



Celebrating Introverts

"Your visions will become clear only when you can look into your own heart.
Who looks outside, dreams; who looks inside, awakes" C.G. Jung

MY INSPIRATION(S)



AGENDA

- Understanding Introverts:
Perceptions and Definitions
- Introvert Characteristics
- Physiological Differences
- Introverts in an Extroverted World
- Towards Healing for Introverts
- Introvert Gifts
- Introverts in Community:
Challenges, Strategies and Support
- Self-Care for Introverts

What is an Introvert?



Budding narcissism (Freud) or a healthy and normal trait (Jung)?

Jung saw introverts and extroverts on an energy continuum – each were healthy and legitimate expressions of personality

INTROVERTS DEFINED

Oxford dictionary: A shy, reticent person. **PSYCHOLOGY:** a person predominantly concerned with their own thoughts and feelings rather than with external things

Merriam-Webster: A typically reserved or quiet person who tends to be introspective and enjoys spending time alone

“A healthy capacity to tune into your inner world. It is a constructive and creative quality that is found in many independent thinkers whose contributions have enriched the world. Introverts have social skills, they like people, and they enjoy some types of socializing. However, party chitchat depletes their energy while giving them little in return. Introverts can enjoy one-on-one conversations, but group activities can be overstimulating and drain energy.”

(Laney)

INTROVERT CHARACTERISTICS

- Prefer to relax **alone** or with a few close friends
- Consider only **deep** relationship as friends
- Need **rest** after outside activities, even ones they enjoy
- Often **listen** but talk a lot about topics of importance to them
- Appear **calm**, self-contained and like to observe
- Tend to **think** before they speak or act
- May prefer a **quiet** atmosphere
- Prefer a **slower** pace over being rushed



INTROVERT CHARACTERISTICS



- Have great powers of **concentration**
- Experience their **minds going blank** in groups or under pressure
- Tend to **dislike small talk**
- Desire **private** space and time
- May treat their homes as **sanctuaries**
- Prefer to **work alone** rather than with a group
- May prefer **written** communication
- Do not share **private** thoughts with many people

THE EXTROVERT - INTROVERT SPECTRUM

EXTROVERTS

- Outward-focused
- People-oriented
- Breadth
- Energized by social interactions
- External processors

INTROVERTS

- Inward-focused
- Idea-oriented
- Depth
- Energized by solitude
- Internal processors

(AMBIVERTS)

THERE ARE MANY TYPES OF INTROVERTS

ISTJ

Responsible, sincere, analytical, reserved, realistic, systematic. Hardworking and trustworthy with sound practical judgment.

ISFJ

Warm, considerate, gentle, responsible, pragmatic, thorough. Devoted caretakers who enjoy being helpful to others.

INFJ

Idealistic, organized, insightful, dependable, compassionate, gentle. Seek harmony and cooperation, enjoy intellectual stimulation.

INTJ

Innovative, independent, strategic, logical, reserved, insightful. Driven by their own original ideas to achieve improvements.

ISTP

Action-oriented, logical, analytical, spontaneous, reserved, independent. Enjoy adventure, skilled at understanding how mechanical things work.

ISFP

Gentle, sensitive, nurturing, helpful, flexible, realistic. Seek to create a personal environment that is both beautiful and practical.

INFP

Sensitive, creative, idealistic, perceptive, caring, loyal. Value inner harmony and personal growth, focus on dreams and possibilities.

INTP

Intellectual, logical, precise, reserved, flexible, imaginative. Original thinkers who enjoy speculation and creative problem solving.

FILTERING/PROCESSING

EXTROVERTS process EXTERNALLY

- speak in order to understand
- speaking and thinking occur simultaneously
- most alive when engaged in the world of people and activity
- trial-and-error learning style
- depend on external feedback to grow
- more physically expressive than introverts

(McHugh)

