

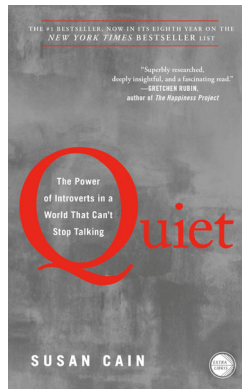


QUIET:
THE POWER OF INTROVERTS IN A WORLD THAT CAN'T STOP TALKING

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THE BOOK

**Quiet:**
The power of introverts in a world that can't stop talking

By Susan Cain



INTRODUCTION

In every class, in every team and in every office, there is a 'quiet one'. Usually regarded as shy and unsociable, this person is reluctant to speak out in group discussions and dreads giving presentations. After work or school, they are home alone with a book instead of seeking the company of others. If they do attend a social function, you are more likely to see them in a deep discussion with just one person instead of in the midst of a lively group. The book 'Quiet, The power of introverts in a world that can't stop talking', lifts the lid on the hidden superpowers of the people we now recognise as introverts. While society has shifted over the last 100 years to celebrate confident, outspoken extroverts, it is often inward-gazing types who we can look to for big ideas and innovative solutions to our collective problems.

As you read Susan Cain's book, you will identify the personality traits of students, friends and colleagues, and feel like you understand them for the very first time. You may even recognise and finally accept your own need to spend time in quiet contemplation. 'Quiet' is filled with fascinating insights about what drives our behaviour and causes some of us to crave the spotlight while others prefer to blend in. The publication also contains valuable lessons about why the introverts in our society are worth celebrating (quietly, of course).



5 BEST QUOTES

"Introverts, in contrast, may have strong social skills and enjoy parties and business meetings, but after a while wish they were home in their pyjamas. They prefer to devote their social energies to close friends, colleagues, and family. They listen more than they talk, think before they speak, and often feel as if they express themselves better in writing than in conversation. They tend to dislike conflict. Many have a horror of small talk, but enjoy deep discussions."

"There's zero correlation between being the best talker and having the best ideas."

"Don't think of introversion as something that needs to be cured."

"The secret to life is to put yourself in the right lighting. For some, it's a Broadway spotlight; for others, a lamplit desk. Use your natural powers -- of persistence, concentration, and insight -- to do work you love and work that matters. Solve problems. Make art, think deeply."

"We don't need giant personalities to transform companies. We need leaders who build not their own egos but the institutions they run."

**11 LESSONS**

for Leaders
about the Power
of Introverts

1. THE EXTROVERT IDEAL

Back in the early 1900s, society, and American society in particular, celebrated people who were honest, faithful and who put others above themselves. After the industrial revolution, a shift occurred. Society progressed to celebrate personality over strength of character. As sales became key and looks more important, the extrovert cemented his (and her) place as leader. The world became a far more competitive place and those who put themselves forward with confidence outperformed others. Being placid or feeling insecure evolved into undesirable personality traits. As a result, introverts, who are believed to make up a third of the world's population, found themselves growing up feeling like they were never good enough.

2. WHEN COLLABORATION KILLS CREATIVITY

A typical extrovert thrives in a group environment. They love social outings and animated discussions. Workplaces, schools and teams have adapted to this by encouraging open-plan workspaces and classrooms and facilitating regular group discussion and debate. This is an introvert's worst nightmare. These personality types are thoughtful, not forceful. Even if they can come up with a good idea, they may lack the confidence to put it forward in a group situation. As a result, many amazing ideas go unheard and many bad ones go unchallenged. Consider that Steve Wozniak, a self-confessed introvert, designed the Apple computer alone, after hours of uninterrupted tinkering. It is unlikely his creation would have seen the light of day if he were forced to brainstorm it amongst colleagues.

3. IS TEMPERAMENT DESTINY?

Susan Cain's research into her own introversion revealed that introverts have a lot of physical as well as behavioural markers. For example, their brains and bodies react far more strongly to stimulation than extroverts. Introverts tend to be 'high reactive', meaning they have a more intense response to new situations, confronting images and even the taste of a lemon. As a result, they become overwhelmed more easily. There is nothing wrong with being this way! But knowing someone is high-reactive can explain a lot about their reluctance to try new things or step outside their comfort zone. What's more, knowing a child's tendency towards introversion or extroversion can help you cater to their needs as a parent or teacher.

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4. BEYOND TEMPERAMENT: THE ROLE OF FREE WILL

Introversion and extroversion, like many things, exist on a sliding scale. You can also be an 'ambivert' who loves to socialise but needs to follow up a big outing with time alone. What's more, you can be an introvert and still exist happily in an extrovert's world. This includes attending social events, making presentations and feeling heard in the workplace. As Susan Cain explains, Bill Gates will never be Bill Clinton, and vice versa. However, both can stretch their personalities to suit what's needed in their environments. This is possible thanks to the power of self-reasoning, the parts of our brains that assure us we don't actually need to run and hide when faced with a room full of strangers. Through practice and self-reasons, many introverts learn over time to adapt to environments where they feel uncomfortable.

