DADIRRI (Official Miriam-Rose Ungunmerr Video)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tow2tR_ezL8>

**Deep listening (dadirri)**

Aboriginal people practice deep listening, an almost spiritual skill, based on respect.

Sometimes called 'dadirri', deep listening is inner, quiet, still awareness, and waiting.

Deep listening means also contemplation - it's a concept not exclusive to Aboriginal people.

Dadirri is the word to describe Deep Listening for the Naiyu

Photo: Julia-Freeman-Woolpert, sxc.hu

Aboriginal people passed on stories orally as they knew no writing. Listening to the story-teller was vital to reproduce the story accurately to the next generation of story-tellers.

**Deep listening describes the processes of deep and respectful listening** to build community—a way of encouraging people to explore and learn from the ancient heritage of Aboriginal culture, knowledge and understanding [[1]](https://www.creativespirits.info/aboriginalculture/education/deep-listening-dadirri#fn1).

A beautiful expression from Central Australia is "*Can they bend the knees?"* It inquires if you can sit down and truly listen, [[2]](https://www.creativespirits.info/aboriginalculture/education/deep-listening-dadirri#fn2) a prerequisite for effectively absorbing information, but also an allusion to how information is passed on in that area: by sitting on the red earth.

Deep listening is also called **dadirri**, a word from the Ngan'gikurunggurr and Ngen'giwumirri languages of the Aboriginal people of the Daly River region, 220 kilometres south of Darwin, NT. In the Wiradjuri language the word for meditation, deep listening, knowing and reflecting is **Winhangadhurinya**.[[3]](https://www.creativespirits.info/aboriginalculture/education/deep-listening-dadirri#fn3)

*[Dadirri] is in everyone. It is not just an Aboriginal thing*.*— Miriam-Rose Ungunmerr-Baumann, Aboriginal writer*[*[4]*](https://www.creativespirits.info/aboriginalculture/education/deep-listening-dadirri#fn4)

Aboriginal writer and senior elder Miriam-Rose Ungunmerr-Baumann describes deep listening as follows [[5]](https://www.creativespirits.info/aboriginalculture/education/deep-listening-dadirri#fn5). *"Dadirri is inner, deep listening and quiet, still awareness. Dadirri recognises the deep spring that is inside us. We call on it and it calls to us. This is the gift that Australia is thirsting for. It is something like what you call 'contemplation'.*

*"When I experience dadirri, I am made whole again. I can sit on the riverbank or walk through the trees; even if someone close to me has passed away, I can find my peace in this silent awareness. There is no need of words. A big part of dadirri is listening."*

*"In our Aboriginal way, we learnt to listen from our earliest days. We could not live good and useful lives unless we listened. This was the normal way for us to learn – not by asking questions. We learnt by watching and listening, waiting and then acting."*

*"My people are not threatened by silence. They are completely at home in it. They have lived for thousands of years with Nature's quietness. My people today, recognise and experience in this quietness, the great Life-Giving Spirit, the Father of us all."*

*“Dadirri also means awareness of where you've come from, why you are here, where are you going now and where you belong. It can be used as a tool to quieten the mind as it teaches about "the quiet stillness and the waiting,"* according to Ungunmerr-Baumann.

*"Our Aboriginal culture has taught us to be still and to wait. We do not try to hurry things up. We let them follow their natural course – like the seasons."*

*Dadirri is also used as a prayer, a prayer in the sense of you just feel the presence of the Great Creator*.*—* Miriam-Rose Ungunmerr-Baumann, Aboriginal writer [*[4]*](https://www.creativespirits.info/aboriginalculture/education/deep-listening-dadirri#fn4)

Dr Laura Brearley, author of the **Deep Listening** Book, says *"deep listening is about tuning in... Deep listening is based on stories, silences and the spaces that lie between. As a research methodology, the practice of deep listening is an invitation into culturally congruent ways of learning and knowing."* [[1]](https://www.creativespirits.info/aboriginalculture/education/deep-listening-dadirri#fn1)

*It does wonders for a person to just be still and listen to someone else talk about their life and how they probably came through things. You never know what you'll learn.—* Archie Roach, Aboriginal singer and songwriter.  
  
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