FILTERING/PROCESSING

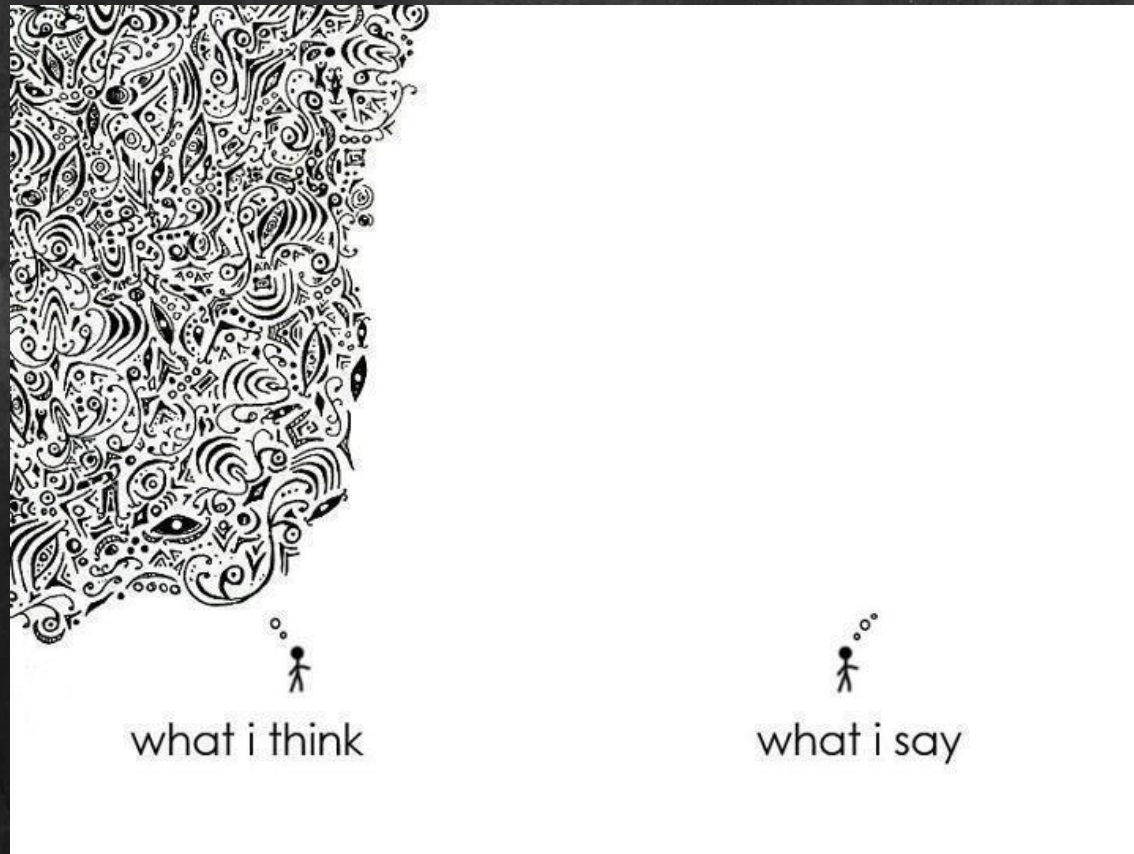
INTROVERTS process INTERNALLY

- requires smaller amounts of stimuli (or overwhelm takes place)
- integrate and think silently
- prefer to process alone – away from external stimuli
- thinking precedes speaking
- pause, reflect and carefully choose words
- most alive in the reflections of their minds
- observation and contemplation
- not as dependent on external feedback for growth

(McHugh)

