



The Newsletter That Helps You Thrive as an Introvert—Your Way!

i introvert insights

Your Introversion *Fluctuates*— Situational Differences Matter

By Peter Vogt

Sometimes you turn into an extravert—or so it must seem, both to you and others around you.

You're more chatty and sociable than usual.

You have more energy in both your words and your behaviors.

You're engaged more outwardly than normal with the people and/or activities around you.

What's going on?

Nothing.

Don't be fooled.

Just be aware that, perplexing as it might be, your tendency toward introversion isn't static.

It fluctuates—minute to minute, hour to hour, day to day—depending on a whole host of factors.

The Person(s) You're With

You're going to be less introverted, for example—and (seemingly) more extraverted—among people you already know well, and people with whom you have something clearly in common.

Family members and close

friends come immediately to mind here, but they're not the only people I'm talking about.

In my own life, for example, I may not have seen my college roommate, Dave, for years—which was exactly the case recently when I attended his father's funeral.

But despite the time that had passed, I easily and happily slipped into reminiscing with him about the high jinks of yesteryear.

And Dave, an introvert himself, did the same, even though it was a tough day for him and his family.

The Topic or Activity

If you're anything like me, you'll be less introverted—and (seemingly) more extraverted—when the topic or activity or discussion you're engaged in with others is clearly **substantive** in your eyes.

Will you be the life of the party during small talk?

Highly unlikely.

But the opposite may, and probably does, well occur when you know

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TIPS, TRICKS, AND TOOLS

SOCIAL LIFE

In Social Situations, Find—and Bond With—Fellow Introverts

If, like many other introverts, you find social situations draining—perhaps even intimidating and/or anxiety-producing—one simple way to combat those feelings is to seek out other introverts in attendance, says Detroit, Michigan-based writer Kristin O’Neill.

“We’re always around; we’re usually the ones listening rather than talking, watching and observing, or getting a drink solo,” says O’Neill, an introvert herself, in her recent *Detroit Mom* website article entitled “An Introvert’s Guide to Navigating Social Situations.”

You’re likely pretty good at reading body language and “getting a feel for the energy in the room,” O’Neill says.

So “you’ll be able to notice fellow introverts,” she writes, “and [you] might be lucky enough to escape to a quieter area of the event together and lament on all the things you’d rather be doing.”

“You might even make a new friend!” she adds.

Austin, Texas-based digital marketer Kristi Koeter offers similar advice in her October 16 *Almost Sated* Substack newsletter article entitled “Improv for Introverts (and Other Conference Tricks).”

Koeter writes that she recently at-

tended a major national conference in Austin where she did “more in-person networking than my introverted heart is comfortable with.”

On the first day, she says, she met a woman who came right out and told her that she was an introvert, and that making conversation at big events was hard for her.

“Her admission immediately put me at ease,” Koeter says.

“[And] I realized this was a terrific tactic for navigating a big event like this: **Tell people your type right away.**”

“When you say you’re an introvert to a fellow introvert,” Koeter stresses, “they immediately get you, and you both feel less alone.”

RELATIONSHIPS

Use Shared Interests to Turn Acquaintances into Friends

Is there someone in your life you already know—sort of, at least!—that you would like to become closer friends with?

One easy way to do that is to tap into the power of shared interests, says communication expert TJ Guttormsen, in his recent blog post entitled “A Simple Way to Become Better Friends with Someone.”

Find an activity or a project or even just a topic “that will excite both of you, that you can [then] do together,” says Guttormsen, an introvert himself.

“What kinds of interests, hobbies, experiences, goals, or similar do the two of you share?” Guttormsen says.

“Make a list. And keep in mind

that the more things you can think of, the easier it will be to find a suitable activity or project.”

Perhaps you both like photography, Guttormsen suggests. Or hiking in nature. Or taking your dog to the dog park.

“Activities like these won’t just let the two of you spend more time together, but [they] will also give you

both an obvious topic to focus on—one that both of you are excited about and interested in,” Guttormsen stresses.

“This will ensure that neither of you has to worry too much about what to talk about. And it tends to eliminate the potential awkwardness of spending time alone with someone you don’t know well.”



Be Very Specific About What You Seek from Networking

Next time you're at a networking event (or in any networking situation, really), set aside advice like "just go network" and "push yourself" and "put yourself out there," says introvert career coach Julianna Yau Yorgan.

"I'm not saying that you shouldn't network as an introverted job seeker," Yorgan writes in a recent LinkedIn post.

"But let's be honest: those tips are **not** useful for us, you know?"

Yorgan suggests instead a different mindset for your networking activities: getting "**very** specific about your objective for networking."

"Like, **way more** specific than you think," she emphasizes.

For example:

I want to know what it's really like to work at _____ company.

I want to know what that hiring manager is like to work for.

I want to be introduced to a recruiter at _____ company so they can look for a role for me.

