



"The most precious things in speech are the pauses." ~ Sir Ralph Richardson

Most people know that when presenting a speech, pauses are powerful tools that place the right emphasis on a word or point and help the audience notice information.

Pauses have an important place in conversations, too. They provide benefits to our conversational partners.

- Pausing after asking a question offers the other person time to think and mentally engage in the conversation.
- Pausing separates thoughts, allowing the other person to absorb the message delivered and consider the points presented.
- Using longer pauses lets ideas, questions, and thoughts linger. Don't be afraid of the silence. Silence often signifies a point being taken to heart.
- Pausing prevents cutting the other person off too soon and losing important information that is not shared.

Pausing also benefits us as the speaker.

- Pausing, even for a moment, engages our brain to collect and organize our thoughts before we open our mouth.
- Pausing in a heated discussion can prevent overreacting and exacerbating a situation.
- Pausing provides an opportunity to consider the other person's complete communication, including body language and tone.

Most importantly, when speaking or receiving, consciously pausing automatically slows down listening. In conversations, we formulate responses while the other person speaks, which means we are not focusing on what is said. When we pause and listen, we hear the whole story instead of part of the story, which results in more successful communication.