FILTERING/PROCESSING

Introverts process internally

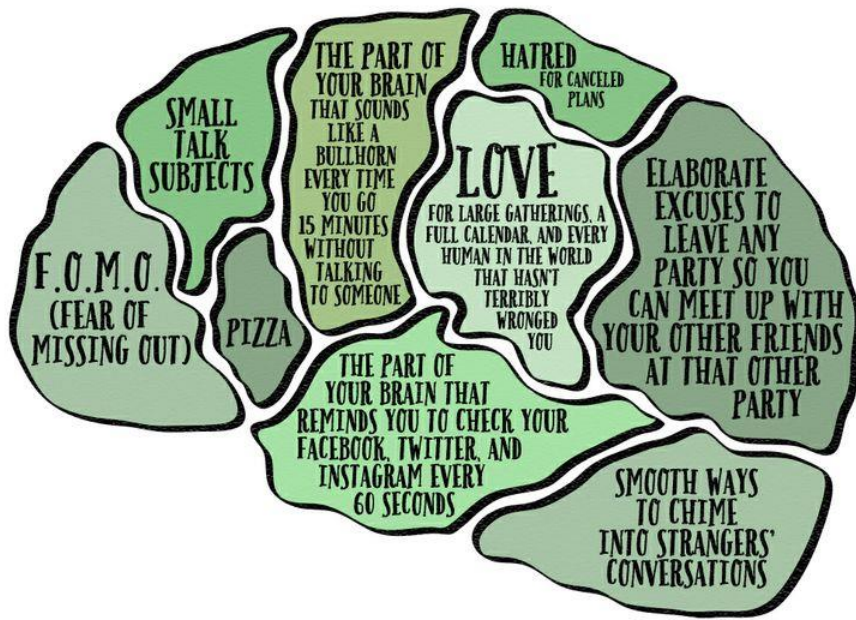


“Quiet people have the loudest minds.” ~ Stephen Hawking

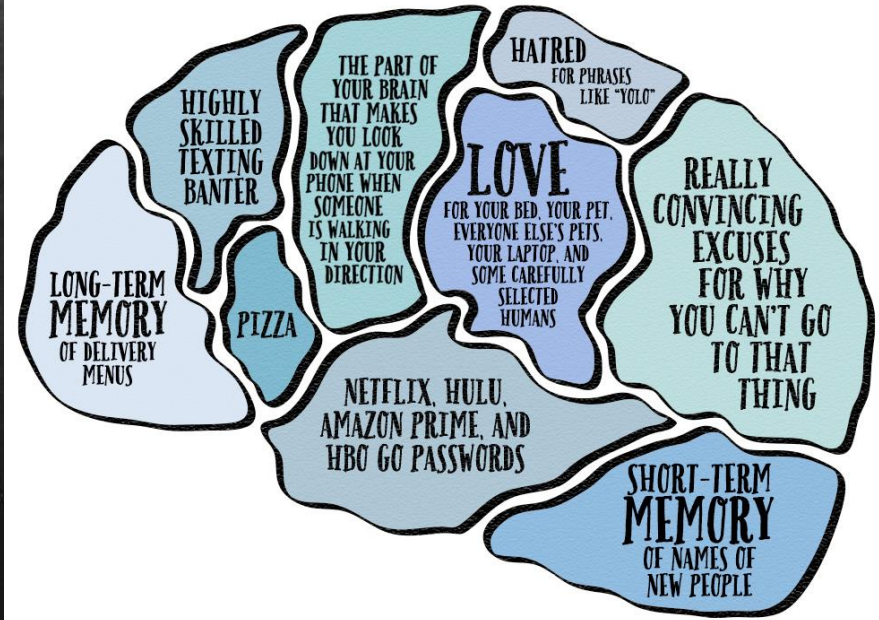
PHYSIOLOGICAL DIFFERENCES

Introverts have naturally busier, more active brains – require less stimulation than extroverts

THE MAP OF AN EXTROVERT'S BRAIN



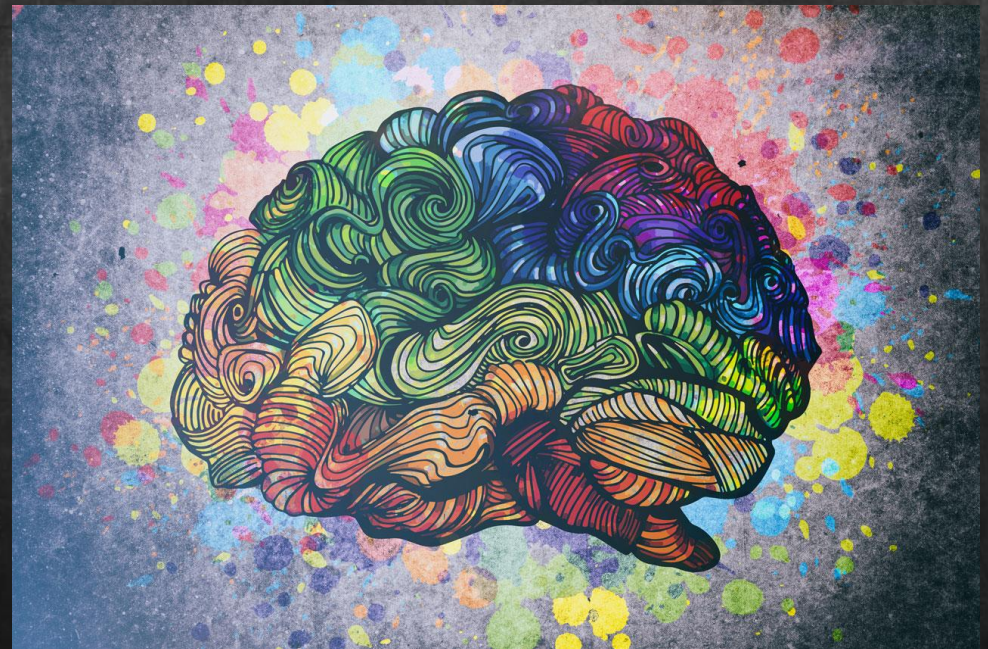
THE MAP OF AN INTROVERT'S BRAIN



PHYSIOLOGICAL DIFFERENCES

Blood flows in different paths in introverted and extroverted brains

- INTROVERTS have more blood flow in a **longer, slower path**, to areas that focus on internal things like remembering, solving problems and planning
- EXTROVERT blood flows to areas that are used for the processing of **sensory experiences** (ie, external input)