Once you know what you're looking for, Yorgan says, "figuring out how to network, and with whom, becomes that much easier."

"Because despite what extraverts



think," she adds, "we introverts aren't anti-social or shy. We just like to have a plan, and [we] don't like talking to people who bore us."

SELF-CARE

Caution: Don't Overuse the Word "Yes" in Your Life

Business strategist Jackie Colburn prides herself on being someone who promotes self-care, work-life balance, and well-being.

But a year ago, she found herself in a place where she had stopped following her own advice.

She was overextended—and it took her partner and child to point it out to her, she writes in her recent blog post entitled "How I Walked Away from Burnout (and 3 Tips to Help You Do the Same)."

One of the ways Colburn has since regained her footing, she writes, is by consciously fighting the urge to automatically say "yes" to things.

It's been "a concerted effort not to overuse" the word, she stresses.

"In every situation, I started asking myself if I actually wanted to do

something," Colburn writes.

"If so, what level of participation I was comfortable with, and were there ways I could remove myself from the role of coordinating that effort."

Colburn didn't automatically start saying "no" to everything. She says she has simply forced herself "to pump the brakes, wait for the other

person—the one who invited me to hang out—to get the ball rolling and follow up."

She sees some people less often these days, she acknowledges.

But that has "helped me realize that those relationships may have been a little one-sided, allowing me to reallocate my energy elsewhere."

You might find the same.



IT'S AN INTROVERT'S LIFE

Fight Off Those Silly Questions with Silly Questions of Your Own

By Peter Vogt

In high school and, especially, in college, people always used to ask me a question that I just couldn't understand.

Not "couldn't understand" as in "what are you asking?" but, rather, "couldn't understand" as in "why are you asking?"

The question:

How come you don't drink?

It's true: I didn't drink back then, and I rarely do even now.

But "how come?"

There was no "how come?" I just didn't have any interest in drinking. It was as simple as that.

I wasn't (and I'm still not) against drinking. I didn't (and still don't) have some moral or ethical or religious stance against it.

I just didn't (and still don't) think about it. It wasn't (and still isn't) on my daily radar screen.

If anything, I didn't drink back in my younger days because it appeared that the only reason for doing so was to get drunk and lose control.

And I didn't—and still don't!—like feeling out of control.

I'll take **in** control any day.

So I just never really knew what to do with this ridiculous question.

Until one day, a genius response (if I do say so myself) somehow flew out of my mouth.

My reply:

How come you don't smoke?

Once I'd said this, the person who had posed the question to me would be knocked off balance a bit.

They would then say something like this through the perplexed look on their face:

Wait, what?! Well, uh, I just don't.

Or, if they were really sharp—which was rare, since they often had themselves been drinking already—they would immediately back off, because they realized what I was saying between the lines:

That's a dumb \$&#@-ing question.

I still think about these, um, fruitful conversations today, along with the stop-it-in-its-tracks technique I developed to handle them.

Because it's a strategy that works perfectly if you're an introvert and you face your own version of stupid-ass "how come you ... ?" or "why don't you ... ?" questions from people in your life.

For example:

How come you don't you go out more?

Again, there's probably no real answer to this question from where you sit. You just like what you like, which is to say that most of the time, you'd rather, say, stay home and read a book than go out .

But for whatever reason, that response often just isn't good enough for others in your life, particularly if they are extraverts.



So ... how about this head-spinning response instead?

How come you don't stay in more?

Here's another question you may have gotten once or twice (or a hundred times) in your life:

Why don't you talk more?

"Why don't you shut your —?"
No!

No.

Yes, that's a tempting response. Just try it a little nicer:

Why don't you talk less?

OK, that's not very nice either. How about:

Why don't you like quiet?

Don't expect an answer to your own silly question. There isn't one.

But it will at least serve as a silencing comeback to the silly questions posed by others in your life.

Fellow introvert, you need what you need in life.
And you deserve to get it—every day.

You can. And you will.

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PRACTICAL RESEARCH

Planning at Work Helps with Both Productivity and Mindset

Doing just a few minutes of structured planning at the beginning of your work week will likely help you get more things done **during** the week—and reduce the amount of after-hours rumination you have about your job, according to a recent study in the *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*.

The study involved 209 participants, some of them employees at a health management company, others employees at an information technology company, and still others part-time college students who worked in full-time jobs.

For the first two weeks of the seven-week study, researchers allowed the participants to work the

way they normally did.

Then, for the next five weeks, the researchers had the participants engage in a structured planning process each Monday morning. Specifically, the planning involved prioritizing and goal setting, planning work steps, planning for predicted obstacles, and visualizing how to handle one of the predicted obstacles.

Each Friday afternoon, the participants completed detailed questionnaires that assessed how things had gone that week and how the participants were feeling and behaving.

The study's key finding: The Monday-morning planning sessions (which, on average, had taken the participants only about eight minutes to do) led to both fewer unfinished tasks and less after-work rumination among the participants.

