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Quiet

*The Power of Introverts in a World That
Can't Stop Talking*



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Excerpt from the Introduction

Today we make room for a remarkably narrow range of personality styles. We're told that to be great is to be bold, to be happy is to be sociable. We see ourselves as a nation of extroverts—which means that we've lost sight of who we really are. Depending on which study you consult, one third to one half of Americans are introverts—in other words, one out of every two or three people you know. (Given that the United States is among the most extroverted of nations, the number must be at least as high in other parts of the world.) If you're not an introvert yourself, you are surely raising, managing, married to, or coupled with one.

If these statistics surprise you, that's probably because so many people pretend to be extroverts. Closet introverts pass undetected on playgrounds, in high school locker rooms, and in the corridors of corporate America. Some fool even themselves, until some life event—a layoff, an empty nest, an inheritance that frees them to spend time as they like—jolts them into taking stock of their true natures. You have only to raise the subject of this book with your friends and acquaintances to find that the most unlikely people consider themselves introverts.

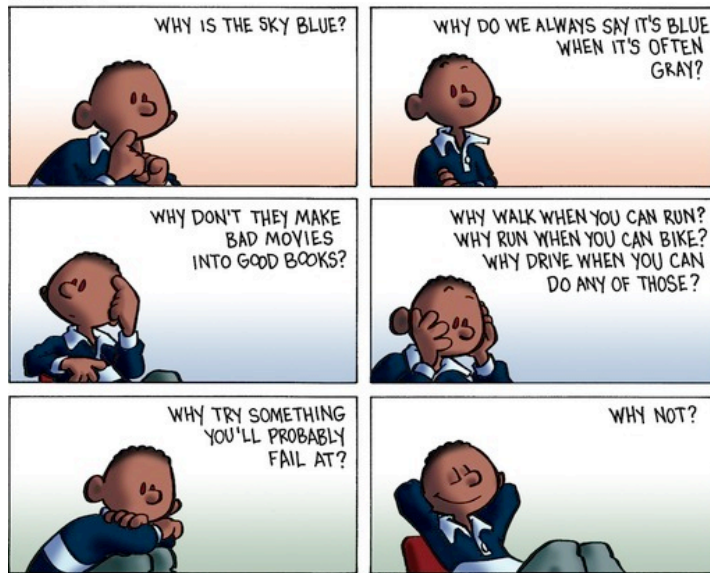
It makes sense that so many introverts hide even from themselves. We live with a value system that I call the Extrovert Ideal—the omnipresent belief that the ideal self is gregarious, alpha, and comfortable in the spotlight. The archetypal extrovert prefers action to contemplation, risk-taking to heed-taking, certainty to doubt. He favors quick decisions, even at the risk of being wrong. She works well in teams and socializes in groups. We like to think that we value individuality, but all too often we admire one type of individual—the kind who's comfortable "putting himself out there." Sure, we allow technologically gifted loners who launch companies in garages to have any personality they please, but they are the exceptions, not the rule, and our tolerance extends mainly to those who get fabulously wealthy or hold the promise of doing so.

Introversion—along with its cousins sensitivity, seriousness, and shyness—is now a second-class personality trait, somewhere between a disappointment and a pathology. Introverts living under the Extrovert Ideal are like women in a man's world, discounted because of a trait that goes to the core of who they are. Extroversion is an enormously appealing personality style, but we've turned it into an oppressive standard to which most of us feel we must conform.

The Extrovert Ideal has been documented in many studies, though this research has never been grouped under a single name. Talkative people, for example, are rated as smarter, better-looking, more interesting, and more desirable as friends. Velocity of speech counts as well as volume: we rank fast talkers as more competent and likable than slow ones. The same dynamics apply in groups, where research shows that the voluble are considered smarter than the reticent—even though there's zero correlation between the gift of gab and good ideas. Even the word introvert is stigmatized—one informal study, by psychologist Laurie Helgoe, found that introverts described their own physical appearance in vivid language ("green-blue eyes," "exotic," "high cheekbones"), but when asked to describe generic introverts they drew a bland and distasteful picture ("ungainly," "neutral colors," "skin problems").

But we make a grave mistake to embrace the Extrovert Ideal so unthinkingly. Some of our greatest ideas, art, and inventions—from the theory of evolution to van Gogh's sunflowers to the personal computer—came from quiet and cerebral people who knew how to tune in to their inner worlds and the treasures to be found there.