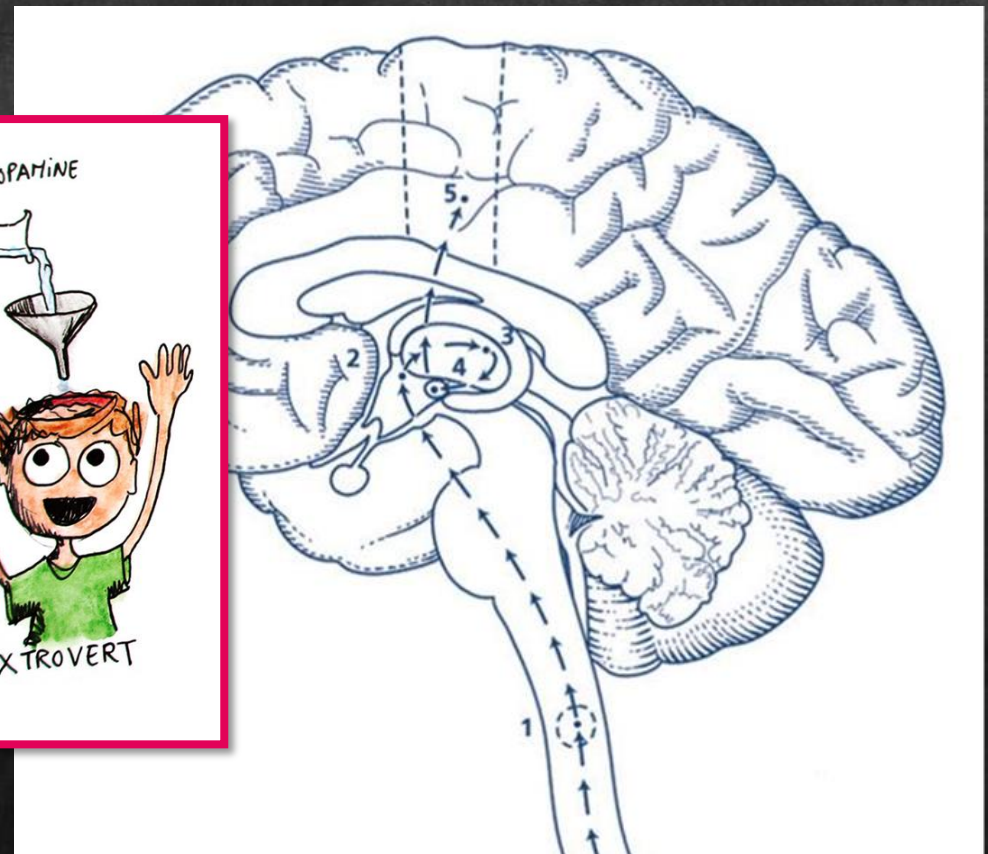


PHYSIOLOGICAL DIFFERENCES

Different chemical balances (neurotransmitters)

EXTROVERTS require greater amounts of dopamine, which is processed when people are active and in motion

- A shorter path through the brain
- “Act and react” response in stressful situations
- Quick thinking and speaking skills
- Fast access to short-term memory (= faster processing)

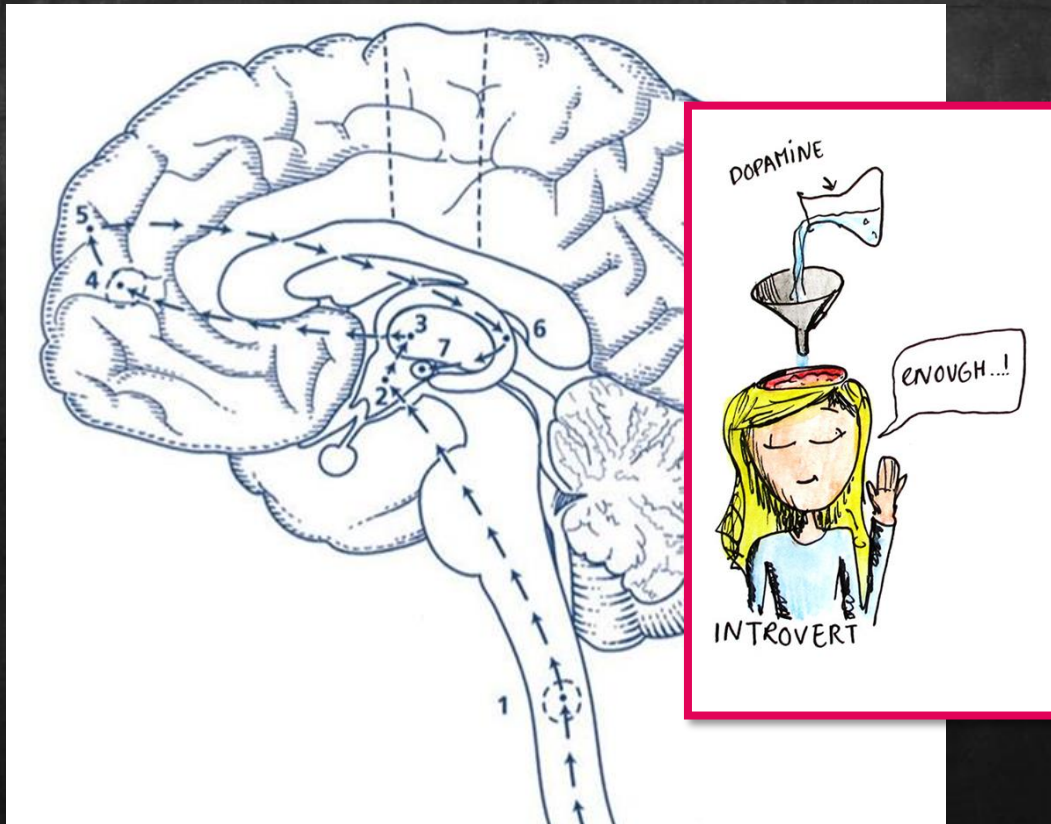


(McHugh)

PHYSIOLOGICAL DIFFERENCES

Different chemical balances (neurotransmitters)

INTROVERTS require more acetylcholine and less dopamine, which can overwhelm them.



