



introvert insights

Your Introversion Influences Every Relationship You Have

By Peter Vogt

Do you think your relationship with your significant other would improve if the two of you mutually understood each other's personality, particularly when it comes to your respective levels of the robust trait that is introversion/extraversion?

Do you think your relationship with your child would improve if the two of you knew where each other fell on the spectrum of introversion/extraversion?

Do you think your relationships with your co-workers and your boss would improve if you all had a good idea of where you each stood with respect to introversion/extraversion?

The answer in all three cases, of course, is: of course!

But it's easy to forget. Too easy.

It's so easy, in fact, to get so engrossed in learning about introversion in your **own** life—its influence on you alone, in isolation from others—that you quickly forget that it has just as powerful an influence on your many **relationships** as well.

Sometimes you have to step back

and (re)awaken the idea that your introversion goes far beyond you yourself; it reaches into virtually every interaction you have with other people, particularly those with whom you have some kind of established relationship, if only a weak or tangential one.

Think about all the different people in your life and all the different roles you play with them.

Your introversion/extraversion, and perhaps theirs as well, is always in the midst of it all.

Let's look at just a few examples.

Your Significant Other

Picture this: Introverted you has a significant other who is an extravert. But neither of you fully understands the dynamic; you're both fuzzy about the introversion/extraversion concept, though you've heard the terms thrown around.

Do you suppose any problems could brew in this scenario?

Ask any marriage counselor. A colleague of mine **is** a marriage counselor, and every day she sees

August 2022

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TIPS, TRICKS, AND TOOLS

PARENTING

Tap the Power of Consistency to Get the Solitude You Need

Quiet time to yourself is something you absolutely **need** as an introvert, especially if you're the parent of young children.

So make precious solitude a not-to-be-missed part of your days, even if you can pull it off for only a few minutes at a time.

"When my child was in day care, I memorized her schedule. I kept that schedule on the weekends, including her nap time. That was 'quiet time' for me," says Shaleah Williams, creator of "The Introverted Black Mom" podcast, in a recent *Self* magazine website article (by Rebecca Joy Stanborough) entitled "7 Tips for Introverted Parents Who Are Feeling Overwhelmed and Touched Out."

"[T]hat may be my biggest tip for introverted parents," Williams says. "Keep a consistent schedule."

Julie Vick, author of *Babies Don't Make Small Talk, So Why Should I? (An Introvert's Guide to Surviving Par-*



enthood), says you may need to experiment and adjust a bit to find a solitude strategy that works for you over time.

"When my kids were younger," Vick notes in the *Self* article, "my husband and I used to trade off sleeping in on the weekends.

"Now that [the children] are older, we trade off putting them to bed at night. Knowing that I have some pockets of time in my schedule

to do something like binge-watch mindless TV shows alone helps me."

Stanborough stresses in the article that making solitude an automatic part of your day—i.e., turning it into a **habit**—is key.

"People intentionally build exercise and eating habits to maintain their health," she writes, "and the same kind of consistent, frequent effort can be used to build quiet times into your daily routine."

SUCCESS AT WORK

Tell Colleagues How You Tick in Terms of Communication

To prevent misunderstandings, tell people—outright—about your communication tendencies and preferences as an introvert, particularly if you're in a leadership role in your organization, advises leadership coach Stefanie Finkelstein.

"While it's not necessary to pretend to be someone other than who

[you] are, it is helpful and important to ensure that those around you understand your style so that it isn't misinterpreted," Finkelstein writes in her blog post entitled "What to Do If They Don't Understand Your Quiet Leadership Style."

When you communicate your preferences proactively, Finkelstein says, "your colleagues will know how to best connect with you."

"This can alleviate any stress or

tension caused by someone taking it personally if you react less than exuberantly to their social invitation or call for connection," she stresses.

"You know it's not personal, but they might not."

So tell people if you prefer emails over personal visits. Tell people if you find phone calls distracting. Etc.

And be sure to ask your colleagues about their preferences as well, Finkelstein adds.

SLEEPING BETTER

Use a Calming Pre-Bed Ritual to Prep Your Brain for Sleep

You would think that after, say, three hours of socializing at a dinner party full of relative strangers, you and your introverted psyche would be so wiped out that you'd fall asleep the moment your head hits the pillow that night.

