

Introverts, extroverts each contribute something

By Mandy Kendall

There are a lot of connotations to being extrovert or introvert. Most people would characterize an extrovert as “life and soul of the party’”, very friendly and maybe a bit loud. Whereas introverts are often described as “shy, timid, softly spoken and not really into socializing much at all.”

One dictionary definition of introvert describes them as a “shy, reticent, and typically self-centered person”, with extrovert being defined as “an outgoing, overtly expressive person.”

However, according to personality experts, being confident or shy has nothing to do with being extrovert or introvert. You can be confident and be an introvert, or shy and an extrovert. Who knew?



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Although those definitions may be true in the extremes, just as there are many layers to personality types, there are layers to being extrovert and introvert. As with most things, there is a spectrum and some people may be more introverted than others or more extroverted than others. Indeed there are ambiverts, having the best of both worlds by being in the middle of the spectrum, described as “moderately comfortable

with groups and social interaction, but also relishes time alone, away from a crowd. “

Take me for example, I'd like to think that I am an ambivert but with some research I discovered that I definitely fit into the introvert mold more than the extrovert model.

Kate Bartolotta, owner and founder of Be You Media Group, uses a cup analogy to help explain some of the basic differences. She says to think of ourselves as having a cup of energy available to us. Most of us love social interactions, being with friends and family and being around people. Introverts will tend to find that their cup of energy is depleted over time being around people and need to have some time alone to replenish their cup, whereas extroverts find that socializing fills their cup. Another way of looking at it is to think about how you respond to stimulation, social or otherwise. Extroverts tend to crave stimulation to help them feel alive and energized, whereas introverts tend to find they are at their best in calmer environments.

Bartolotta also suggested this 12-question quiz to find out just where you are on the introvert/extrovert scale.

With one third to half of the population being introverted, but society forcing us to conform to social expectations, it's easy to see how a lot of people may well be living lives that just aren't good for them, or those around them. It might seem these days that in order to survive or be accepted we all have to be gregarious and charismatic. But we need the balance of the contribution that introverts and extroverts give to society. Try not to be persuaded to fit in with social convention and just be who you really are.

Qwik-e tips on dealing with introversion

Be honest – with yourself, family, friends and co-workers. Forcing yourself to be sociable when you really don't feel like it is not going to help you, or anyone have a good time.

Tell those close to you that sometimes you just need some alone-time so that you can be at your best when you are with them. Let co-workers know that you need some quiet time to get your work done or be creative. You might be surprised how many people feel the same way too. Make sure you are not doing things a certain way because you feel that is what is expected of you.

Think about those around you – Do you know someone who seems fine one minute, then quiet or moody the next? Maybe they struggle with keeping up with your social circle interactions and need to withdraw occasionally. Allow them some space and just ask them what they like to do to recharge their batteries, you may be surprised by what you hear.

No excuses – Don't feel like you have to make excuses for not joining every event. No one really expects more than just a "sorry I can't make that". You can be honest with close friends and family and tell them you need some recharging time, but generally social acquaintances don't need to be told why you're not joining them.

Let your emotions be your guide – Think about where and when you feel your best (home reading a book, at a quiet dinner with a few friends, at a rock concert or large parties) and let that help you decide how you are going to spend your spare time.

This TEDx talk gives a very good overview of introversion versus extroversion.

Until next time.

Mandy Kendall operates Health Connective in South Lake Tahoe, which aligns wellness seekers with their ideal wellness provider. If you have questions, would like some advice, or would like to request some Qwik-e tips on any health and well-being topic, drop her an email at connect@healthconnective.com or keep an eye out on Lake Tahoe News for regular Qwik-e tips

on how to make healthy changes one Quick and Easy step at a time.