



ALPHA SIGMA PHI FRATERNITY to BETTER the MAN.

As part of our 175th Anniversary, we are focusing on one of the five values every quarter until Grand Chapter 2020. Silence is both the most intriguing and the most difficult to grasp.

When brothers at Yale in the early 20th century passed by the Tomb, they were to be silent. They were forbidden to speak of its interior. This method of silence shows reverence. The Black Lantern Processional is silent to show respect.

The value of Silence, however, is not limited to symbolism. It is meant to be applied practically in everyday life. The sixth edition of the To Better the Man Manual describes silence as “having the self-confidence to listen first, and act second,” and “the will to build an interior life founded upon an honest desire to truly listen to others.” Silence forces us to hear out others, to consider their viewpoints before defending our own, and gives us the time to evaluate our thoughts about what we’ve heard and decide whether or not it is prudent to give a response. It allows us to be more thoughtful and purposeful in the words we do speak.

As university student bodies become increasingly diverse and therefore expose students to a plethora of new concepts and ways of thinking, it is beneficial for our undergraduate brothers to master the value of silence to keep an open mind when hearing these ideas and to make those of different values feel at home in Alpha Sigma Phi. But all brothers can benefit by applying these principles. In these times of heightened political tension, alumni and undergraduates both can use silence as a means to discuss politics purely academically.

Because of the difficulty of interpreting and applying Silence in the contemporary culture of each successive generation’s brothers, the value forces these brothers to reflect on the meaning, therefore fulfilling the purpose of the value by listening first and acting second.

Today, Silence is practiced through our partnership with the Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network (RAINN). RAINN operates a national hotline for survivors of sexual assault. This partnership reminds brothers to listen to victim’s stories without interjecting and then act in helping connect the victim with the agencies and resources they need. The value of Silence is not to always be silent, but to determine when it is appropriate to be silent and when it is not.

As culture continues to change over time, each new group of brothers will have to interpret and apply the value of Silence to fit their own time. However, the underlying concept of listening and knowing when to be silent or not will continue to be something that sets apart an Alpha Sig man. Silence also holds value through life in many areas such as potential employers, the military, medical providers, and family.

Chapters should reflect on the Value of Silence during the first quarter of 2019 (January through March). This includes holding a short chapter discussion on Silence. If possible, chapters should hold a fundraiser for RAINN this quarter. Next quarter (April to June 2019), we will focus on Charity.

Here are some ideas others have used for fundraisers:

- Lace up for RAINN
- Dinner (like spaghetti, pizza, burgers, hot dogs, donuts, etc). Lots of food alternatives.
- Auction. Note: best to do donated items, NOT human labor, dates, etc.
- Direct donation campaign to chapter members/alumni.
- Dance Marathon.
- Athletic event measuring some repetitive skill (track laps, 1/2 court baskets, etc.)
- Video challenge - short videos in various categories. Ticket sales for public viewing.
- Pancake breakfast.
- St Baldricks(?)- Shaved head, ice bucket, mustache growth, etc.
- T-shirt sales
- Late night French Toast study break
- 5K run
- Raffle
- Anti-stress Day Massage Tables and Dog/Cat petting (match with Spring Charity/Humane Society)
- Car Show
- Pre-Game Car Smash
- Dunk tank with school VIPs
- Egg throw
- Sweetheart pageant
- Non-perishable food donation
- Concession stand manning at little league/fair/community event
- Trivia Night
- Talent show
- Cornhole/Ping pong/pool/Dodgeball/Boxing tournament
- Gender reversal competition: ladies weightlifting and men cooking

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