Not necessarily—which you may already know firsthand!—according to psychologist Shelby Harris, a behavioral sleep medicine specialist and author of *The Women's Guide to Overcoming Insomnia*.

There's a difference, Harris says, between feeling **fatigued** and feeling

tired. Being fatigued, she says, connotes a drain of your energy, whereas being tired is that drowsy feeling that leads to sleep.

"For introverts, socializing tends to overstimulate the brain and body, leading some to feel irritable, indecisive, or on edge, or even to get physical symptoms, like a headache or muscle aches," Harris says in a recent *Well+Good* website article (by Erica Sloan) entitled "How to Wind Down for Better Sleep—Especially If You're an Introvert."

"While all of that can be extremely exhausting," Harris points out, "it doesn't necessarily lead to feeling sleepy."

Biologically speaking, Harris says, the process of falling asleep doesn't operate like an on-off switch. So when you're an introvert especially, she stresses, it helps to have a calming pre-bed ritual.

Just make sure it doesn't involve a screen. Scrolling through messages or posts on your phone, for example, not only increases your (perhaps already high) level of mental stimulation; it also exposes you to the kind of blue light that suppresses your brain's melatonin level and thus promotes wakefulness vs. tiredness.

Better ideas: reading, knitting, listening to music, coloring, or doing a jigsaw or crossword puzzle.

COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

Shoot Videos on *Your Terms*—and Let Go of "Perfection"

Depending on who you are, you may love the idea of making videos or utterly dread it.

Whatever the case, when you're an introvert and you're shooting a video—either by choice or by necessity, for professional purposes or other reasons—it pays to have a few tricks up your sleeve that will help you do well.

Here's one for the top of your list: "Only shoot video when you feel energized," says Carla Marshall, content marketing manager for TubeBuddy, a company that helps people succeed on YouTube.

"Pick a time of day that you know you will be at your best," Marshall writes in her recent blog post entitled "The Introverted Creator's Guide to Appearing on Camera."

"That can be before you've gone through all the tasks in your day that drain you, like long phone calls or

meetings," Marshall says.

"Or maybe for you, it's after all those tasks have been completed and you can just sit down in a quiet room and talk to a camera."

Business coach Susanne Rieker offers a wise tip for the **end** of your video shooting process: Abide, as she herself does, by what she calls "the rule of two takes."

"That's all you get," Rieker writes

in her blog post entitled "How to Show Up on Social Media as an Introvert."

"If you film a reel and you aren't happy with the first take, you get one more, and then you have to publish it," Rieker says.

"You'll be surprised by how much time this saves you."

To say nothing of the unnecessary fear and stress you'll avoid.



IT'S AN INTROVERT'S LIFE

In the Garden of Volunteering, You May Be the Perfect Bloom

By Peter Vogt

The ad's headline grabbed me:

Introverts and Quiet Types Needed

"*Hmm. That's different,*" I thought. Needed for what, exactly?

Needed for their—our—unique qualities and strengths, it turns out, in service of one of the noblest purposes I've ever encountered: keeping people company, silently but surely, during the last hours of their lives.

The ad was posted by Endless Journey, an Omaha, Nebraska-based hospice care provider.

I know hospice care.

They were there for me and my family 10 years ago when we lost my first wife, Lois, to cancer.

To say that the hospice nurses who helped us were godsend is a ridiculous understatement, but it's the only word I have for them.

Annette showed up, weekly at first and more frequently as time went on, to give Lois a sponge bath. Annette always spent an inordinate amount of time on Lois's feet. It took me a while to figure out why: She was only briefly **washing** Lois's feet. She spent the rest of the time **rubbing** Lois's feet, without a word.

A little later in our journey, Willie came into our lives. Part nurse, part coach, part counselor, and part older sister figure, Willie oozed wisdom. And calm. Much-needed calm in a truly nightmarish storm.

It never occurred to me at the

time, but Annette and Willie were almost certainly introverts. Both of them spoke quietly, carried themselves quietly, went about their work quietly, and left our home quietly after giving every one of us quiet hugs of compassion and support.

We leaned on Annette and Willie, often literally.

And they were always there.

Now, let me be clear: Do you have to be an introvert to work in hospice care? Of course not.

