



Introvert or Extrovert:

Which Are You and What Does It Mean?

Are you an Introvert or an Extrovert? Are you sure? What difference does it make in how you work and manage relationships in and out of the workplace?

The first of the four basic preferences of psychological type has to do with where you get your energy:

Introverts:

Get energy from inside themselves.

Extroverts:

Get energy from outside themselves.

Extroversion and Introversion involve a collection of traits we are born with. Although to an extent we are “hardwired,” all of us have the capacity to conform to many diverse surroundings.

*To find the good life,
you must become yourself.*
—Dr. Bill Jackson



*What really matters is what you do
with what you have.*
—Shirley Lord



And especially for Introverts:

*What a lovely surprise to finally
discover how unlonely being alone can be.*
—Ellen Burstyn



*Within you there is a stillness and
sanctuary to which you can retreat
any time and be yourself.*
—Herman Hesse

Both types are perfectly normal, each type has its own strengths, and neither type is “right” or “wrong.” However, communication gaps between the two types can result in arguments.

Most people are closer to the center of the Introversion/Extroversion continuum, but the strengths of each type of temperament are needed to balance the world.

Extroverts outnumber Introverts about three to one. Society and the workplace usually reward Extroversion, and Introverts’ contributions are often overlooked and undervalued. As a result, Introverts tend to give up their natural tendency, live and work on Extroverted terms, and must develop extra coping skills because of the pressure to be like the rest of the world. When Introverts leave work and go home hoping to recharge, they are often bombarded by family and friends.

Contrary to our stereotypes of Introverts, they are not necessarily quiet or withdrawn. Many people who appear to be outgoing and talkative are actually Introverts in Extroverts’ clothing. You may be surprised to learn that many public personalities are actually Introverts (Diane Sawyer, Harrison Ford, Jane Pauley)

Introverts are like a rechargeable battery who need to stop expending energy and rest to recharge. Introverts’ energy flows out faster than Extroverts, and more time is required for Introverts to restore energy. Introverts need to calculate how much energy something will take, how much they need to conserve, and plan accordingly.

Just being around people can be overstimulating to Introverts. Their energy is drained in crowds, classes, or any noisy and invasive environment. They may like people very much. But after talking to

anyone, they usually begin to feel the need to move away, take a break, and get some air. Introverts need to limit their social experiences so they don’t get drained.

Before I realized the extent of my Introversion, I often thought something terrible was wrong with me. Certainly my life would be easier in many ways if I were more of an Extrovert, but I have learned (and am still in the process of learning) how to use my Introversion to best advantage and how to prevent working against my psychological type from totally exhausting me. I deeply appreciate clients, friends, and family who understand my need for time alone to re-charge.

I hope that the articles this month at <http://www.melbabenson.com/articles.php> will assist you in determining whether you are an Introvert or an Extrovert, help Introverts cope with the challenges of being an Introvert in an Extroverted world, and help all of us better understand each other and work more effectively together:

“Are You an Introvert or an Extrovert?”

“Introverts and Extroverts at Work”

“Introverts and Extroverts
in Personal Relationships”

“A Survival Guide for Introverts”

The more we understand each other and accommodate our differences, the happier and more productive we can be at work and in personal relationships.

Melba W. Benson, Ph.D.

Educator/Coach/Mediator

1007 Bucknell • Arlington, Texas 76012

Metro (817) 265-2820 • Fax (817) 265-2571

mwbenson@aol.com

<http://www.melbabenson.com>