INTROVERTS IN THE WORKPLACE

Learning to Thrive
TODAY’S DISCUSSION

What is an introvert? (Hint: It’s not about shyness)

Introvert Office Strategies

Resources
ABOUT ME

Writer, editor, professional coach

Lover of knitting, road trips, deep conversation

Disdainer of loud noises, scratchy shirts, icebreaker games
NOTECARDS

On each notecard, jot down one concept that resonates with you during our discussion.

This doesn’t require a specific format. You’re the only one who will see it, and you won’t need to share it with the group.

Just write it in a way that you’ll remember it.
SO, WHAT’S AN INTROVERT?

Approximately 25-35% of the population has an introverted temperament.

It’s a temperament, not a personality trait.

It’s about how you gain and lose mental energy.

It’s physiological.
MORE ON INTROVERTED BRAINS

Introverts think a lot – mulling and comparing new and old experiences
Need time and space for ideas to “surface”
Need REM sleep to cement ideas in long-term memory
Need to decrease physical energy use in order to examine thoughts – body slows down
Source: Liz Fosslien and Mollie West Quiet Revolution
EVEN MORE ABOUT US

Depth over Breadth
Writing over Talking
Low Key over High Strung
Yes over No
WHERE DO YOU LAND?

Let’s find out.

Answer the following true/false questions in the way that they are most true for you. Answer in terms of what is actually true for you, not what you wish was true.
1. When I work on projects, I like to have larger uninterrupted time periods rather than smaller chunks.

2. I sometimes rehearse things before speaking, occasionally writing notes for myself.

3. In general, I like to listen more than I like to talk.

4. People sometimes think I’m quiet, mysterious, aloof or calm.

5. I like to share special occasions with just one person or a few close friends, rather than have big celebrations.
6. I usually need to think before I respond or speak.

7. I tend to notice details many people don’t see.

8. If two people have just had a fight, I feel the tension in the air.

9. If I say I will do something, I almost always do it.

10. I feel anxious if I have a deadline or pressure to finish a project.
11. I can “zone out” if too much is going on.

12. I like to watch an activity for awhile before I decide to join in.

13. I form lasting relationships.

14. I don’t like to interrupt others; I don’t like to be interrupted.

15. When I take in lots of information, it takes me awhile to sort it out.
16. I don’t like overstimulating environments. I can’t imagine why people want to go to horror movies or ride roller coasters.

17. I sometimes have strong reactions to smells, tastes, foods, weather, noises, etc.

18. I am creative and/or imaginative.

19. I feel drained after social situations, even if I enjoyed myself.

20. I prefer to be introduced, rather than to introduce others.
21. I can become grouchy if I’m around people or activities too long.

22. I often feel uncomfortable in new surroundings.

23. I like people to come to my home, but I don’t like them to stay too long.

24. I often dread returning phone calls.

25. I find my mind sometimes goes blank when I meet people or when I am asked to speak unexpectedly.
26. I talk slowly or have gaps in my words, especially if I am tired or if I am trying to speak and think at once.

27. I don’t think of casual acquaintances as friends.

28. I feel as if I can’t show people my work or ideas until they are fully formulated.

29. Other people may surprise me by thinking I am smarter than I think I am.
THE BIG REVEAL

If 20-29 of these statements are true for you, you're probably an **introvert**.

If 10-19 of these statements are true for you, you're probably an **ambivert**.

If only 1-9 of these statements are true for you, you’re probably an **extrovert**.
Introverts are often highly creative, and we’ve seen a number of great graphic illustrations of what it feels like to be inside an introvert mind.

Here are a few.
I love being alone. Together.
I've only got an hour before I run out of steam, so cut the crap—How ARE you?
there are days when I wish I could wear one of these around my neck.
and then - hey, are you listening to me?

yes, sorry there's a lot going on

I'd love to but I have plans tonight

Source: Liz Fosslien and Mollie West Quiet Revolution
SO, YOU’RE AN INTROVERT... WHAT NOW?

Knowledge is power.

Play to your Strengths.