But is it a field that happens to line up quite nicely with what the typical introvert has to offer?

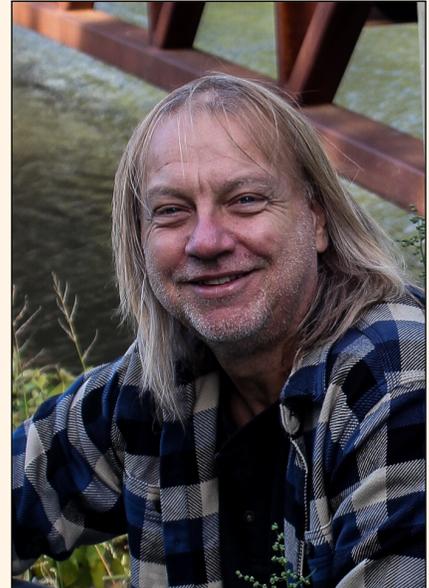
For sure.

It's no wonder, then, that Endless Journey is seeking "introverts and quiet types" by name:

Do you love people but don't like to make small talk? Introverts and quiet types are the perfect volunteers for our Sit Beside Me program as well as our patients who are lonely but just want people who are willing to sit and people watch with them.

Being comfortable with silence is a key gift in a hospice volunteer! ... We utilize volunteers to sit quietly beside a patient who may be in their last hours to days—checking for signs of discomfort, reading scripture, making sure there is music or other soothing elements in the room. ...

Nonjudgmental, calm, and supportive companions are lifesavers!



My wife Adrienne and her teaching colleagues are about to begin another school year. Adrienne came home the other day with an inspiring T-shirt, designed by her school's media specialist and emblazoned with one of the key themes for the year:



Take that advice to heart as you think about the ways **you** can volunteer in this world—your own way, using your own gifts.

Yes, you can sit with someone who is dying. Or you can pet kittens at the animal shelter. Or you can read at your kid's school. You can even volunteer from home.

Bloom where **you** are planted.

And always remember: Your soil is fertile, your seeds one of a kind.

LAST CHANCE!

BETA version ends August 31!

Online Course



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LOYAL

PRACTICAL RESEARCH

Acting “Out of Character” Carries Its Share of Costs

Whenever you act out of character—i.e., when you engage in behaviors that deviate from your personality—be prepared to pay a cognitive and emotional price for it, according to a recent article in the *Journal of Research in Personality*.

The article describes the results of three studies, all of which involved participants who first completed a personality assessment.

In the first two studies, participants were questioned once (first study) or twice (second study) a day about their behaviors, feelings, and thoughts on that particular day. For example, participants would rate the phrase “today, I was talkative” anywhere between 1 (extremely inaccurate)

rate) and 9 (extremely accurate).

The participants also answered questions about how they were feeling (i.e., positive affect and negative affect) that day.

The key finding in both studies: Behaving out of character was “linked to decreased levels of positive affect, and increased levels of negative affect,” the study’s authors note in the journal article.

In other words, positive feelings go down and negative feelings go up when you act out of character.

In the third study, the researchers attempted to replicate the first two **and** examine whether the results had any connection with what they referred to as “resource depletion.”

In this study, participants were also asked about their usage of four personal “resources” each day: self-

discipline, concentration, stress-resistance, and physical energy.

The results of the study mirrored those of the first two, with the additional insight that “behaving out of character is linked to increased levels of resource depletion, which is in turn associated [with] lower positive and higher negative affect.”

“These findings,” the researchers conclude, “are one of the first to show that deviating from one’s personality profile can be depleting, and that this is associated with affective costs.”

Source: “A Multidimensional Approach to Acting Out of Character: How Deviating from One’s Personality Profile Relates to Resource Depletion and Affect,” *Journal of Research in Personality*, January 19, 2022 (online).

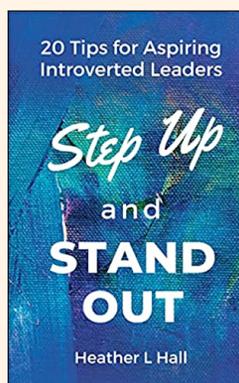
REFLECTIVE READS

Step Up and Stand Out Offers Advice for Introverted Leaders

If you’re an introvert and you’re in a position of leadership (or want to be), particularly at work, Heather Hall’s *Step Up and Stand Out* is the kind of cut-to-the-chase guide you’ll appreciate having on your desk.