- A longer path that conserves and restores energy
- “Rest and Repose”
- Pleasure experience in thinking and reflecting
- Difficulty accessing words/memories quickly
- Slow to react in stressful situations

PHYSIOLOGICAL DIFFERENCES

The dominance of the long acetylcholine pathway means introverts are:

- Slow to speak or retrieve information/words/memories
- Clearer about ideas, thoughts, and feelings after sleeping on them

(Laney, Introvert Advantage)



INTROVERTS HAVE RICH INTERIOR LIVES



“You may think I’m small, but I have a universe inside my mind.” ~ Yoko Ono



INTROVERTS IN AN EXTROVERTED WORLD

- Approximately 50% of the population are introverts
- The world prioritizes and celebrates extrovert traits in many areas, such as:
 - Success
 - Leadership
 - Productivity
 - Community
 - Communication



INTROVERTS IN AN EXTROVERTED WORLD

- Introverts are often misunderstood
 - Introverts are “among the most misunderstood and aggrieved groups in America, possibly the world.” (Jonathan Rauch)
 - “While extroverts commonly feel loneliness when others are absent, introverts can feel most lonely when others are present, because ours is the aching loneliness of not being known or understood.” (McHugh)



INTROVERTS IN AN EXTROVERTED WORLD

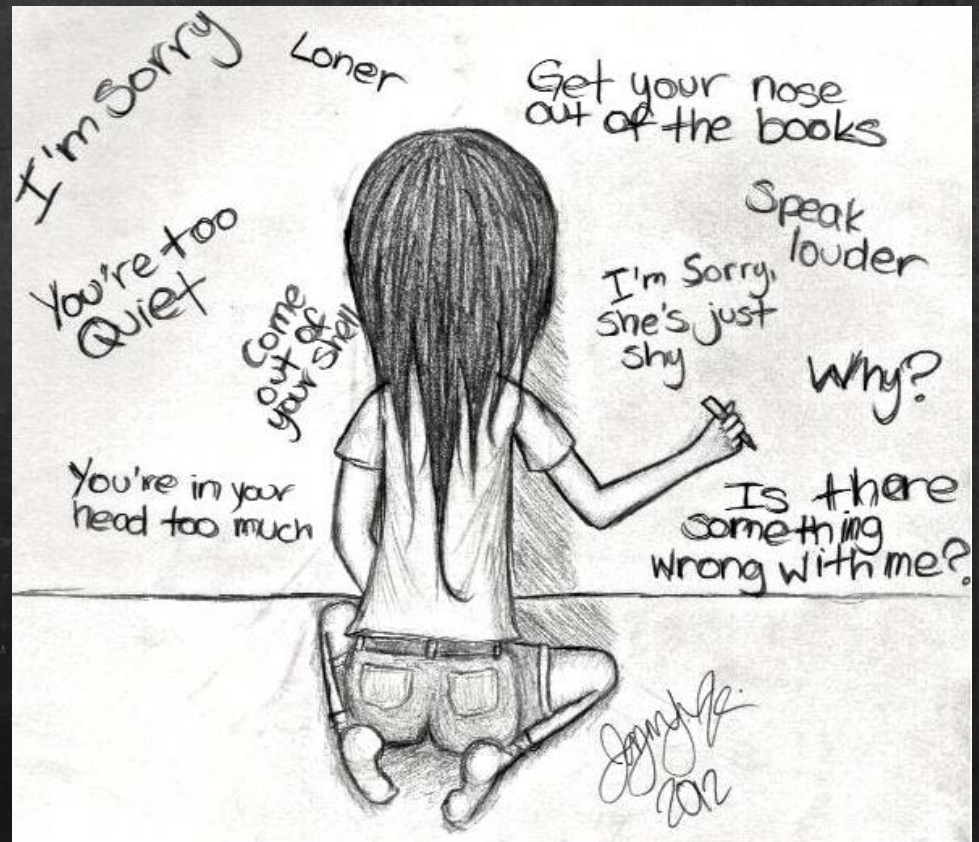
- Can be misinterpreted as:
 - Slow, snobbish, closed, antisocial, narcissistic, lazy, boring, moody, high-maintenance
- Can experience feelings of:
 - Exhaustion
 - Depression
 - Inauthenticity/Artificiality
 - Inadequacy
 - Exclusion
 - Marginalization



TOWARDS HEALING FOR INTROVERTS

Introverts “seek healing both from the **internal wounds** of distorted self-understandings and feelings of inadequacy, and from the **outward wounds** of alienation from others and exclusion from our communities.”

(McHugh)



TOWARDS HEALING FOR INTROVERTS

- Introverts will find healing by **reviewing and reinterpreting** the meaning they give to their personality traits.

- “Having limitations is not the problem. It is **the meaning we give limitations** that causes so much pain.”

