

INTROVERTS IN THE WORKPLACE

Harnessing Your Strengths



TODAY'S DISCUSSION

What is introversion? What is extroversion?

Life and office strategies for introverts

Resources to explore

ABOUT ME

Writer, editor, coach

Lover of knitting, road trips, deep conversation

Disdainer of loud noises, scratchy shirts, icebreaker games

SO, WHAT MAKES A PERSON AN INTROVERT?

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



A tendency toward introversion or extroversion is a temperament, not a personality trait

It's about how you gain and lose mental energy and respond to external stimuli

It's physiological

INTROVERTED BRAINS

Introverts ponder a lot – mulling and comparing new and old experiences

Introverts need time and space for ideas to “surface”

Introverts need REM sleep to cement ideas in long-term memory

Introverts need to decrease physical energy use in order to examine thoughts – the body slows down



EXTROVERTED BRAINS

Extroverts gain energy by being around others

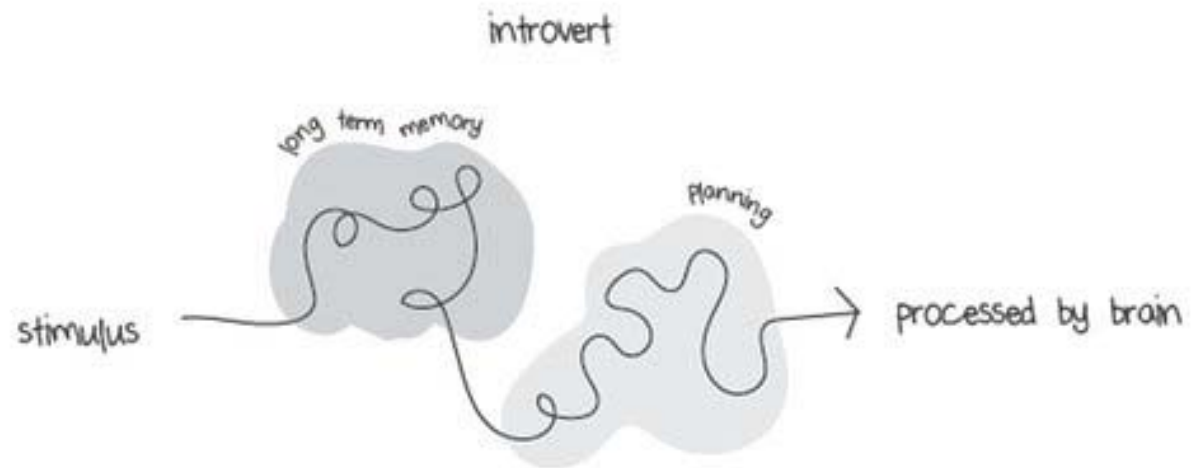
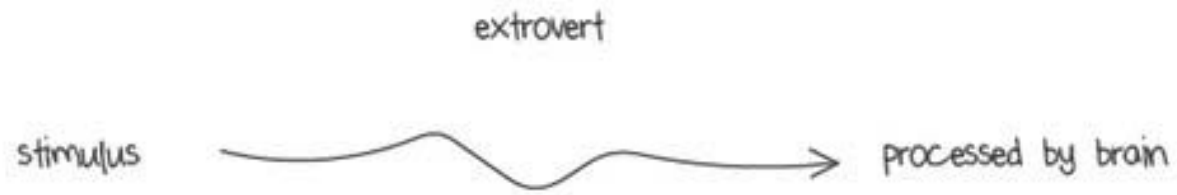
Extroverts' brains process information quickly

Extroverts experience socializing as “recharging,” and they may feel depleted without social contact

Extroverts often enjoy sensory stimulation like bright lights, loud noises and vibrant colors

Extroverts often seek out adventures, risks and novelty

Extroverts usually don't mind attention



Source: **Liz Fosslien and Mollie West** Quiet Revolution



WHERE DO YOU LAND?

Let's find out.

Choose the group of statements that best matches the way you feel. Answer as you are, not as you would like to be.

GROUP 1

I like to be in the thick of things.

I relish variety and get bored with sameness.

