



# introvert insights

## The Holidays Can, and Should, Be About More Than “Survival”

By Peter Vogt

This is the time of year when I could swear that introverts are being told not to embrace the peace of the holiday season, but to instead prepare for war. Inevitable war.

The headlines on the trending how-to articles say it all, frequently using the term “survive” (or a close facsimile) to emphasize the apparent stakes involved.

Some examples:

“How to Survive the Holidays as an Introvert” (and dozens of nearly identically titled pieces)

“The Introvert’s Guide to Making It Through the Holiday Season”

“The Introvert’s Guide to Coping with the Holidays”

Even the less battle-oriented articles have an element of inevitable doom and/or doubt in them:

“9 Ways That Introverts Can Actually Enjoy the Holidays”

“Tactics for Introverts During Holiday Family Time”

“Tips for Successfully Navigating the Holiday Season as an Introvert”

I’m sad to say that ... I completely understand why these types of articles exist, and why they are so widely read. The holidays often are, shall we say, difficult for us introverts. I know I’ve had my own struggles in the past. Many times.

But do we really have to set the bar **this** low where introverts and the holidays are concerned?

No. And we shouldn’t.

Instead, we should make them our own. Our own way.

### “On Holiday”

The British have a way of using the word “holiday” that I’ve always loved: They say “**on** holiday”—as in “I’m going on holiday” or “he/she is on holiday.”

The phrase essentially means “on vacation” or “on R&R.” As the

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# TIPS, TRICKS, AND TOOLS

## HOLIDAY GATHERINGS

### To Skip Past Small Talk—or Worse—Sit at the “Kids’ Table”

If the thought of engaging in awkward small talk—or worse (i.e., discussions about potentially hot-button topics)—has you dreading your upcoming holiday dinners with family, try doing what freelance writer Morgan Redding does: Volunteer to sit at the “kids’ table.”

“Kids can be an excellent escape for introverts at a holiday gathering,” Redding writes in her recent *Introvert, Dear* website article entitled “How to Survive the Holidays as an Introvert.”

The kids’ table, she says, “can be a welcome break from cringe-worthy conversations around politics and work at the ‘adult table.’”

“I’ve found that when I speak with children, it usually doesn’t have the draining effect on me like conversing with adults,” writes Redding, an introvert herself.

“The children don’t have an expectation for how I should reply or questions I should or shouldn’t ask. They are genuine in their responses. And often hilarious.”

The kids can also help you out, and vice versa, before or after the dinner itself, Redding stresses.

“Taking your child (or a niece or nephew) for a stroll around the block or throwing a ball outside can also

get you a break from the indoor environment if it is too loud or stimulating,” she notes.

“If you’re in a home where the child lives, ask them to show you their room or favorite toy. I promise you they will be more than willing to tell you all about their new favorite thing! Plus, building this genuine connection with your younger family members is valuable too.”



## NETWORKING TIPS

### Let a Rubber Duck Help You Prep for Networking Events

When storytelling expert Rebecca Vogels worked in Silicon Valley, she spent time with software developers who introduced her to a technique called *rubber duck debugging*.

“Originally mentioned by Andrew Hunt in his 1999 book *The Pragmatic Programmer*, rubber duck debugging is a method for problem solving,” Vogels says in her *Forbes* website article “Networking for Introverts: How to Do It, and Why Program-

mers Talk to Squeaky Ducks.”

When a developer runs into a problem with their code, Vogels writes, they need to talk it out.

“But really,” she says, “they need to talk **at** something.

“So they talk to a squeaky duck on their desk, explaining the code to it.”

In the process, they go through the code line by line and come to a new understanding of it, frequently uncovering the error(s) that got them stuck in the first place.

It’s a strategy you can use else-

where in your professional life as well, Vogels stresses. Namely, in your professional networking activities, especially those that involve networking events.

Think rubber duck **storytelling**, Vogels says.

“Before going to a networking event, you should tell your story to a squeaky duck, your dog, or a stuffed animal,” she writes.

“You’ll be able to see any problems with your story, and come up with ideas for additional content and potential segues.”

## To Succeed in Job Interviews, Own Your Unique Strengths

If you're like many introverts, you have strengths that you're either not fully aware of or that you tend to downplay as not being all that important in the world of work.

Don't fall into this trap—especially as you prepare for job interviews, advises Charlotte Rogers, digital and content editor for the *Engineering & Technology (E&T) Jobs* website.

