

The Misconceptions about Introverts and Extroverts

Discovering that I am an introvert really helped me in embracing my skills and ensuring my work aligned with this. I often end up educating parents and their young adults about introversion and extroversion as part of my career coaching services. The information is usually enlightening to them, so I wanted to share it in the hopes of helping more people.

Firstly, what is an introvert/extrovert?

It's not about how you come across in public. **It's about where you get your energy from.**

Extroverts get energy from social interaction, whereas introverts get energy from privately reflecting on their thoughts and feelings.

It's also about your sensitivity to stimulation. If you're an introvert, you're more prone to being overstimulated by intense or prolonged social interaction—and at that point, reflecting on your thoughts and feelings can help you recharge. But introversion-extroversion is about more than just social interaction. Extroverts crave stimulating activities like skydiving and stimulating beverages sold at Starbucks. Introverts are more likely to retreat to a quiet place, but they're very happy to bring someone else with them. *It's a myth that introverts are anti-social.*

You can be confident in your interactions with others, but still an introvert. You could also be shy in your interactions with others, but still an extrovert.

How can you find out if you're an introvert or extrovert? Here's a quick, free quiz.

<https://ideas.ted.com/quiz-are-you-an-extrovert-introvert-or-ambivert/>

About 50% of the world are introverts! But until recently, most people believed that if you are anything other than an extrovert, there is something wrong with you.

Schools value extroverts – those more likely to take on leadership roles, be in the Production, take on presentations, speak up often in class, generally be visible. It's harder to value the introvert, as they will only speak when they have something important to say, need time to process information and like to reflect before giving their opinion.

Lots of the great ideas in this world have come from introverts, as they have been given the time to think, process, innovate. We need to embrace and encourage that. As a career coach, I help students see that their introversion may not be rewarded at school, but it will be in the real world – the work place. And trying to behave like an extrovert when you are really an introvert can't be sustained; it's emotionally draining being someone you are not!

Introversion/Extroversion is a spectrum – some people are highly introverted; some are slightly extroverted, and some are in the middle of introversion and extroversion (ambiverts).

Parents – understanding whether your child is an introvert/extrovert is an important part of their self-awareness and gives them the courage to be themselves.

<https://www.quietrev.com/> is a great resource to find out how introverts can make their way in the world. Susan Cain has done brilliant work in this area and her Ted talk changed my thinking!