

The Definitive Guide to Awkward Silences

So you're out and about, gallivanting around town with someone, anyone. It may be a good friend, a mere acquaintance, a close family member, a distant relative, whatever. Anyway, there is the dreaded lull in the conversation and you're thinking, "Oh great, this is awkward. Now they're going to hate me forever because I haven't done my part to fill every millisecond of silence with some sort of jovial conversation. And they obviously already do hate me because they are awkwardly silent as well. What'll I do! What'll I do! Say something! SAY SOMETHING!" Hang on, my friend, things may not be as grim as you imagine. There may be a good reason for their silence. Here are five kinds of awkward silences and their logical reason.

1. The Awkward Silence of Feasting – Talking between bites is fine and dandy, but I prefer to spend most of my time while eating concentrating on my food. I know I'm not alone in considering feasting a very, very serious business indeed. However, there are those who have the gift of concentrating on eating while holding a continuous conversation without showing everyone the matter wallowing around in their face. Unfortunately there are also those people who do both of these things, but don't possess this gift. These poor souls just can't talk (but insist on doing so on a constant basis) without displaying the food in their mouths to the world. If you are such an individual, you are very well advised to primarily restrict yourself to consumption concentration.

2. The Awkward Silence of Contemplation – Sometimes what you construe as an awkward silence might just be the other person thinking. There are those who have been known to do strange things like this from time to time. There are dozens of us! Dozens!!!! There is so much to think about: Thoughts and

thoughts in thoughts and thinkers's of thoughts and thinkers' of thoughts in thoughts in thoughts. It never ends. I'm putting private prayer in this category.

3. The Awkward Silence of Concentration – This is related to contemplation but is more specific. While in contemplation you are considering a thought or group of thoughts in your head; with concentration you are honing in on something in the real world like a book, a movie, Bigfoot in the backyard, etc., etc., etc. Maybe your awkward silence right now is a result of reading this article. If so, bless your heart all to pieces, my friend.

4. The Awkward Silence of Friendship – It is often the case that when people are best friends or close family for a long time, the awkward silences turn into comfortable silences. At least that is *often* the case. Maybe you are one of those souls where no amount of familiarity can instigate the awkward silence of friendship. If this is the case, I feel for you, but know that this is a community of welcoming and acceptance. We embrace all levels of awkwardnicity. Other than that, I don't know what to say. This is awkward.

5. The Awkward Silence of Awkwardness – Okay, there's no way to get around this one. Sometimes an egg is just an egg. There's no confetti or chocolate inside. Sometimes the awkwardness is mutual. In other words, you are right to be as full of despair and anguish as you originally thought. Kidding. It's never the end of the world. Or is it?

There you have it. There is usually a mixtures of two or more of these visages of awkward silences. For instance, for me it might be the awkward silence of feasting and concentration if I'm eating lunch while watching Bigfoot play with the cats in our backyard.