I know lots of people and consider them friends.

I enjoy chatting, even with strangers.

I feel energized after activity, and I'm ready for more.

I can speak or act without needing to think first.

I am generally peppy.

I tend to talk more than I listen.

GROUP 2

I prefer to relax alone or with a few close friends.

I consider only people with whom I have deep relationships my friends.

I need rest after outside activities, even ones I enjoy.

I often listen, but I can talk a lot about topics I'm interested in.

I appear calm and self-contained, and I like to observe.

I tend to think before I speak or act.

I've experienced my mind going blank in groups or when I'm under pressure.

I don't like feeling rushed.

THE BIG REVEAL

If you feel that more of the statements in Group 1 apply to you, then you're likely extroverted.

If more of the statements in Group 2 apply, you're likely an introvert.

And there's a third option: if you feel that both groups have statements that apply to you, you might be an ambivert – someone who falls in the middle.

POLL: WHERE DO YOU FALL?

Introverts:

Extroverts:

Ambiverts:

SO, YOU'RE AN INTROVERT...

Play to your Strengths.

If you're an introvert, you're probably:

- Able to focus
- A good collaborator
- A good listener
- A good writer
- Self-motivated
- Insightful
- Empathetic

INTROVERTS PREFER...

Depth over Breadth

Writing over Talking

Low Key over High Strung

Yes over No

A MANIFESTO FOR INTROVERTS*

- ❖ Solitude is a catalyst for innovation.
- ❖ Sometimes it helps to pretend to be an extrovert. There will always be time to be quiet later.
- ❖ But in the long run, staying true to your temperament is key to finding work you love and work that matters.
- ❖ One genuine relationship is worth a fistful of business cards.
- ❖ It's OK to cross the street to avoid making small talk.
- ❖ “Quiet Leadership” is not an oxymoron.
- ❖ “In a gentle way, you can shake the world” ~ Mahatma Gandhi

*Excerpted from Susan Cain's *Quiet: The Power of Introverts in a World that Can't Stop Talking*

INTROVERTS: THE GRAPHIC NOVEL VERSION

Introverts are often highly creative, and there are a number of great illustrations of what it feels like to be inside an introvert's mind.



I've only got an hour
before I run out of steam,
so cut the crap—
How ARE you?

?!