FRAZZ



BY JEF MALLET



A species in which everyone was General Patton would not succeed, any more than would a race in which everyone was Vincent Van Gogh. I prefer to think that the planet needs athletes, philosophers, sex symbols, painters, scientists; it needs the warmhearted, the hardhearted, the coldhearted and the weakhearted. It needs those who can devote their lives to studying how many droplets of water are secreted by the salivary glands of dogs under which circumstances, and it needs those who can capture the passing impression of cherry blossoms in a fourteen-syllable poem or devote twenty-five pages to the dissection of a small boy's feelings as he lies in bed in the dark waiting for his mother to kiss him goodnight. . . .Indeed the presence of outstanding strengths presupposes that energy needed in other areas has been channeled away from them. Allen Shawn -- American composer, pianist, educator, and author

Without introverts, the world would be devoid of:

the theory of gravity -- Sir Isaac Newton

the theory of relativity -- Albert Einstein

Yeats's "The Second Coming" -- W. B. Yeats

Chopin's nocturnes -- Frederic Chopin

Proust's *In Search of Lost Time* -- Marcel Proust

Peter Pan -- J. M. Barrie

Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and *Animal Farm* -- George Orwell

The Cat in the Hat -- Theodor Geisel (Dr. Seuss)

Charlie Brown - Charles Schulz

Schindler's List, *E. T.*, and *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* -- Steven Spielberg

Google -- Larry Page

Harry Potter -- J. K. Rowling

(Cain 5)

...But by 1920, popular self-help guides had changed their focus from inner virtue to outer charm--"to know *what* to say and *how* to say it," as one manual put it. "To create a personality is power, advised another. "Try in every way to have a ready command of the manners which make people think 'he's a mighty likeable fellow,'" said a third. "That is the beginning of reputation for personality."

...The earlier guides [nineteenth century] emphasized attributes that anyone could work on improving, described by words like

Citizenship
Duty
Work
Golden deeds
Honor
Reputation
Morals
Manners
Integrity

But the new guides celebrated qualities that were ... trickier to acquire. Either you embodied these qualities or you didn't:

Magnetic
Fascinating
Stunning
Attractive
Glowing
Dominate
Forceful
Energetic

...The Williams Shaving Cream ad featured a slick-haired, mustachioed man urging readers to "LET YOUR FACE REFLECT CONFIDENCE, NOT WORRY! IT'S THE 'LOOK' OF YOU BY WHICH YOU ARE JUDGED MOST OFTEN."

(Cain 23-24)

...Even T. S. Eliot's famous 1915 poem *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock*--in which he laments the need to "prepare a face to meet the faces that you meet"--seems a *cri de coeur* about the new demands of self-presentation. While poets of the previous century had wandered lonely as a cloud through the countryside (Wordsworth, in 1802) or repaired in solitude to Walden Pond (Thoreau, in 1845), Eliot's Prufrock mostly worries about being looked at by "eyes that fix you in a formulated phrase" and pin you, wriggling to a wall.

(Cain 24, 31)

Society is itself an education in the extrovert values, and rarely has there been a society that has preached them so hard. No man is an island, but how John Donne would writhe to hear how often, and for what reasons, the thought is so tiresomely repeated. —WILLIAM WHYTE -- *The Organization Man* (1956)

(Cain 34)

If we assume that quiet and loud people have roughly the same number of good (and bad) ideas, then we should worry if the louder and more forceful people always carry the day. This would mean that an awful lot of bad ideas prevail while good ones get squashed. Yet studies in group dynamics suggest that this is exactly what happens. We perceive talkers as smarter than quiet types—even though grade-point averages and SAT and intelligence test scores reveal this perception to be inaccurate. In one experiment

in which two strangers met over the phone, those who spoke more were considered more intelligent, better looking, and more likable. We also see talkers as leaders. The more a person talks, the more other group members direct their attention to him, which means that he becomes increasingly powerful as a meeting goes on. It also helps to speak fast; we rate quick talkers as more capable and appealing than slow talkers.

(Cain 51)

...A well-known study out of UC Berkeley by organizational behavior professor Philip Tetlock found that television pundits—that is, people who earn their livings by holding forth confidently on the basis of limited information—make worse predictions about political and economic trends than they would by random chance. And the very worst prognosticators tend to be the most famous and the most confident—the very ones who would be considered natural leaders in an HBS classroom.

The U.S. Army has a name for a similar phenomenon: “the Bus to Abilene.” “Any army officer can tell you what that means,” Colonel (Ret.) Stephen J. Gerras, a professor of behavioral sciences at the U.S. Army War College, told *Yale Alumni Magazine* in 2008. “It’s about a family sitting on a porch in Texas on a hot summer day, and somebody says, ‘I’m bored. Why don’t we go to Abilene?’ When they get to Abilene, somebody says, ‘You know, I didn’t really want to go.’ And the next person says, ‘I didn’t want to go—I thought you wanted to go,’ and so on. Whenever you’re in an army group and somebody says, ‘I think we’re all getting on the bus to Abilene here,’ that is a red flag. You can stop a conversation with it. It is a very powerful artifact of our culture.”

The “Bus to Abilene” anecdote reveals our tendency to follow those who initiate action—**any action**(Boldface mine/not in original text). We are similarly inclined to empower dynamic speakers.

(Cain 52)

Indeed, according to a famous study by the influential management theorist Jim Collins, many of the best-performing companies of the late twentieth century were run by what he calls “Level 5 Leaders.” These exceptional CEOs were known not for their flash or charisma but for extreme humility coupled with intense professional will....