“Focus on **your** strengths, not other people's, and you will find what works best for you,” Rogers writes in her recent *E&T Jobs* article “How to Have a Successful Interview as an Introvert.”

“It may not always feel like it,” Rogers concedes, “but being an introvert in the workplace can be a fantastic skill, and it definitely has its advantages.”

For example, Rogers writes, you likely:

Think logically and carefully before making decisions.

Listen well to directions.

Work well alone, “without having to rely on people to help you do your job.”

Invest the time and energy necessary to be observant.

Interviewing coach Dominique Law, an introvert herself, feels so strongly about owning one's unique introverted strengths that she suggests writing them down.

“Having a list of your positive attributes will help you feel more confident when answering interview questions,” Law writes in her recent *Forbes* website article “Three Interview Tips for Introverts.”

You should even practice talking about your strengths, aloud, in the mirror, Law says.

“The more confident you feel saying them to yourself,” she emphasizes, “the more confident you will feel repeating them in your interview.”

## WORKPLACE SUCCESS

### Your Meeting Contributions Can Emerge Later vs. Sooner

How can you best contribute in meetings at work when, like so many other introverts, you find that your best ideas come not in the moment, but after the topic of discussion has come and gone—or even after the meeting itself has ended?

Consider making peace with the phenomenon and focusing your energy on detailed post-meeting analysis and follow-up, says Matthew DiGirolamo, chief corporate affairs officer for L'Oréal North America.

“Many introverts struggle to show up the way they want to or need to in meetings. Their sensitivity to external stimuli means that they are easily overwhelmed in large group settings,” DiGirolamo writes in his recent *Fast Company* website article entitled “The 4 Success Strategies That Helped This Introvert Climb the Corporate Ladder.”

“While [introverts] are great active listeners, they need time to think silently and reflectively as opposed to ‘thinking out loud’ on the spot,” DiGirolamo continues.

“This can make them look timid or unprepared.”

The solution: If you're not able to create value **during** a particular meeting, find a way to create value **afterwards**, DiGirolamo says.

“Send an email debrief, or schedule a one-on-one exchange to make your valuable reflections known to your colleagues or manager.”

Meetings tend to be “made for extraverts,” says DiGirolamo, an introvert himself. But at their essence, they're really about problem solving, sharing perspectives, and influencing—all of which you can do in your own way and time.



# IT'S AN INTROVERT'S LIFE

## Labels Have the Power to Boost Your Confidence—or Destroy It

By Peter Vogt

Over the last month or so, I've been on an educational odyssey to learn how to replace the radiator in my son's 2001 Honda Civic. And to then go forth and actually **do** it.

This is not the kind of thing that comes easy to me. In fact, it comes difficult—so much so that, in the not-so-distant past, I never would have attempted it.

But I have learned something crucial about myself over the years, something that is troubling and life changing at the same time: I have a nasty habit of going along with the idea that my introverted strengths are weaknesses.

I'll bet you do too, given the extraverted culture we live in.

Think about it. Are you and I really “slow” (my frequent self moniker) at certain tasks, or are we instead “methodical” in our approach to them? Do we “think too much,” as people often tell us, or are we “reflective”? Are we “rigid” and “inflexible,” or are we “planful” and “organized”?

Words really do have power, and words as personal descriptors have gotten the best of me and my introversion way too many times.

But not this time.

This time, I decided I would treat, and label, my introverted strengths as the introverted strengths they really are.

Out with “slow,” for example, and in with leveraging applicable YouTube videos, studying them me-

thodically to learn the radiator replacement procedure in detail.

Out with “think too much” and in with pinpointing two key videos that, supplemented by my trusty Haynes repair guide, would serve as my step-by-step field manual for the operation.

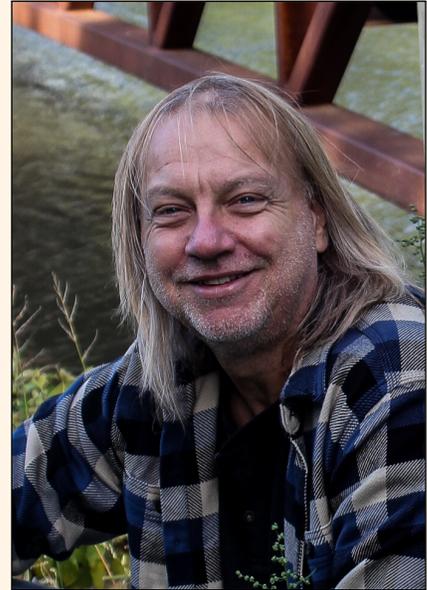
Out with “rigid” and in with writing down each step as I completed it, taking photos as necessary, so that once various parts had come out to get the new radiator in, I'd be organized enough to reverse the process and put Humpty Dumpty back together again.