AK 15

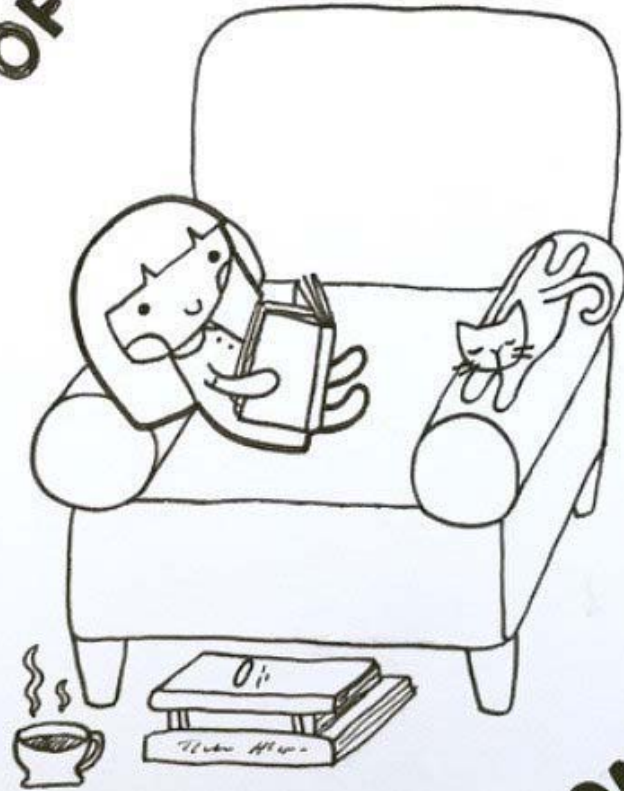
© 2015 Aaron T. Cyclopedia - Kimura



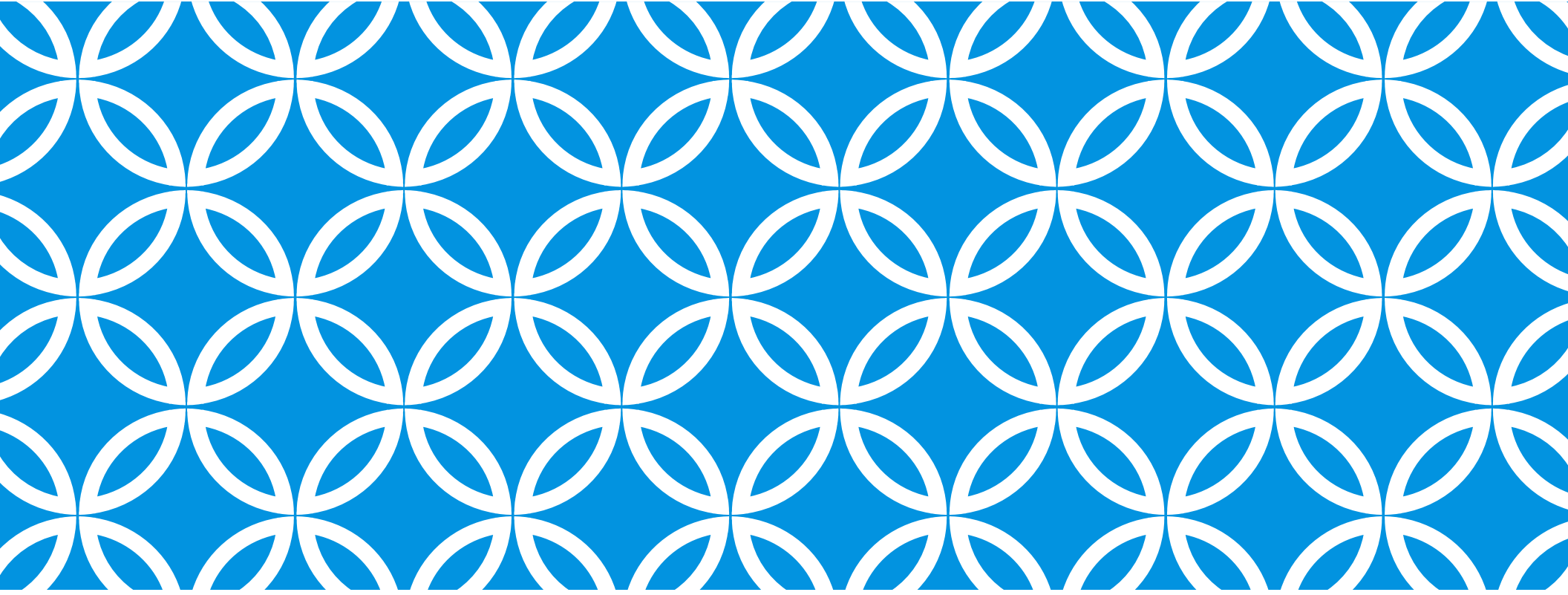
there are
days when
I wish I
could wear
one of
these around
my neck.



OFTEN ALONE



RARELY LONELY



INTROVERT OFFICE STRATEGIES

To maintain your energy

GREAT CAREER CHOICES FOR INTROVERTS

- ❖ Engineering
- ❖ Web Development
- ❖ Design
- ❖ Accounting
- ❖ Mechanic
- ❖ Author
- ❖ Counselor/Therapist
- ❖ Scientist
- ❖ Management

**POLL: DO YOU WORK IN AN OPEN OFFICE PLAN,
SUCH AS A CUBICLE?**

Yes/No

WORKPLACE “DOs”

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”



THE 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 to answer questions
- Speaking in a group

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

Remember, introverts tend to work and speak at a slower pace

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

STRATEGIES TO CALM DOWN WHEN YOU'RE UPSET

Introverts may tend to be more irritated by external stimuli than others.

Introverts are also more attuned to their inner world and thus can react to stress faster and with more intensity.

