



introvert insights

Think of Your Introversion Not as a *Type* but as a Consistent *Tendency*

If you've ever watched a Major League Baseball game on TV, especially in the last few years, you may have tuned in just in time to see some of the infielders—and perhaps an outfielder or two as well—wildly out of place.

For example: Perhaps the short-stop had drifted over to the right-hand side of second base (i.e., positioned between first and second) instead of the normal left-hand side (between second and third), while the third-baseman had wandered over to shortstop.

Meantime, maybe the center fielder had moved basically into right field (joining the actual right-fielder, who had moved all the way to the first-base foul line), while the left fielder had moved clear over to center field.

Maybe you even witnessed all four infield players positioned between first and second base, leaving the left-hand side of the infield completely undefended.

What you were seeing was just one of a hundred variations of what is known as the *shift*. It's a defensive strategy based on nothing more than

a particular hitter's **tendencies**.

The shifts described here would be used against a left-handed hitter who has a strong tendency (identified by analysis of statistical data) to “pull” the ball—that is, to hit the ball to the right-hand side of the infield, or to right field in the outfield.

Granted, this tendency isn't particularly conscious or controllable (unless you believe it's possible to intentionally “steer” how you're hitting a 98-mile-per-hour fastball). It's also not a foregone conclusion. But it's definitely real—real enough for opposing teams to adjust their defensive strategies for it.

Tendencies play a role in strategy in other sports, too. Consider the penalty kick in soccer, a situation where the goalkeeper has to cover a mammoth-sized space (24 feet wide by 8 feet high) while the opposing player takes a free, uninterrupted shot from just 12 yards away.

The keeper is allowed to move side to side on the goal line but can do nothing else until the ball is kicked—putting him/her at an

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TIPS, TRICKS, AND TOOLS

TAMING TECHNOLOGY

Turn Off Push Notifications to Regain Social Media Control

If you'd like to reduce your social media bombardment but you don't necessarily want to—or can't!—quit Facebook, Twitter, et al. completely, writer Morgan Sung has a simple happy-medium remedy for you to consider, at least where your cell phone is concerned: turning off push notifications for social media apps.

That's exactly what Sung did herself recently, as she notes in an article she wrote for the *Mashable* website. The eye-opening result: "I created a space where I could be introverted in peace."

"Without the constant pressure to be 'on,'" Sung stresses, "I had time to recharge by myself until I had the energy to reply to messages and re-enter the world."

The beauty of Sung's idea is that it doesn't require what for many of us is simply unrealistic in the times we live in: dropping social media



from our lives (and our phones) altogether. It does, though, re-establish a sense of control over how much information is coming in, and when, which is crucial to the typical introvert's happiness and well-being.

Be forewarned: It actually takes a little time, especially if you participate on several social media platforms, to adjust each application's

settings so that you stop receiving all those notifications that pile up on your screen and, far worse, in your brain—in real time.

The investment is well worth it, Sung writes.

"[H]aving designated time to be alone without getting interrupted ... has been vital to maintaining my mental health," she stresses.

MANAGING YOUR ENVIRONMENT

Public Spaces Aren't Always Quiet—but You Have Options

Half an hour ago, I was at my favorite quiet coffee shop—writing this very newsletter—when two people came in, sat down, and completely destroyed the atmosphere.

"Loud talkers," the cast of *Seinfeld* may have characterized them.

They weren't doing it intentionally, and I'm certain they meant no harm; I doubt they were even aware of it. BUT THEY SHOUTED ALL THEIR WORDS. And in this partic-

ular case, they treated us all to a full-contact dose of, ahem, colorful language to boot.

It's a public place, and I have no right—or desire—to be the volume police. Still, what can you do, especially if you're an introvert like me, when noise beyond the normal is suddenly thrust upon you?

You have options.

Get some noise-canceling headphones. They can be expensive, but you may find that it is money well spent—especially if it helps you

(re)create the relative silence you were seeking in the first place.

Play white noise. A much cheaper and perhaps more appealing alternative to noise-canceling headphones is to download a white noise app to your cellphone, then use regular headphones or earbuds to listen to peaceful noise instead of, well, noisy noise!

Move, or leave. That's what I did 30 minutes ago—and now I'm back in business again in the peaceful confines of ... the public library.

Get “Niche-Picky” to Make Group Experiences Rewarding

Maybe you’re looking to develop one high-quality friendship, or even a significant-other relationship. Or maybe your goal is to meet people who can lead you to a new job or a career change.

Whatever the case, getting to know people can be difficult and even tiresome, particularly if you’re an introvert. It’s not so much that you don’t want to create new relationships; rather, you know that doing so will consume considerable energy—energy you may or may not always have.

One way to make things easier on yourself—and more rewarding in the

long run—is to put yourself in a group situation of some sort.

