I would like to take a moment of silence.

As a child, I had always wondered why we take a moment of silence to honor those who have past and to pray for those in sad plight. I wondered what I would be doing for anyone by just being silent myself. It was in my nature after all during that time to be loud, to want to play all the time, scream at the top of my lungs in delight at the freedom of childhood. I did not understand the concept of peace, or noise-pollution for that matter. I did not understand that just one moment of pin-drop silence is cherished by many because it meant one moment of peace.

In this world of wars, terrorist attacks, and domestic violence, I am lucky to be writing in a room that is perfectly safe and silent except for the tapping of the keys on my keyboard as I type. In another part of the world, whether at this very moment or in the past or future, there may be bombs blasting in midair, shrill screams and cries piercing the air, houses exploding, metal screeching, dirt arising, dust descending, walls falling, roofs collapsing, pipes erupting, glass falling, lodging into the skin of human beings. Do not forget the thump of heartbeats, louder than usual, unified in terror…

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If only human beings could stay as pure as children, ignorant of the horrid complexities of the world, shielded by the beauty of innocence! Yet it is in the human makeup to be complex, not simple, to be able to take on challenges of a difficult nature. The way human beings utilize complex thinking to solve everyday problems is after all amazing when you think of the difference in intelligence levels of humans and chimpanzees, our closest living relatives among the world’s species. Yet what come with this otherwise well-meaning complexity are more intense emotions and feelings, whose power can take over the mind. Impatience from an unsolvable problem lead to stress whose catharsis is anger. Anger’s wrath knows no bounds. People are lost every day because of this wrath.
I would like to take a moment of silence.

Silence is our consolation that allows anger to subside. In just one moment of pin-drop silence, there is thought and consideration and patience and peace. Those who believe pray to an omnipresent or ethereal power for the sake of others’ protection. Those who do not believe try to understand how the complexity of human beings could lead to the vile and horrid actions of violence. The key is that people begin to think about others, the solution to stopping pain, the cause of violence and anger.

I look to Mahatma Gandhi who employed silence and meditation to realize that human beings are not perfect but are very flawed, are not simple but very complex, are not always intelligence-driven but are emotion-driven. His patience with the opposing party, employing nonviolent tactics to win a war stopped unnecessary bloodshed from occurring. “Patience is a virtue,” a wise-man once said. Patience gives time for anger to subside and be uplifted, and for reason, truth, and morality to be uncovered and seen once again. Human beings’ strong, intense emotions, which cause one to act before thinking, can be stopped in their paths by patience. This above all is the key to nonviolence, to stop anger from taking the more destructive path; to stop nations from starting wars and let diplomacy take over; to stop people from committing crimes and cause them to think about their actions before they are committed.

Most recently, the world witnessed the actions of terrorists at the Boston Marathon on April 15th or Patriots’ Day in the state of Massachusetts. On this day, a spirit of nationalism was evoked, a beautiful feeling of love for one’s country, which was broken when someone recklessly decided to hurt others for revenge. If only the anger of revenge had not covered reason. If only those people, now terrorists, had thought before they acted, had been more patient and realized the horror of the crimes they were about to commit…

I would like to take a moment of silence…