Here are five steps you can take to calm down anywhere:*

1. Keep breathing
2. Keep your eyes and facial expression calm and alert
3. Notice your tension and let it go
4. Look from a different angle
5. Call upon your own wisdom

*Source: *The Introvert Advantage*, by Marti Olsen Laney, Psy.D.

LUNCH: YOUR NEW BEST FRIEND

Go it alone when needed.

Don't work through lunch

Keep it healthy

Take a break from social media

WHEN YOU'RE EXHAUSTED BY 2 PM...

Try to avoid having too many meetings

Eat a high-protein snack

Take a walk

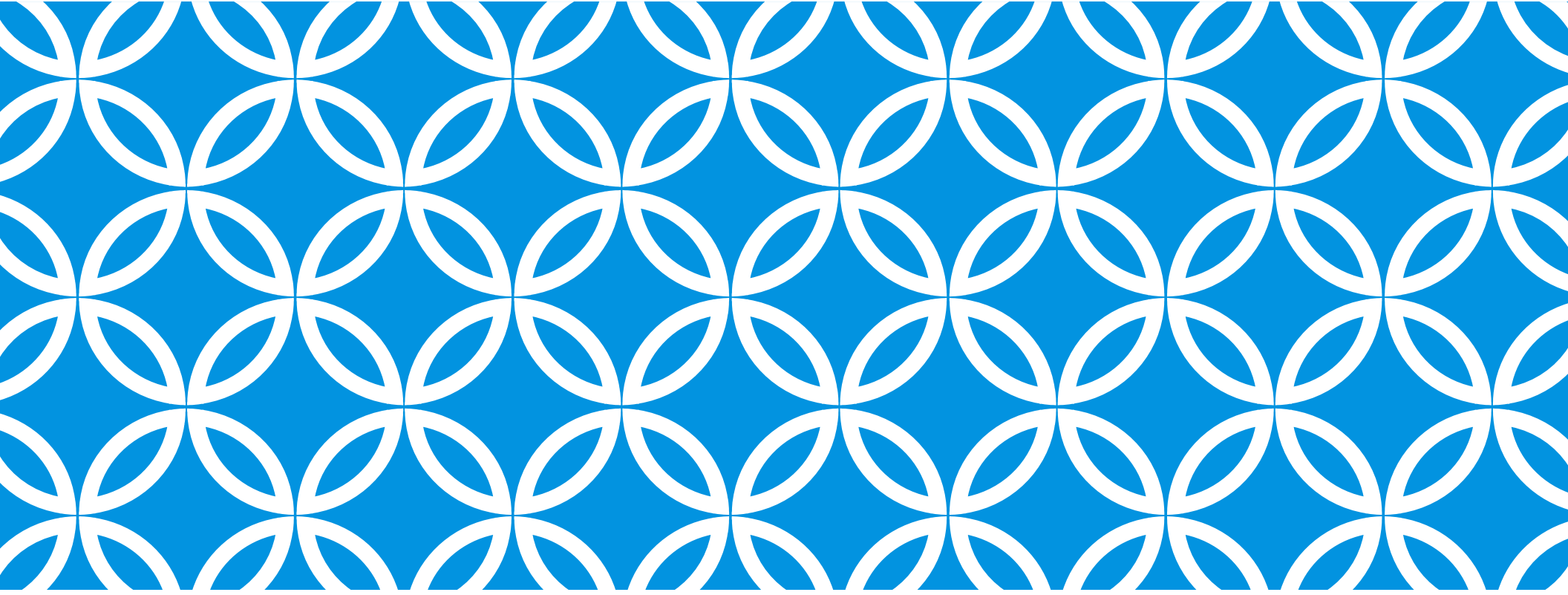
Meditate

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

CARING FOR YOURSELF OUTSIDE THE OFFICE

1. Take time EVERY DAY to wind down and process
2. Have meaningful conversations
3. Sit in companionable silence
4. Take time for hobbies and interests
5. Design a quiet space for yourself
6. Give yourself permission to stay home and be quiet
7. Search for a deeper purpose to your life and work
8. Simplify

*Source: "12 Things Introverts Absolutely Need to be Happy," by Jenn Granneman. *Introvert, Dear*, June 20, 2018



RESOURCES



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](#)