Agreed, this is not always the introvert’s favorite option either! But it can be much more appealing than you might think if you adopt a practice that Stanford University researcher and shyness expert Lynne Henderson refers to as *niche-picking*.

As author Anneli Rufus describes it in her fascinating book *Party of One: The Loners’ Manifesto*, niche-picking transforms the group structure into “a by-product of the main action.”

Citing Henderson, Rufus argues that “if you like hiking but usually hike alone ... it wouldn’t kill you to join the local hiking club.” That

way, you might build a friendship with someone who already shares one of your passions.

Similarly, Rufus says, if you’ve always wanted to learn another language, why not sign up to take a class with a few other people who are looking to do the same thing?

Again, the shared interest—as well as the common experience—can help you break through the sometimes awkward and almost always draining initial interactions involved whenever you’re trying to meet someone new.

In the end, you may find yourself feeling, and acting, more extraverted than usual in a group situation—all because you’ve chosen it wisely.

SELF-RENEWAL

Plan for Your Own Recharging Activities Throughout the Day

Brenda Knowles knows something about feeling drained and the “fogginess” that often accompanies it when you’re an introvert living in a very extraverted world.

She’s developed a mindful, realistic solution to it all, too.

“I have learned to manage my energy rather than my time,” she writes in a blog post. “I understand that I have to incorporate renewal periods into my day.”

Knowles—author of the book *The Quiet Rise of Introverts: 8 Practices for Living and Loving in a Noisy World*—talks about the many activities she proactively pursues whenever her “circuits begin to overload.” Among them: going for a walk, talking with a close friend, taking a long shower, exercising, meditating, reading, or taking a nap.

The key word here, of course, is “proactively.” Just as you can either manage your time or let it manage you, you can control your own daily activities—or watch in despair as revitalization slips away from you.

For that, you pay an undeniable price.

“If there is no opportunity for renewal,” Knowles stresses, “we may feel like our brain is numb.

“We may speak slower and take longer to gather our thoughts due to the longer neural pathways bottlenecking the processing of input. We may feel embarrassed or guilty because we cannot keep up with the fast-paced, driven world.”

Hours of back-to-back activities and non-stop frenzy can leave you feeling, as Knowles aptly puts it, like a “rubbery frog in formaldehyde.”

So don’t leave daily recharging breaks to chance or good fortune. Plan for them. Build them into your



day, on purpose. Go get them, or take them, instead of hoping they somehow come to you.

Whether you’re taking five minutes to breathe or 105 minutes to work on restoring the old motorcycle in your garage, it will be time wisely invested.

IT'S AN INTROVERT'S LIFE

Tuning Out Sometimes Is Just a Form of Self-Care—Nothing More

By Peter Vogt

Back in late August, *The Wall Street Journal* ran a fascinating article headlined “Sorry, Pal, I Don’t Want to Talk: The Other Reason People Wear AirPods.”

AirPods, if you’re not familiar with them, are Apple’s wireless earbuds. You can use them for obvious reasons like listening to music or to callers on the phone. But as the *Journal* article pointed out, you can also use them **not** to listen. To anything. Or, especially, anyone.

Case in point, as described in the article: Zach Miles, who graduated earlier this year from Oral Roberts University in Oklahoma. He told *Journal* reporter Rebecca Dolan that he frequently uses his AirPods to intentionally keep people at a distance.

“If you’re not in the mood to talk to somebody, or if you’re in a hurry,” he said, “it gives someone a visual signal.”

Jasiel Martin-Odoom of Brooklyn told the *Journal* that he often gets frustrated when people around him fail to observe what Dolan characterized as “the stay-away rule.”

Heading to a friend’s house recently, Martin-Odoom noted that “I had my AirPods in, because it’s an UberPool ride—I don’t want to talk to anybody.”

One of his fellow passengers, though, did.

“The fact that I had to pause my music and had to engage in a conversation—which we both could have avoided if she’d just also put

her headphones in—bothered me,” Martin-Odoom said.

As you might imagine, Miles and, especially, Martin-Odoom took a verbal beating in some of the reader comments accompanying the piece. Words and phrases like “arrogance” and “a real piece of work” and “narcissistic” and “anti-social” came pouring out.

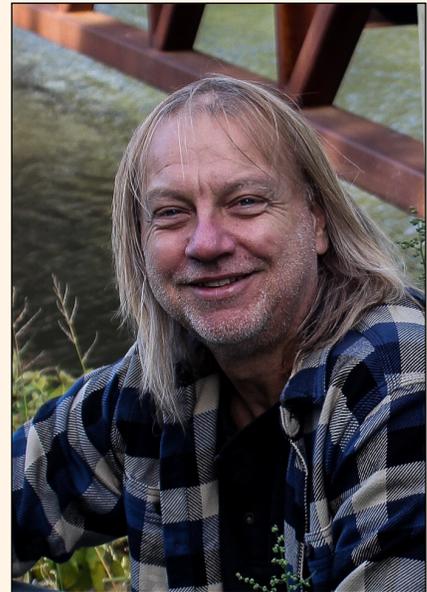
One reader said: “It astonishes me that the current generation is so convinced that they’re more virtuous than past generations.” Another comment concluded that Martin-Odoom is “just too good to listen to another human being.”