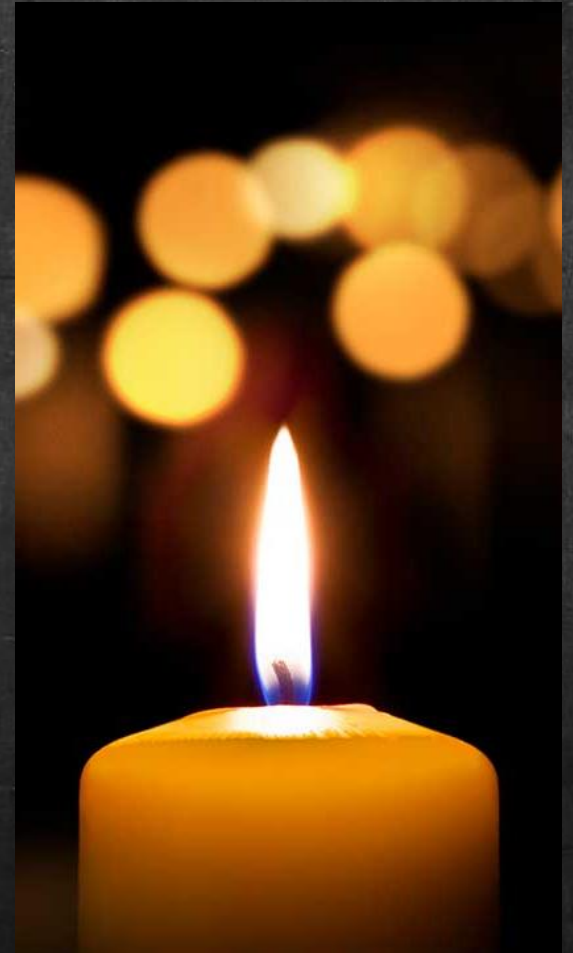
(Laney)

- “Finding healing as an introvert will not entail freedom from [introvert] characteristics. Healing for us will involve **a new way of interpreting our natural personality traits.**”

(McHugh)

INTROVERT GIFTS

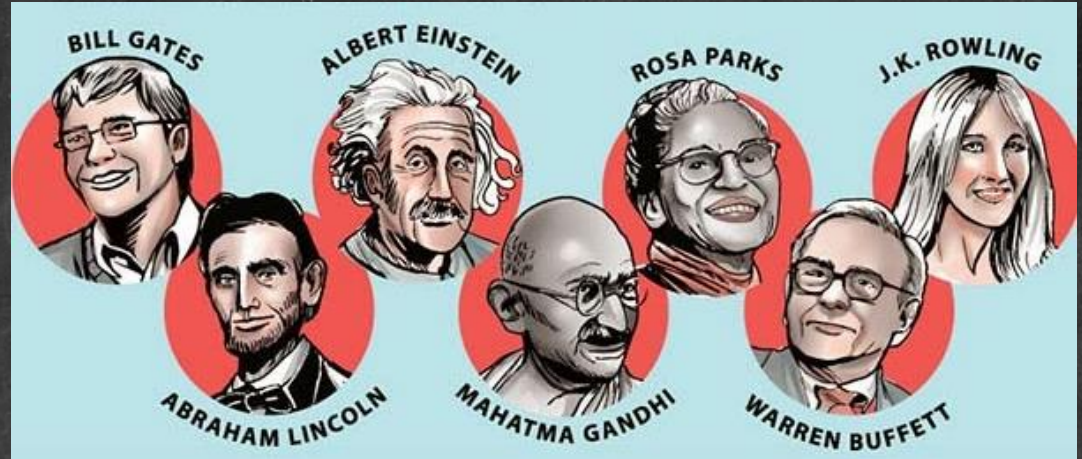
- Insight
 - Observation, reflection, intuition, evaluation, self-awareness
- Depth
 - Knowledge, interest
- Loyalty
- Compassion and service
- Listening and giving space
- Calming Presence
- Authenticity
- Creativity/Imagination
 - Less reliant on established patterns and thus able to create new things



FAMOUS INTROVERTS

Albert Einstein
 Gandhi
 J.K Rowling
 Bill Gates
 Rosa Parks
 Barack Obama
 Mark Zuckerberg
 Guy Kawasaki
 Warren Buffett
 Lady Gaga
 Marilyn Monroe
 Jay Z
 Abraham Lincoln
 Hilary Clinton
 Jimi Hendrix
 David Letterman
 Beyonce Knowles
 Tom Ford
 Bob Dylan
 Zayn Malik
 Barbara Walters
 Yoko Ono
 Aleksandr
 Solzhenitsyn

Tom Hanks
 Marlon Brando
 Leonardo
 DiCaprio
 Angelina Jolie
 Clint Eastwood
 Emma Watson
 Henry David
 Thoreau
 Steven Spielberg
 Christina
 Auguilera
 Audrey Hepburn
 Drew Barrymore
 Stephen Hawking
 Bob Newhart
 Rainer Maria Rilke
 Laurie Helgoe
 Bjork
 Mary Oliver
 Franz Kafka
 Plato
 Ludwig von Mises
 Marilyn Monroe



Helen Hunt
 Oscar Wilde
 Cheryl Strayed
 Andy Warhol
 Anne Lamott
 Rumi
 Virginia Wolf
 Anne Morrow
 Lindbergh
 Marilynne
 Robinson
 Bertrand Russel

Gwyneth Paltrow
 Michael Jordan
 Julia Roberts
 Meryl Streep
 Harrison Ford
 Steve Wozniak
 Tom Hanks
 Keanu Reeves
 Michelle Pfeiffer
 Johnny Depp
 Al Gore
 James Dean

Marilyn Monroe
 Sir Isaac Newton
 Eleanor Roosevelt
 Larry Page
 Charles Darwin
 Elon Musk
 Dr. Seuss
 Frederic Chopin
 H.L. Mencken
 Ayn Rand
 Nikola Tesla
 Courtney Cox

