

# WHAT EARBUDS KEEP YOU FROM EXPERIENCING!

In traveling around the world, I see more and more people living their lives with earbuds in place. I'm a huge music fan, so I understand the joy of listening to music, or hearing a great lecture or teaching when I'm on a plane, walking around – whatever. But I'm seeing more and more people who rarely leave the house without them. If you're one of those people, here are a few things you may be missing in your life:

1. Meeting other people. I'm from the South, so I'm a compulsive greeter. As a result, I rarely pass anyone without saying hello. I've noticed the people with earbuds aren't rude, they just don't notice me. As a result, they experience far less human contact.
2. Listening to your surroundings. It's not just about avoiding being hit by a car, it's about listening to the sounds of the city, the forest, the suburbs – wherever you happen to be. Kathleen and I like to walk up the mountain behind our house in the mornings, and it's always filled with birds, deer, bees, dogs – plenty of natural sounds. It's hard to find a good substitute.
3. Probably my most important issue is simply listening to yourself. People who constantly have input from music or other sources, rarely listen to their own thoughts. A century ago, Friedrich Nietzsche argued that we seek out distractions in order to stay mentally busy, so we can avoid facing up to the big questions—like whether we're living genuinely meaningful lives. He wrote that before iPhones or the Internet!

If Descartes believed that *"I think, therefore I am,"* if we're not listening to ourselves think, then we're missing our very essence.

Think about it.

**Pull the plugs occasionally and listen to the world around you. You'll be surprised at what you hear... ❖**