- Ability to focus
- Ability to collaborate
- Ability to listen
- Ability to write
- Self-motivation
- Insightful and empathetic
GREAT CAREER CHOICES

Engineering
Web Development
Design
Accounting
Mechanic
Author
Counselor/Therapist
Scientist
Management
INTROVERT OFFICE STRATEGIES

To maintain your energy
WORKPLACE “DO’S”

DO organize your workspace
DO take breaks. A walk, fresh air and solitude are a must
DO use headphones
DO develop strategies to handle interruptions
DO wear comfortable clothing
DO keep a “workplace survival kit”
INTROVERT’S WORKPLACE SURVIVAL KIT

Hand cream and lip balm
Earplugs
Refillable water bottle
Headphones and a calming playlist
Space heater or fan
Protein-based snacks
Built-in breaks
INTROVERT MEETING STRATEGIES

Meetings can produce uncomfortable situations for introverts
- Close proximity
- Being put on the spot
- Speaking in a group
- Answering questions

Strategies
- If you can, turn meetings into emails
- Arrive early and find a comfy spot
- Research beforehand, anticipate questions you may need to answer
- Approach the presenter afterward
PACE YOURSELF:
IT’S A MARATHON, NOT A SPRINT

Introverts tend to work at a slower pace
Have a sense of humor about it
Tackle tough tasks early in the day
In a crisis, take a minute
Keep your colleagues informed of what’s going on

“It’s not that I’m so smart, it’s just that I stay with problems longer.” ~Albert Einstein
MANAGING YOUR MANAGER

Remember, introversion is not a weakness, it’s a temperament

It’s ok to let your manager know what you need to work most efficiently. Just as extroverts need stimulation to be energized, introverts need quiet and space.

Suggestions:
• Ask for space
• Ask for an agenda
• Ask for to speak one-on-one after meetings
• Ask for milestone check ins to avoid micromanagement
• Learn about extroverts
THE CHALLENGE OF PUBLIC SPEAKING

Know that it’s normal to be nervous
Know your subject
Practice
Visualize success
Find friendly faces
Perfection isn’t necessary
Don’t forget to congratulate yourself!
REDUCING OVERWHELM

Figure out what’s going on in your body.
Breathe. Get a drink of water.
Notice what you’re telling yourself in your head.
Remember other stressful situations – and how your solved them.
WHEN YOU’RE EXHAUSTED BY 2 PM...

Try to avoid having too many meetings
Eat a high-protein snack
Take a walk
Meditate

“Introverted people who balance their energy have perseverance and the ability to think independently, focus deeply, and work creatively.” ~Marti Olsen Laney, Ph.D.
LUNCH: YOUR NEW BEST FRIEND

Go it alone when needed.
Don’t work through lunch
Keep it healthy
Leave your phone out of it
If you’re looking to advance in your career, take heart. Many successful people are introverts, and many introverts are highly successful.

The Four P’s
1. Preparation
2. Presence
3. Push
4. Practice

Source: Jennifer B. Kahnweiler, Ph.D., American Management Association
SETTING GOALS

Now we’ll revisit those notecards and use them to set goals for change.

Rephrase each idea into a goal.

Make your goals SMART:
- Specific
- Measurable
- Attainable
- Relevant
- Time-Related

Example of a concept: Introverts need frequent breaks to process things and let their brains recharge.

Goal created from this concept: Starting tomorrow, I will take a 15-minute walk outside the building every afternoon at 2 p.m. for a week.

Keep your goals handy in your office or somewhere else you’ll see them often.
RESOURCES

Books
- The Introvert Advantage by Marti Olsen Laney, Ph.D.
- Quiet by Susan Cain
- Quiet Leadership by David Rock
- The Secret Lives of Introverts by Jenn Granneman

Apps
- 30/30
- Headspace
- Nature Sounds
- Sattva

Websites
- Quiet Revolution (quietrev.com)
- Introvert, Dear (introvertdear.com)

Videos
- Ted Talk by Susan Cain
- 2 minute meditation