The planning sessions also had a positive effect on the participants' *cognitive flexibility*—i.e., their ability to adapt both their thinking and behavior to changing situations.

“Our results suggest that employees should be encouraged to set work goals for one week at a time, create a detailed plan for how they will achieve those goals, think about obstacles, and develop appropriate alternative plans,” the researchers conclude about their findings.

Source: “A Field Experiment on the Effects of Weekly Planning Behaviour on Work Engagement, Unfinished Tasks, Rumination, and Cognitive Flexibility,” *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 96(3) (September 2023), pp. 575-598.

REFLECTIVE READS

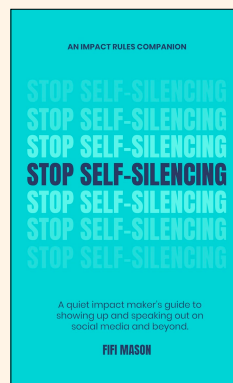
Tools in *Stop Self-Silencing* Will Free Your True Voice

Like so many other introverts—perhaps you're one of them too—I have not just one but two voices in my head, constantly playing cerebral tennis against each other.

The first voice—my True Self Voice—has lots of experiences and ideas to share with the world.

The other –ing voice—the one Fifi Mason would call my Self-Silencing Voice—works overtime and on weekends to keep the first voice muzzled.

Too often in my case, the Self-Silencing Voice prevails.



But now that I've read Mason's fluff-free book *Stop Self-Silencing*, I'm looking forward to winning more of these inner battles.

I say that primarily because of the game-changing, practical **tools** Mason offers in the book.

There are three of them, to be specific, and all of them soar over the bar that is my B.S. Meter, which is constantly set to high where self-help books are concerned.

Broadly speaking, the tools involve very intentional *reframing*—not simply trying to dismiss self-silencing thoughts or wish them away, but instead giving them plausible, winning alternatives to go up against in that tennis match that never seems to end.

If you're looking for that one additional “thing,” that one boost that will help you beat your own Self-Silencing Voice, *Stop Self-Silencing* is the resource for you.

Continued from page 1

that the energy you're putting into engaging with something or someone will have a worthy payoff.

Typically where we introverts are concerned, appealing **depth** and **opportunities for learning** both fit the bill.

So you just may find yourself shooting up your hand to ask a question or make a comment at that author lecture, for example.

Because if your purpose is worth the extraverting involved, you can and often do just go forth and do it.

The Atmosphere

You're going to be less introverted—and (seemingly) more extraverted—in calm, relatively quiet, one-on-one interactions vs. free-for-all group interactions.

Suppose you set up an informational interview with someone you don't know, and the two of you decide to meet at a peaceful, out-of-

the-way coffee shop.

Will that alone turn you into Super Extravert? No, of course not.

But are you far more likely to be talkative and interactive in other ways than you would be in, say, a crowded bar, where you're blinded by the lights and drowning in loud music and noise?

Yes.

Your Internal Battery

You'll be less introverted—and (seemingly) more extraverted—when your internal battery (physical, mental, emotional) is fully charged or close to it. When you've gotten enough sleep, enough alone time, plenty of time to think, and all the other things we introverts need to be healthy and happy in life.

When your battery is dead or near dead, on the other hand, you'll probably be even **less extraverted**—and (seemingly) **more introverted**—than you typically are.

One night a few years ago, as

I was driving from the Green Bay, Wisconsin, area back to my home in the Minneapolis suburbs, I noticed that my car's headlights were getting dimmer ... and dimmer ... and dimmer as the miles passed.

The car's alternator was going bad, and I knew I had only so much time and distance before I would stall out to a complete stop.

I almost made it, but I came up about 30 miles short. (Luckily I was rescued by a passing trucker.)

That incident, though, which has stuck with me all these years, perfectly symbolizes what it is and will be like for **you** as an introvert when your internal battery is not fully charged—and when it is.

To be clear: You are and always will be an introvert at your core.

Just remember that you do have an extraverted side.

And like a deer at dusk, it will emerge to reveal itself under the right conditions.





1036 38th Street South
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Editor and Publisher:
Peter Vogt, M.S.
peter@introvertinsights.com



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INTROVERT INSPIRATIONS

“By embracing our strengths, prioritizing self-care, honing our unique skills, focusing on quality connections, exercising patience, and staying true to ourselves, introverts can achieve remarkable success.”

~ Joe Smith

“[W]hen you honor your natural tendencies, you'll attract individuals who appreciate you for who you are—not who you try to be.”

~ Raven Sinéad

“Society's extraverted bias often overlooks the richness of the introvert's inner world, but beneath the quietude lies a universe of creativity and brilliance waiting to be explored.”

~ Anjali Mudgal

“In a world that often celebrates hustle and bustle, finding peace as an introvert is a beautiful reminder that embracing one's authentic self can lead to a fulfilling and serene existence.”

~ Aditi Shahani