5. WHY 'COOL' IS OVERRATED

One of history's most impressive teams was politician Franklin Roosevelt and his wife Eleanor. Eleanor, an introvert, spent a great deal of time working with the poor and disadvantaged. Although shy, she was forceful when it came to encouraging her husband to establish the right policies for these people. Eleanor was not 'cool' in the sense of being a stereotypical leader or having unwavering emotions. However, she leveraged her passion and sensitivity to fight for the greater good. Different situations call for different characteristics. In nature, some animals thrive by hiding, others survive by attacking with force. The human race needs 'shy' animals who spend time in quiet contemplation just as much as it needs 'bold' ones who speak up and out.

6. WHY WALL STREET CRASHED AND WARREN BUFFETT PROSPERED

During the dotcom boom in the early 2000s, finance expert Warren Buffett was one of the first to predict a collapse. He understood the warning signs and thus was able to weather the storm, as he has done in many other financial situations. In 2008, the world's economy took a hit from the Global Financial Crisis. Many extroverts had the finger of blame pointed at them after this crisis. It is believed the financial downturn happened partly because risk-taking extroverts had control of Wall Street. When a risk paid off, it delivered a 'dopamine hit', which led to further questionable decisions. Behind the scenes, many introverts could see what was happening but they found it difficult to make their voices heard. This is the risk of an extrovert-heavy team. You need thoughtful, analytical, risk-averse introverts to keep score and ensure the right decisions are being made.

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7. SOFT POWER

While America celebrates the extrovert, other cultures highlight introverts as high achievers. For example, in the US, many Asian students find themselves misunderstood. Generally speaking, this is because Asian cultures favour study, hard work and academic results over sports, social outings and group activities. The sense of duty is to family, not to friends, and the emphasis is on staying quiet, not speaking out. Cultural awareness is so important in this situation. Neither is right or wrong, it is just that societies have evolved in different ways. What's also worth noting is that neither style is prohibitive to leadership, especially if nurtured in the right ways.

8. WHEN TO BE AN EXTROVERT

All over the world, introverts achieve amazing things. Many speak on stage, sometimes as a weekly part of their job. Some brilliant public speakers would surprise you when they explain they are actually an introvert. These figures rely on their passion to come out of their shell. They are excited to share what they know and they have found a way to overcome their reluctance to step out in public. To counter the over-stimulation, many compensate with allocated quiet time. According to 'Free Trait Theory', introverts are capable of acting like extroverts for the sake of work they consider important.

9. THE COMMUNICATION GAP

Many introverts are married to or in relationships with extroverts. The blend of personalities encourages one to push themselves beyond their comfort zone and the other to slow down and think things through more carefully. What's essential in this situation is compromise and understanding. Extroverts tend to argue more forcefully and with more passion because of their commitment to their partner. Introverts see this as a threat and shut down, which their partners find offensive. Acknowledging each other's needs and finding a middle ground are key to an enduring introvert/extrovert relationship.

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10. CULTIVATING QUIET KIDS IN A WORLD THAT CAN'T HEAR THEM

Introverted children can become lost and feel there is something wrong with their personalities when they are constantly encouraged to be social and outgoing. Often, extroverted parents become confused when their introverted children resist the push towards playdates and outdoor adventures. Once they understand that their child is happy being alone with a book, parents can relax and stop scheduling so many activities. The parent's ideal role with an introverted child is to understand and encourage. If their child is feeling shy or reluctant to try something new, they can push for very small steps. Start with sitting by the ocean instead of diving in, and progress to paddling before facing big waves. If you have an introverted child, talk things through and try to see the world through their eyes. What's most important is that they are enjoying themselves.

11. WONDERLAND

As Susan Cain writes, "The secret to life is to put yourself in the right lighting." "Figure out what you are meant to contribute to the world and make sure you contribute it. If this requires public speaking or networking or other activities that make you uncomfortable, do them anyway. But accept that they are difficult, get the training you need to make them easier, and reward yourself when you're done." "If you are a teacher, enjoy your gregarious and participatory students. But don't forget to cultivate the shy, the gentle, the autonomous, the ones with the single-minded enthusiasm for chemistry sets or parrot taxonomy or nineteenth-century art. They are the artists, engineers and thinkers of tomorrow."



ACTION STEPS

Think about the introverts in your world. You may have concluded they are lazy, uncooperative or that they just don't like you. In reality, they are not in the best 'lighting' to engage with you and demonstrate their true potential.

If you're a teacher or team leader, create a variety of ways for introverts to contribute. They may prefer documenting their brainstorming ideas quietly on paper. Instead of a presentation, they may wish to make a video.

When speaking to an audience is unavoidable for your students or staff, help them by starting them in a smaller group or at least let them know you understand why they find the task so challenging.

Are you an introvert? Make peace with yourself. You don't have to change but it can help to explain to others why you choose to avoid certain situations. Use your preferred methods of communication to come up with a plan that lets you contribute your own incredible expertise and insights.

**1 KEY TAKEAWAY**

We live in a diverse world and everyone has something to contribute. By ignoring the 'quiet ones', we are missing out on well-calculated solutions and ideas.

Understanding the challenges an introvert faces in an extrovert's world and realising why some people hate the spotlight will help you approach introverts or being introverted in a whole new way.

Both sides of the spectrum have something to offer and should be equally catered to and celebrated.

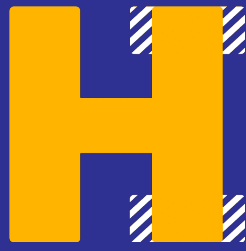


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Read the full book

Quiet

by Susan Cain

Cain's case for the power of introverts in a loud world.

[Get it on Amazon](#)