

LISTENING AS SPIRITUAL HOSPITALITY by Henri Nouwen

To listen is very hard
because it asks of us so much interior stability
that we no longer need to prove ourselves
by speeches, arguments, statements or declarations.
True listeners no longer have need
to make their presence known.
They are free to receive,
to welcome, to accept.

Listening is much more than allowing another to talk
while waiting for a chance to respond.
Listening is paying full attention to others
and welcoming them into our very beings.

The beauty of listening is that those who are listened to
start to feel accepted,
start taking their own words more seriously,
discovering their own true selves.
It is a form of spiritual hospitality
by which you invite strangers to become friends,
to get to know their inner selves more fully
and even to dare to be silent
with you.