

BRAINY GUPSHUP

COUNSELLING DEPARTMENT



Once again, it's happened. You've been accused of being too shy, being reclusive or anti-social, but that's not how you really feel inside at all! Being introvert is only a way one is and is nothing to do with being smarter, brighter or more successful. Whether you're an introvert or know someone who is, rest assured that an introvert is not an oddball.. nor are they emotionally flawed or socially inept.

Is it true that extroverts are more valued than introverts? Do hirers prefer extroverts to introverts? Is the society more geared towards Extroverts? This newsletter will demonstrate that introvert strengths are actually superpowers that make them thrive in caring, compassionate and competitive environments.

Who is an Introvert?

Introversion, as a personality trait, refers to the individual difference in the inclinations toward the inner and outer world (Jung, 1921). Although no one is completely introverted or extraverted, usually introversion and extraversion are viewed as opposites, and introversion can also be defined as low extraversion.

While extraverts like to be social with other people, introverts are more comfortable with their inner world of thoughts and feelings (Helgoe, 2010) and prefer solitude (Burger, 1995).

Like all people, Introverts need social relationships. However, they are selective when it comes to building social contacts, and they require more time alone to balance out their energy after social situations because they can get overstimulated (Schmeck and Lockhart, 1983). Introverts tend to be sensitive, introspective, and interested in the deeper feelings of encounters or transactions (Henjum, 1982).



Introversion Versus Shyness

Many people think of introverts as shy, but the two aren't linked.

Introversion is a personality type, while shyness is an emotion.

People who are shy tend to feel awkward or uncomfortable when they're in social situations, especially when they're around strangers. They may feel so nervous, they become sweaty. Their heart may beat quicker, and they may get a stomachache. They may be inclined to skip social events because they

don't like the negative feelings that take over their thoughts and bodies when they have to go to parties or other activities.



People who are introverted also prefer to skip social events, but it's because they feel more energized or comfortable doing things on their own or with one or two other people. Introverts don't choose to skip social events because they have strong negative reactions to larger gatherings the way that shy people do; they just prefer being alone or in very small groups.

Types of Introvert

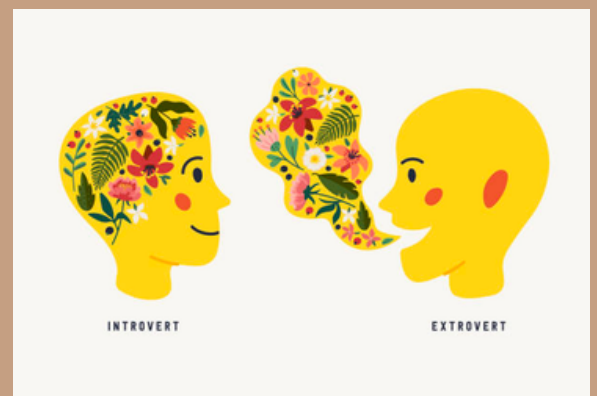
- A **social introvert** prefers interacting in small groups.
- A **thinking introvert** spends long periods of time absorbed in their own thoughts or imagination.
- An **anxious introvert** requires time alone due to shyness, awkwardness around others, or a lack of self-confidence.
- An **inhibited introvert** makes cautious and calculated interactions, reserving their thoughts and feelings to themselves.



Thus, these types of introverts may be blended to any varying degree or even overlap with extrovert tendencies. Since every person is unique, their personality and characteristics will also be.

Introversion as a strength in the Professional World

As a Middle School Counselor, I know that my social and thinking introversion has helped me in a huge way in the role I play. Students of different personalities approach our office through the day and do question their personality, strengths and characteristics- sometimes not too happy with who they are or what they look like.



Accepting oneself and one's personality perhaps is the right of passage for a pre-teen student. These conversations with our students often makes me ponder back to my own growing years, when I had a natural inclination to spend time alone.

My parents would want to drag me from our home in the hills of Himachal to Delhi for weekends to attend family rituals ever so often. I would be happy behind a book or with my dogs. I would take my time to open up and would sometimes not look too confident, till I took the time to open up and share with a small group of cousins of mine. I loved small group talk and tuning into conversations most attentively. Tuning into people's thoughts, moods and emotions came easy to me.

And then came college. One of the brilliant things about post-grade-school adulthood was that friendships became more sacred and choices to attend movies, birthday parties, sleepovers

became more selective. The more time I spent away from the imposition of extroverted activities and the more time I spent doing what I alone decided to do, the more I started to figure out that my natural inclination to lead a quieter and less socialized life maybe wasn't like being buck-toothed or near-sighted at all. It eventually occurred to me that I *liked* being the way I was and that there were actually a few good things that came along with being introverted. Indeed our children would also need such times of reflection where they discover who they are and accept themselves wholeheartedly for who they become.