The morning I decided to get started on the job, my father-in-law, God bless him, offered to help. And into the old trap I fell.

“I'm slow,” I said to him.

Doh!

“I just need to be methodical about it if I'm going to succeed,” I said in a quick rephrase. “I'd love your help, but I have to take my time and follow my plan if I'm going to learn anything and pull this off.”



My father-in-law, God bless him, agreed to my terms—and abided by them as he, along with my son Théo, dug in with me and we got going.

It was not a flawless process. Rusty bolts broke and we had to improvise. It took a while to get the old radiator out and maneuver the new one into place. We had to watch and rewatch the videos several times.

Eventually, though, we were done. Until I had to replace a burst radiator hose the next day. **Then** we were done.

And then I understood that labels like “slow” have got to go.

### See You in January—I'd Love Your Feedback!

We'll be taking our customary break from publishing in December. See you in January for the January 2022 issue!

Until then: Thanks, as always, for reading. I'm so grateful for you and your interest and support.

I would love your feedback about *Introvert Insights*. If you'd be willing to offer yours, please email me at: [peter@introvertinsights.com](mailto:peter@introvertinsights.com).

Thanks again!

Peter Vogt, Editor and Publisher

Coming soon ...

My new online course that will free you to **BE** you!



You **deserve** to be the introvert you are.

You **need** to be the introvert you are.

You **can** be the introvert you are.

And with the right knowledge, the right practical tools, and the right mindset ...

**You Will!**

# PRACTICAL RESEARCH

## Your Beliefs About Leisure Influence Its Impact on You

If you tend to think of leisure activities as unproductive and wasteful, you're not only going to enjoy them less—you may well hurt your mental health as well, according to a recent article published in the *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*.

The article summarizes the findings of four studies led by Gabriela Tonietto, an assistant professor of marketing at Rutgers University.

In one of the studies, 300 people were asked to share what they did for Halloween and how much they enjoyed it, along with their attitudes toward leisure in general. Those who viewed leisure as wasteful enjoyed their Halloween less—especially if it involved doing something purely for

fun (e.g., attending a party) vs. something that could double as fulfilling a responsibility (e.g., trick or treating with their kids).

In another study, participants read a news article that came in several versions: one meant to convince them that leisure time is wasteful, another meant to convince them that leisure time is unproductive, and a third meant to convince them that leisure time is productive.

The participants then watched a video entitled “Best Funny Cat Videos 2019” and were asked how much they enjoyed it.

Those who had read the “leisure time is productive” article enjoyed watching the video the most.

The other two studies revealed similar findings. Moreover, the researchers also concluded that “the

belief that leisure is wasteful is also associated with poorer mental health outcomes, including lower reported happiness and greater reported depression, anxiety, and stress.”

“While work can impart meaning and a sense of purpose in life, leisure—such as time with family and friends, hobbies, and exercise—is what makes our lives happy and healthy,” Tonietto concludes.

“For those who think of leisure as wasteful, focusing on the productive ways that individual leisure activities can serve their long-term goals can help.”

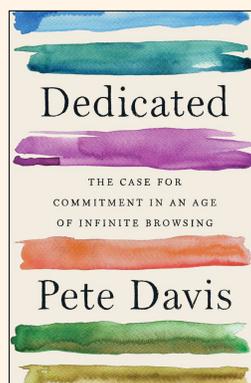
**Sources:** “Viewing Leisure as Wasteful Undermines Enjoyment,” *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 97 (August 21, 2021 online publication); Rutgers University news release, August 24, 2021.

# REFLECTIVE READS

## Dedicated Celebrates the “Superpower” of Depth

One of the least talked about—and least acknowledged—aspects of introversion involves the introvert’s gravitation toward **depth**.