INTROVERTS IN COMMUNITY

- Introverts' ways of being in community can feel at odds with extrovert expectations and norms
- Spiral pattern of community engagement



INTROVERTS IN COMMUNITY

A HOW-TO FOR INTROVERTS (McHugh)

- Ask questions
- Look for who is initiating with you
- Reveal your process
- Make friends in high places – allow them to network on your behalf
- Find mentors – a specific, purposeful and structured relationship
- Overexpress yourself – nonverbal cues
- Socialize with a purpose



INTROVERT

**I'm not angry, this is
just my face.**

INTROVERTS IN COMMUNITY

A HOW-TO FOR INTROVERTS (McHugh)

- Join a group
 - Task or activity focus
- Take on a role
 - Purpose, participation, permission
 - Stretching personality
 - Ex: Lady Gaga



“Introverts are capable of acting like extroverts for the sake of work they consider important, people they love, or anything they value highly.”

(Susan Cain)

RELATIONAL CHALLENGES



Being an introvert I love facebook: It allows me to socialize without having to actually talk to anybody.



someecards
user card

- **Enmeshment** – when introvert identities become distorted or absorbed into another person's identity
- **One-Directional Relationships** – can be attractive to emotionally needy people
- **Introverts in Conflict** – slow to think on feet leads to conflict-avoidance and misunderstood motives, BUT can also bring composure, calmness and diplomacy into conflict
- **Technology** – social media is not equal to community

(McHugh)

SUPPORTING INTROVERTS IN COMMUNITY

BECOMING AN INTROVERT ALLY

- Make room for introvert ways of being in communal spaces
 - For pauses and breaks in conversation
 - For silence
 - For reflection
 - For observation before participation
 - For a clear “no”



SELF-CARE FOR INTROVERTS

CHALLENGES

- Dealing with the expectations and disappointment of others
- Internalization and conflict avoidance
- Negative self talk
- Self-doubt and sense of failure
- Compassion fatigue



SELF-CARE FOR INTROVERTS

“Seeking out alone time becomes a practice of **solitude**; internal processing becomes a vehicle for **self-discovery**; and standing on the outskirts makes us **keen observers**.”

(Lacy Ellman)



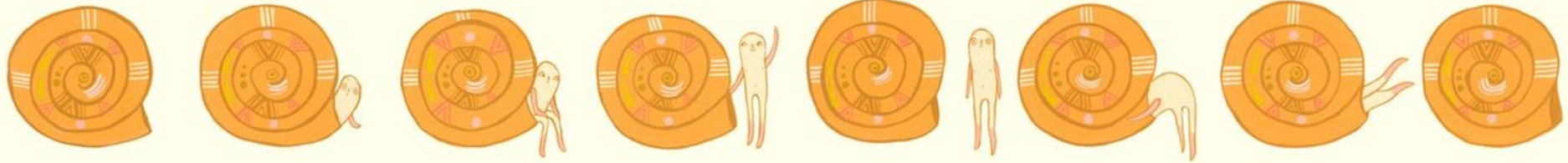
“Your solitude will be a support and a home for you, even in the midst of very unfamiliar circumstances, and from it you will find all your paths.”

~ Rainer Maria Rilke

SELF-CARE FOR INTROVERTS

- Cultivate **solitude**
- **Connection** with close friends
- Create **sanctuary** and spend time there
- **“Intentional Scheduling”** (McHugh)
 - Space out social engagements and appointments
 - Allow recovery time after social events
 - Make time for solitude
 - Plan ahead for social events by napping or resting in advance
 - Plan regular “introvert nights”
 - Schedule time off to rest and recharge
 - Give yourself **permission** to say no
 - Recognize your **rhythms**, and honour them by your choices