Yet the headline for the piece—in particular, the “I Don’t Want to Talk” phrase—was precise and accurate. The headline did not say, for example, “I’m Too Good to Talk to You,” nor did it say “I’m Too Virtuous to Talk to You.”

It only said “I Don’t Want to...”

I’m hung up on this article—and the prevailing thinking and attitudes behind it—because, while I don’t (yet?) use AirPods, I engage in the types of behaviors described in the article every single day. Almost always subconsciously, even automatically, but every bit as deliberately.

At halftime of my son’s soccer games, for instance, I walk away from the other parents and go sit somewhere by myself for five or 10 minutes. Why? Merely to take a break from the sideline refereeing that’s been going on, and to avoid the inevitable armchair analyses of how the boys are playing.



Am I being anti-social? No. I just don’t want to take part.

When I bring my daughter to gymnastics each week, I look for a spectator chair that is off on its own or, failing that, one that is next to a person reading a book. Like I will soon be doing, if all goes well.

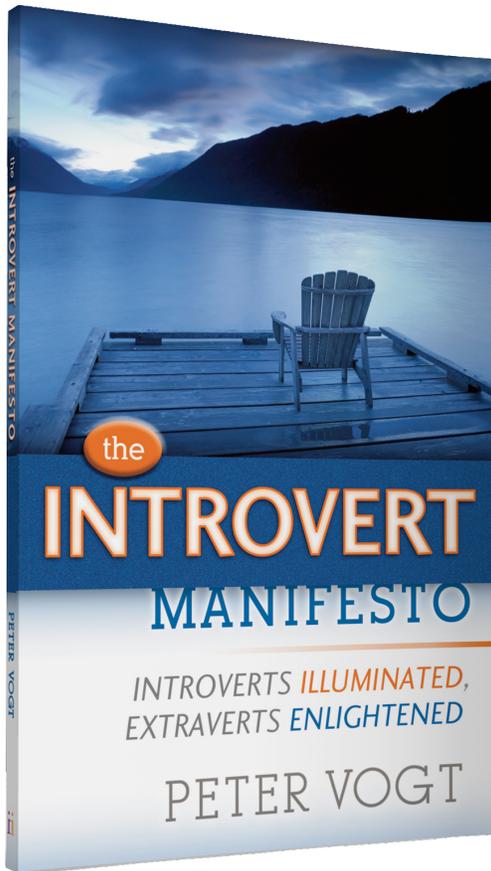
Am I being rude? Do I think I’m better than everyone else? No. I just don’t want to talk; I want to read.

Now, let me be clear: There is a time and a place for everything—socializing included—not to mention a time and a place for devoting one’s full attention to the outside world.

In the *Journal* article, for example, another interviewee expresses shock that in his informal Facebook poll of 80-plus of his friends, only 9 percent said they find it acceptable to wear AirPods during meetings at work. He should instead be shocked that the figure is that high.

But the many tricks of the daily introvert existence aren’t automatically self-absorption or self-centeredness, either. They are often simply self-care. Self-aware self-care. Just a simple want—and nothing more.

Introverts. Explained. Accurately.



That's the radically simple idea behind *The Introvert Manifesto: Introverts Illuminated, Extraverts Enlightened*, by Peter Vogt, editor and publisher of *Introvert Insights*.

Read extensive excerpts and order your paperback copy now at:

IntrovertManifesto.com

Also available on Amazon

PRACTICAL RESEARCH

People Who Want to Pursue Solitude Get More Out of It

Solitude has its pluses—especially for the typical introvert—as well as its minuses. But people who are self-motivated to pursue solitude because they find it intrinsically appealing (a.k.a. typical introverts) tend to get the most out of it, according to a recent article in *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*.

The article summarizes a series of four studies, one of which involved two groups of college students who took part in a two-week study.

The students in Group 1 spent 15 minutes in solitude each day during the first week, after which they immediately completed a survey on their motivations for pursuing the solitude experience. They also completed an end-of-day survey that assessed several well-being variables.



During the second week of the study, the students did not engage in solitude and simply completed the end-of-day survey each day.

The students in Group 2 did the same tasks, but for them the order of the weeks was switched.

One key finding: The students who had “high autonomy for solitude”—i.e., those who cited intrinsic

reasons for pursuing it (rather than, for example, “Because I was told to be by myself”)—experienced fewer negative effects of it as well as more positive effects, such as increased relaxation and reduced stress.

