

SELF

The art of silence

Do you crave peace and quiet or prefer the chatter of background noise? If you're more likely to flick the radio on than bask in the sound of silence, it might be time to consider why.

'Some people try to avoid silence in their lives at all costs,' says Adam Ford, author of *Seeking Silence in A Noisy World* (Leaping Hare Press). 'Silence, like the dark, can be frightening. We don't always know how to handle it or what it is we are facing.' As soon as the noise and the distractions stop, he says, we are forced to face issues that our subconscious had put to the back of our minds.

Being cautious about silence is understandable, says Ford. 'Fear of the unknown is a natural defence mechanism, a warning to go carefully.' So turn the radio off for a few moments and see how you fare. And if the chatter in your own head becomes too loud or too much, he recommends you 'open a mental window and focus your attention on something external.' You can work on those troubles another day.



HOW TO...

Establish rapport

Whether you're trying to exchange a dress you don't have the receipt for, or persuading a colleague to help you on a project, creating a positive connection is vital, says Elizabeth Kuhnke, coach and author of *Persuasion & Influence For Dummies* (John Wiley & Sons).

- 1 Look for patterns.** Pick up on words and phrases the person you're talking to uses a lot, and build them into your conversation. Pay attention to how they handle information – do they talk about small details or the bigger picture? Replicate this subtly in your own speech.
- 2 Learn how to 'pace'.** This means listening to someone intently, with the aim of understanding things from their point of view.
- 3 Have faith in the other person.** By treating someone as though their heart is in the right place, you're more likely to establish rapport.

WORK

Tired teamwork

Getting anything done first thing in the morning is tough when you're feeling sleepy, but instead of going on a coffee run, team up with a group of tired colleagues. New research* has shown that a group of tired people is more effective when they work as a team than on their own. When you're tired, you can't think flexibly, so struggle to find successful solutions, says Daniel Frings, a lecturer in social psychology. But being part of a team counteracts that inflexibility and helps get things done.

PHOTOGRAPHS: MARK FORSYTH/GETTY IMAGES; ADRIAN WEINBRECHT/GETTY IMAGES; DANIEL FRINGS, THE EFFECTS OF GROUP WORK FORING ON FATIGUE-RELATED ENGELLING DURING MATHEMATICAL PROBLEM SOLVING, JOURNAL OF EXPERIMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY: APPLIED, 2011