FINDING YOUR RHYTHM

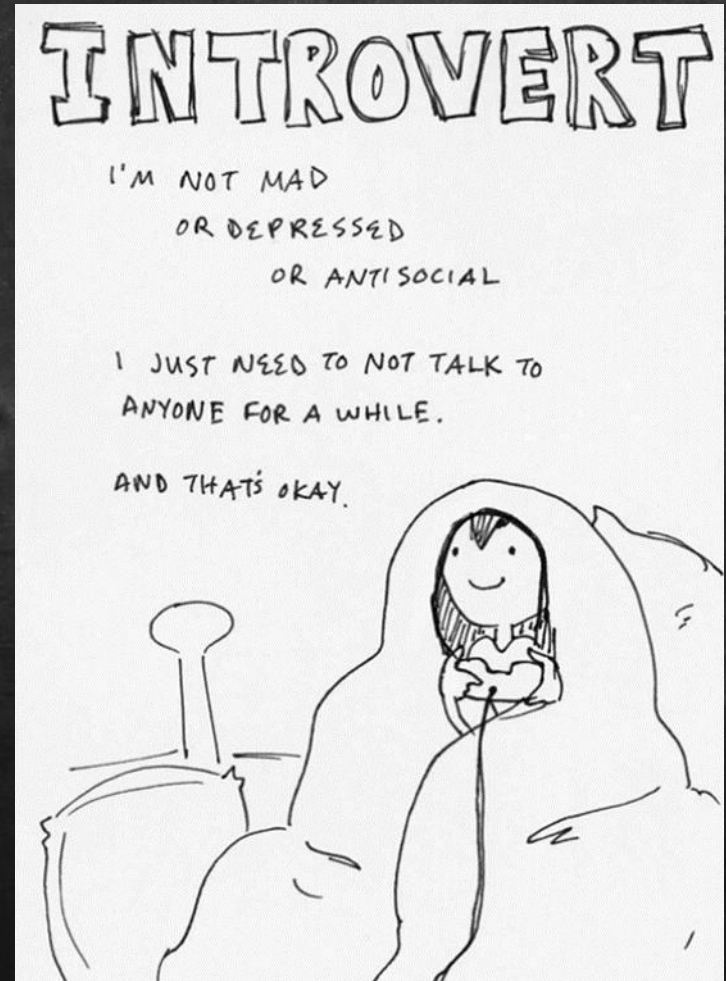


- Get to know yourself and your needs:
 - What are the **times of day** when I feel the most energized? Most tired?
 - How much **sleep** do I need?
 - What are the physical **habits** that energize me? Drain me?
 - When do I most feel the need for **solitude**?
 - How do I find deep **rest**?
 - What are the **relationships** in which I feel the most refreshed? Most drained?

(McHugh)

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

- Introverts are typically **reserved or quiet** people who have a healthy capacity to tune into their **inner worlds**
- Introverts exist on a **spectrum**, and many common personality traits are expressed in **unique** ways
- Introverts are **internal processors** who often require time and space and quiet to reflect on their thoughts



CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

- Introverts have **important gifts** to offer the world, and the first step toward to doing so is to normalize introvert traits as normal and healthy
- Introverts can more fully engage relationships and community by **stretching, not distorting**, their personalities
- Introverts can care for themselves by honouring their personalities through **seeking solitude** and being intentional with living according to their **rhythms**

**INTROVERTS
UNITE**



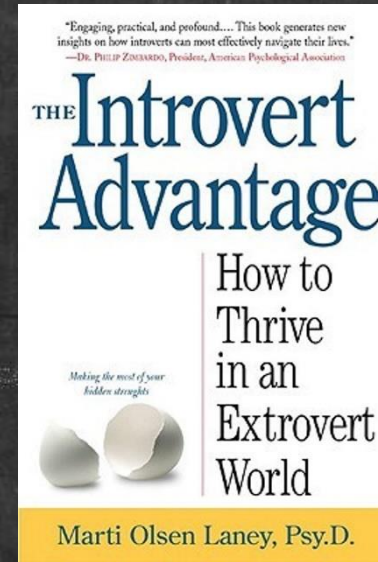
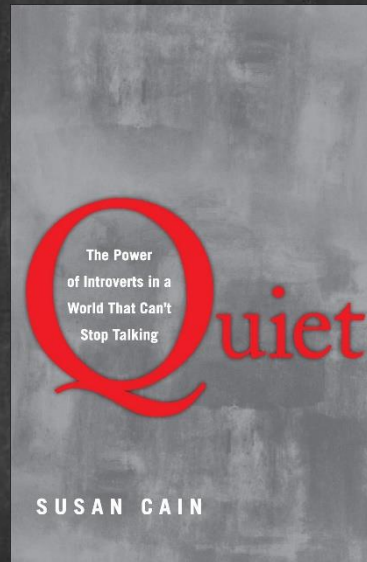
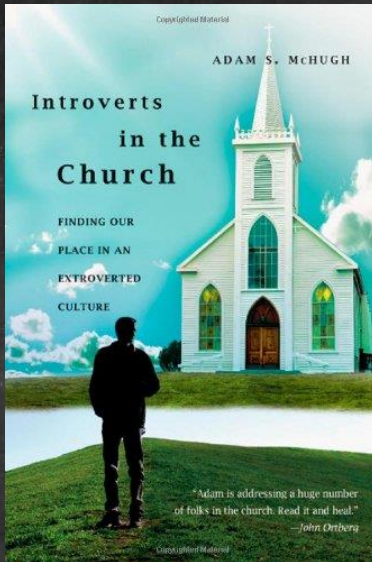
**SEPARATELY
IN YOUR OWN HOMES**



A MANIFESTO FOR INTROVERTS

1. There's a word for "people who are in their heads too much": thinkers.
2. Solitude is a catalyst for innovation.
3. The next generation of quiet kids can and must be raised to know their own strengths.
4. Sometimes it helps to be a pretend-extrovert. There's always time to be quiet later.
5. But in the long run, staying true to your temperament is the key to finding work you love and work that matters.
6. One genuine new relationship is worth a fistful of business cards.
7. It's OK to cross the street to avoid making small talk.
8. "Quiet leadership" is not an oxymoron.
9. Love is essential; gregariousness is optional.
10. "In a gentle way, you can shake the world."—Mahatma Gandhi

SOURCES



Introverts in the Church: Finding Our Place in an Extroverted Culture

By Adam S. McHugh

Quiet: The Power of Introverts in a World That Can't Stop Talking

By Susan Cain

The Introvert Advantage: How Quiet People Can Thrive in an Extroverted World

By Marti Olsen Laney