Source: “Solitude as an Approach to Affective Self-Regulation,” *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 44(1) (2018), pp. 92-106.

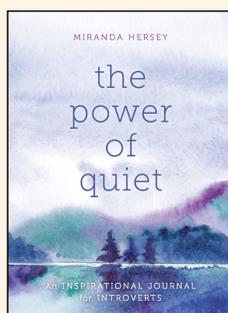
REFLECTIVE READS

The Power of Quiet Will Help You See Your Introvert Needs

Among the 100 or so words on the back cover of Miranda Hersey’s *The Power of Quiet*, one subtly but perfectly captures the book’s key aim: “excavate.”

To excavate, of course, is to dig for something you know is down (or in) there somewhere and then bring it to the surface or into the light. Thus, the buried and vaguely mysterious becomes the seen and sorted through and understood.

The Power of Quiet uses thoughtful (but not overwhelming) questions to help you excavate who you really



are and what you really need as an introvert, especially as you go through the too often automatic, too rarely carefully considered activities of your day-to-day life.

How much time alone do **you** need each day, for example? The book’s “The Space Between Us”

chapter poses questions to help you figure it out, and also invites you to specify what happens when you don’t get enough time to yourself.

Similarly, the book’s “RSVP” chapter offers a checklist of different types of events you might be invited to and helps you discover which of them might actually appeal to you, which ones don’t, and why.

The book is also peppered with inspirational quotes. And if there were such a thing as an award for the book that most exudes an introvert vibe, in both its text and design, *The Power of Quiet* would surely win it. A sense of calm is power too.

Continued from page 1

extreme disadvantage (which, of course, is the point; it's a penalty kick, after all).

So what do professional goalkeepers do? They study opposing players' penalty kick tendencies, again using statistical data. Does this shooter have a tendency to go high and to the keeper's left? The opposite?

Again, a shooter's tendency is not a shooter's certainty. But it is consistent enough for keepers to predict it. (Of course, conversely, shooters study keepers' penalty kick tendencies, too. Does this keeper usually dive right? Left? Stay in place?)

Tendency vs. Type

Why does talk of tendencies matter, especially in the context of introverts and introversion?

It matters because your introversion is also a tendency. Which is to say—and strongly emphasize—that your introversion is not a **type**, the name of the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator notwithstanding. (If I ran the

zoo, it would be called the Myers-Briggs Tendency Indicator.)

Dictionary.com defines the term *tendency* as follows:

1) A natural or prevailing disposition to move, proceed, or act in some direction or toward some point, end, or result.

2) An inclination, bent, or predisposition to something.

Take these very well written, appropriately precise definitions to heart where your introversion is concerned. Yes, you most definitely want to be sure to give your introversion its due in your life. (That's what this newsletter, at its essence, is all about.) You have a tendency, perhaps a very strong one, toward introversion in most cases.

Count on it. Plan for it. Embrace it. For the most part you will anticipate correctly, and you'll keep yourself happy and healthy as a result.

That said, though: Don't fall into the trap of seeing your introversion as a foregone conclusion in every single circumstance and every situation of your life. Don't let that word

“type” lead to **typecasting** where your individual thoughts, feelings, and actions are concerned.

I myself am right-handed, and if I were the guy taking that penalty shot in soccer, I'd use my right foot. That's just my tendency, largely because it comes easily and naturally to me, as the Dictionary.com definition of *tendency* suggests.

Yet ... when I'm playing basketball and I go in for a layup with my right hand (which is the hand I'll use if I can possibly help it), I jump off of my **left** leg. In this particular situation, a comparatively rare one in my life, my left leg works—and feels—better than the right leg that I normally have the tendency to use.

So yes, you're an introvert. But remember: that's merely shorthand for a spectral concept whose precision you can never overlook or ignore.

You're actually someone who has a **tendency toward introversion**. Looking at it this way, and living your life this way, gives you the room and freedom you need to thrive on your own unique terms.





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Editor and Publisher:
Peter Vogt, M.S.
peter@introvertinsights.com



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INTROVERT INSPIRATIONS

“The one who follows the crowd will usually go no further than
the crowd. Those who walk alone are likely to find themselves in
places no one has ever been before.”

~ Francis Phillip Wernig

“Solitude is the great teacher, and to learn its lessons you must
pay attention to it.”

~ Deepak Chopra

“Concentrate all your thoughts upon the work at hand. The sun's
rays do not burn until brought to a focus.”

~ Alexander Graham Bell

“Never underestimate the power of thought; it is the greatest
path to discovery.”

~ Idowu Koyenikan

“Always be a first-rate version of yourself and not a second-rate
version of someone else.”

~ Judy Garland