Natural Strengths

While we're all often flooded with messages that we need to speak up and stand out in order to be successful, introverts can actually achieve even more if they hone their natural strengths, says Beth Buelow, author of "**The Introvert Entrepreneur: Amplify Your Strengths and Create Success on Your Own Terms**". **Their strengths being**

- **They're good listeners** : Introverts are naturally adept when it comes to actively listening, according to Buelow, who identifies as an introvert herself. "We tend to be the friend or colleague you can call on when you're upset or you have good news to share," she says. "We're going to be able to listen and be with you in that, without turning it around and making it about us."

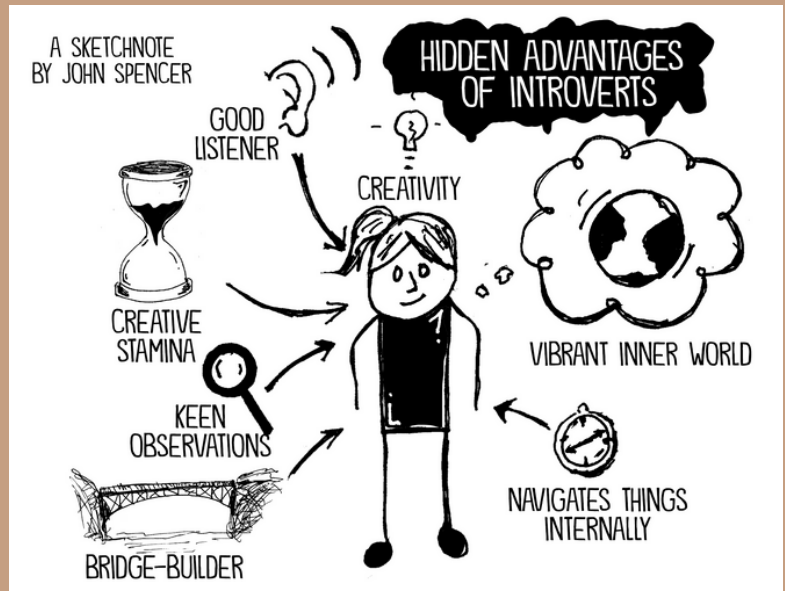
- **They think before they speak:**

Because introverts typically feel less comfortable speaking than they do listening, they choose their words wisely, and would take their time to frame their thoughts well.

- **They're observant:** In addition to their superior listening skills, introverts possess excellent observation skills. Although it may look like they're just sitting quietly during a meeting,

introverts are actually soaking in the information that's being presented and thinking critically.

- The typical introvert also uses his or her observant nature to read the room. They're more likely to notice people's body language and facial expressions, which makes them better at interpersonal communication
- **They're thoughtful networkers:** Being in a large group where the goal is to meet, they can use their natural strengths to create meaningful connections, even if they only connect with a handful of people.
- **They're compassionate leaders:** introverts can make the best leaders — when they channel their natural strengths. They are likely to highlight the strengths of their teams. They have focused conversations with their team members in order to learn their skills, passions and strengths, helping each team member be more efficient and happier at work.



Some strategies that can help introverts feel more comfortable:

If you as a parent or teacher are an introvert, using more of these strategies would surely help have a productive and wholesome day. And if you have a sibling or a child who is an introvert, it will be helpful if you understand how each of the below strategies works wonders for them .

Take breaks: Introverts often need time to recharge after social interactions. Taking breaks throughout the day to be alone, go for a walk, or engage in a quiet activity can help introverts feel more comfortable. It helps them tune to their inner energy and gear up for more meaningful interactions thereafter.

Practice self-care: Engage in activities that help you feel centered and calm, such as yoga, meditation, or reading a book. Taking care of yourself physically and emotionally can help you feel more comfortable in social situations.

Focus on quality over quantity:

Introverts often prefer deep, meaningful connections over large, superficial ones. Focus on building strong relationships with a few close friends rather than trying to be friends with everyone.



Plan ahead: Introverts can benefit largely from knowing what is to be expected in a social setting, outing or interaction. Planning ahead by arriving early, finding a quiet spot to gather one's thoughts, or bringing a friend who understands your needs helps make social interactions more joyful.

I am not “strange”—I am strong. And rather than trying to bend myself to an extroverted set of behaviors that hurt me, I have learned to nurture the gifts of my introversion. I channel my natural strengths !!

World Introvert Day

“This is a day for the dreamers. The thinkers. The quiet ones. The ones sitting in the back of the room or standing at the edges. The ones who know more than they show and feel more than they let on. Today we celebrate introverts.”

-Jenn Granneman, founder of IntrovertDear.com