The typical introvert, consciously or not, prefers, for example, one or two close friendships over seven or eight mere acquaintanceships; becoming an expert in one area vs. dabbling in several; having a substantive conversation, one on one, with a trusted fellow soul instead of trying—often fruitlessly—to either talk or listen amidst the din of a crowded restaurant.



I can actually tell when I have a depth shortage in my own life as an introvert. I feel like I’m skipping randomly across the water on a speedboat—a speedboat someone else is driving—when I’d rather be alone on an anchored rowboat,

lost in thought with a fishing line in the water.

That’s why Pete Davis’s intriguing book *Dedicated: The Case for Commitment in an Age of Infinite Browsing* spoke to me so much.

*Dedicated*, at its core, is about depth. More specifically and importantly, it’s about how lack of depth is hurting us—and how committing to depth can help us to be truly healthy and happy in life.

Depth, Davis says, drives meaning and purpose in our lives. And in turn, he writes, “the depth that comes from sustained purpose is a superpower.”

A superpower **you** likely possess.

Continued from page 1

Merriam-Webster dictionary puts it, being on holiday is “experiencing a time away from home, school, or business, usually in order to relax or travel.”

The key phrase here is “away from,” which in turn implies restoration, rejuvenation, reinvigoration. “The holidays” **can**—and should—be about recharging your batteries, at least to some degree.

No, they’re not all about you (or me). But they’re not all about everyone else either. So why not make a deal with yourself to (re)claim your part of them this year?

Here’s how, using three introvert favorites that you may be neglecting in everyday life.

## Read

You and I and millions of other introverts are naturally drawn to reading for good reason: It’s one of the few activities that offers us a quadruple word score on what I call The 4 Pillars of Introvert Well-Being: Solitude, Reflection, Focus, and Depth.

If you want to get lost in other people’s brains in other people’s worlds—and reap the recharging benefits that go with it—nothing tops reading.

As in reading a book, by the way, or a long-form magazine article. Mindless Facebook scrolling isn’t remotely the same.

## Write

Even if you don’t love writing or view yourself as “a writer,” journaling about your thoughts, feelings, and experiences is amazingly therapeutic and revealing. I am continually amazed by what, and how much, comes out of me when I write vs. speak. The quality and quantity simply don’t compare.

You don’t have to write for long, and nothing fancy is required. Just put pen to paper in a quiet place.

You can also write a draft of that short story that’s been bouncing around in your head ... or a poem ... or a song on your guitar.

## Learn

The holidays, for you, can be the time when you finally have the chance to sink your teeth into learning something you’ve always wanted to learn.

Take that new camera—the one you bought **last** year—out for a real test ride while you’re walking down a snow-filled country road. Start working through the “Introductory French” program you’ve been wanting to get to. Watch a TED Talk or

three to be inspired and to see how others have pulled off the feat you’d like to accomplish someday.

One of the cartoons in Debbie Tung’s poignant book *Quiet Girl in a Noisy World: An Introvert’s Story* shows Debbie getting ready to go home from work. She’s headed for the train station, alone, when a colleague tells her that she’s headed to the train station too and she’d like to tag along.

“Oh, great!” Debbie says.

When the two co-workers arrive at the station, a sign tells them that the next train has been delayed and won’t be arriving for 30 agonizing minutes.

“So,” Debbie’s colleague says to her as the two of them are sitting on a bench, “any exciting plans for tonight?”

Debbie’s response (in a thought bubble): “This feels very much like overtime.”

The holidays can feel very much like overtime too, especially if you’re an introvert.

But they can also feel like, and be, a refreshing time, a revitalizing time, a replenishing time—if you simply think beyond “surviving” them and instead make them the physical, psychological, and emotional oasis they’re really meant to be.





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## INTROVERT INSPIRATIONS

“There is no designated turf in school, in extracurricular activities, or in the workplace for only certain people. Introverts are business leaders, lawyers, doctors, scientists, writers, and, yes, even presidents. The sooner we realize that, the better we will be as a society.”

~ Alex Pappas

“[I]ntroversion and resilience are interrelated, because it takes a great deal of grit and resoluteness to stand your ground and continue to be the person you are.”

~ Jerra Latrice Mitchell

“Commitment is co-owning a little part of existence and, in doing so, loving existence itself a little bit more.”

~ Pete Davis

“Just be introverted and be cool with it. Not a big deal (after all, you're no different than half the world's population).”

~ Maria Prati