The book is a concise collection of tips that Hall has pulled from her 20-year corporate career as well as her leadership coaching experience. Each tip runs only two or three pages, so it’s easy to digest a lot of Hall’s wisdom in just a few minutes.

Hall does a particularly good job of being realistic and balanced in her



approach to advising introverted leaders, both current and aspiring.

To be, and be seen as, a leader in the corporate world, she says, you need to perfect the art of pushing beyond your boundaries at times while remaining true to yourself overall.

It’s especially important in terms of making your voice heard in meetings and in similar contexts, Hall stresses—which takes not only practice, she says, but also the willingness and ability to acknowledge that what you have to say matters.

“Your inner critic—that inner voice which tells you ‘no one cares what you have to say!’ or ‘wait until you have all the facts!’—is wrong,” Hall emphasizes. “You’ve done your homework. You’re ready to deliver. And it’s time for your inner critic to trust you.”

Because it turns out there is plenty to trust in you—and it’s just waiting to come out.

Continued from page 1

couples who have no idea that they are not **intentionally** trying to drive each other bonkers.

They just don't realize that they are different on the introversion/extraversion scale.

Once they figure that out, they can often begin the path toward strengthening their bond.

Your Child(ren)

Introverted you comes home Friday night after a grueling week at work. Your brain literally hurts. You have nothing left to give, to anyone. You just want to stare at the wall.

Your lovely little 6-year-old daughter bops in and wants you to play with her. Immediately.

Now what?

You need to find a way to get what you need **and** give your daughter what she needs, and deserves.

Maybe it's as simple as saying to her: "I need a few minutes to catch my breath, sweetie, and then I can read you a story."

Bottom line: Your introversion is **here**, too, in this relationship.

Your Colleagues at Work

Introverted you sits in the Monday morning team meeting week after week, saying little in the moment but frequently following up with your boss via email when you (inevitably) come up with observations or ideas long **after** the meeting ends.

Several of your more-extraverted colleagues conclude that you are pretty much disengaged from the group's work and goals, and you can sense that they believe you aren't pulling your weight.

Does this strain your relationships with them? Almost certainly.

Would it help if they knew that you and your introverted approach to work thrive when you simply have some time to think and process before responding to things?

Yes, without question.

Your Family

Introverted you is with your extended family for the holidays. First there's an enormous breakfast. Then there's baking cookies. Then lunch. Then "let's all go to the mall!" Then ice cream. Then a 45-minute trip down the busy interstate to see

great-grandpa at the nursing home. Then the return 45-minute trip. Then dinner. Then eggnog, hot chocolate, and singing.

And finally, your crash.

Would it help for you to have a break in there somewhere? And for your family to understand why and not hassle you about it?

All the Rest

Would it help if your friends knew how much introverted you treasures getting together with them one on one, and how much introverted you hates the idea of "the more the merrier"?

Would it help if you yourself knew—and respected—why you'd rather email your insurance guy vs. calling him?

Would it help if the parent of your child's best friend knew—and truly understood—why you yourself don't want to stay for best friend's birthday party at Chuck E. Cheese?

It goes on and on and on.

Your introversion accompanies you, everywhere you go and in every relationship you have.

Don't ever forget it.





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Introvert Insights is published monthly by Introvert Insights, LLC, 1036 38th Street South, Moorhead, MN 56560.

IntrovertInsights.com

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INTROVERT INSPIRATIONS

"Introversion is not a deficit of extraversion. It's a quieter way of interacting with the world around you—one which brings a lot of advantages to you and your family."

~ Rebecca Joy Stanborough

"While extraverts derive joy from external interactions, introverts can recenter themselves when they go deep into themselves."

~ Yvonne Peters-Adzimah

"[T]ime spent recharging alone does not mean you're missing out on any experiences—it just means you'll get more out of them when you're ready."

~ Martina Essert

"Introversion is just as valid and worthy and beautiful as extraversion. Just because it isn't getting the praise in the real world that it deserves doesn't mean that it's bad."

~ Becky Mollenkamp