloon.” The picture hasn't a word of dialogue. (Jeff Rovin, in The Unbelievable Truth! , p. 116)**

**Kellogg’s sells more than two billion Pop-Tarts each year, but they owe part of their success to a blunder by a competitor. Post announced to the press in 1963 that they were busy working on a new product – toaster pastries called Country Squares. Kellogg’s rushed to create their own toaster pastries, and gave them a catchy name: Pop-Tarts. What’s more, they managed to get them on the market six months ahead of Post’s Country Squares. (Murray McLeod, in Tidbits)  
  
These three basic rules of effective communication were enunciated first by the late Vice President Alben Barkley: “No. 1 -- Have something to say. No. 2 -- Say it. No. 3 -- Shut up.” (L. M. Boyd)**

**The world’s smallest and oldest republic, San Marino (24 square miles), is located mostly on top of a mountain entirely surrounded by Italy. It has survived for hundreds of years as an independent nation because, in all of the wars, revolutions, invasions, and banditry that have swirled around it through the ages, San Marino kept its mouth shut. Interested parties, take note. (Bernie Smith, in The Joy of Trivia, p. 331)  
Researchers monitored several sidewalk Santa Clauses to note a pattern -- Christmas donations increased considerably when those bell ringers stopped ringing their bells. (L. M. Boyd)**

**Early monks in silent orders invented the first sign language. *(Don Voorhees, in The Super Book of Useless Information, p. 255)***

**In England, the Speaker of the House is not allowed to speak; his main responsibility is to preside over the deliberations. *(Harry Bright & Harlan Briscoe, in So, Now You Know, p. 37)***

**Thomas Edison wanted to put a large phonograph in the mouth of the Statue of Liberty to give it a voice that could be heard all over New York Harbor. His idea was met with silence. (Jack Kreismer, in The Bathroom Trivia Book , p. 44)**

**Silent Storytelling: Almost all of the great directors in the 1930s trained in silents, and if there is one characteristic that unites artists as disparate as John Ford and Alfred Hitchcock, it is their ability to tell a story in purely visual terms. (Smithsonian magazine)  
Jonathan Swift, the author of “Gulliver's Travels,” once went for an entire year refusing to speak to any other human being. (Paul S. Hagerman)**

**One can stay in the silence too much. It is merely the doorway opening onto that which is beyond the silence; i.e., activity based upon the light and strength gained in claiming it. One can get too much of this good thing, just as one can get too much of perfectly good nourishing food. So instead of spending too much time in the silence, begin to make real practical use of what you have already gotten from study and from the silence. (Myrtle Fillmore's Healing Letters, p. 45-46)**

**Researchers say they've learned youngsters watch more educational TV when not urged to do so by parents. (L. M. Boyd)It's interesting to note that when the children of Israel marched around the walls of Jericho, God didn't allow them to talk. Could it be that in seven days they might have talked each other out of an answer from God? They might well have all quit on the fourth day and gone home.  
(Russ Johnston, in God Can Make It Happen)As president of the Constitutional Convention of 1787, George Washington did not feel free to enter the debates. This suited him. He was not a good public speaker. As a young man in the Virginia House of Burgesses, he had barely said a word. He had been equally silent in the Continental Congress in 1774 and 1775. But his commanding presence at every session of the convention was a powerful reminder to the delegates that they had gathered to create a stronger central government. (Thomas Fleming, in Reader's Digest)  
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