... when he analyzed what the highest-performing companies had in common, the nature of their CEOs jumped out at him. *Every single one of them was led by an unassuming man like Darwin Smith.* Those who worked with these leaders tended to describe them with the following words: quiet, humble, modest, reserved, shy, gracious, mild-mannered, self-effacing, understated....

So what do introverted leaders do differently from—and sometimes better than—extroverts?

One answer comes from the work of Wharton management professor Adam Grant... extroverted leaders enhance group performance when employees are passive, but that introverted leaders are more effective with proactive employees. (My note: substitute *teacher* for leader and *students* for employees or *principal* for leader and *teachers* for employees)...

...introverts are uniquely good at leading initiative-takers. Because of their inclination to listen to others and lack of interest in dominating social situations, introverts are more likely to hear and implement suggestions. Having benefited from the talents of their followers, they are then likely to motivate them to be even more proactive. Introverted leaders create a virtuous circle of proactivity.

(Cain 54-57)

... It was only when God paired him up with his extroverted brother Aaron that Moses agreed to take on the assignment. Moses would be the speechwriter, the behind-the-scenes guy, the Cyrano de Bergerac;

Aaron would be the public face of the operation. “It will be as if he were your mouth,” said God, “and as if you were God to him.” ...

... its stories suggest that introversion plays yin to the yang of extroversion; that the medium is not always the message; and that people followed Moses because his words were thoughtful, not because he spoke them well.

(Cain 61)

... “The evangelical culture ties together faithfulness with extroversion,” McHugh [Adam McHugh evangelical pastor] explained. “The emphasis is on community, on participating in more and more programs and events, on meeting more and more people. It’s a constant tension for many introverts that they’re not living that out.

... McHugh added his own voice to this chorus, first with a blog calling for greater emphasis on religious practices of solitude and contemplation, and later with a book called *Introverts in the Church: Finding Our Place in an Extroverted Culture*. He argues that evangelism means listening as well as talking, that evangelical churches should incorporate silence and mystery into religious worship, and that they should make room for introverted leaders who might be able to demonstrate a quieter path to God. After all, hasn’t prayer always been about contemplation as well as community? Religious leaders from Jesus to Buddha, as well as the lesser-known saints, monks, shamans, and prophets, have always gone off alone to experience the revelations they later shared with the rest of us.

Events [services in megachurches] like this don’t give me the sense of oneness others seem to enjoy; it’s always been private occasions that make me feel connected to the joys and sorrows of the world, often in the form of communion with writers and musicians I’ll never meet in person. Proust called these moments of unity between writer and reader “**that fruitful miracle of a communication in the midst of solitude.**” [Use of boldface not in the original] His use of religious language was surely no accident.

(Cain 66-69)

I am a horse for a single harness, not cut out for tandem or teamwork ... Full well do I know that in order to attain any definite goal, it is imperative that one person do the thinking and the commanding.

—ALBERT EINSTEIN

(Cain 71)

Intentionally so. In his [Stephen Wozniak, cofounder of Apple] memoir, he offers this advice to kids who aspire to great creativity:

Most inventors and engineers I’ve met are like me—they’re shy and they live in their heads. They’re almost like artists. In fact, the very best of them *are* artists. *And artists work best alone* where they can control an invention’s design without a lot of other people designing it for marketing or some other committee. I don’t believe anything really revolutionary has been invented by committee. If you’re that rare engineer who’s an inventor and also an artist, I’m going to give you some advice that might be hard to take. That advice is:

Work alone. You’re going to be best able to design revolutionary products and features if you’re working on your own. Not on a committee. Not on a team.

(Cain 73-74)

... If this is true—if solitude is an important key to creativity—then we might all want to develop a taste

for it. We'd want to teach our kids to work independently. We'd want to give employees plenty of privacy and autonomy. Yet increasingly we do just the opposite.

... It's the story of a contemporary phenomenon that I call the New Groupthink—a phenomenon that has the potential to stifle productivity at work and to deprive schoolchildren of the skills they'll need to achieve excellence in an increasingly competitive world.

(Cain 75)

... As Janet Farrall and Leonie Kronborg write in *Leadership Development for the Gifted and Talented*:

While extroverts tend to attain leadership in public domains, introverts tend to attain leadership in theoretical and aesthetic fields. Outstanding introverted leaders, such as Charles Darwin, Marie Curie, Patrick White and Arthur Boyd, who have created either new fields of thought or rearranged existing knowledge, have spent long periods of their lives in solitude. Hence leadership does not only apply in social situations, but also occurs in more solitary situations such as developing new techniques in the arts, creating new philosophies, writing profound books and making scientific breakthroughs.

... What's so magical about solitude? In many fields, Ericsson [Anders Ericsson, research psychologist] told me, it's only when you're alone that you can engage in Deliberate Practice, which he has identified as the key to exceptional achievement. When you practice deliberately, you identify the tasks or knowledge that are just out of your reach, strive to upgrade your performance, monitor your progress, and revise accordingly. Practice sessions that fall short of this standard are not only less useful—they're counterproductive. They reinforce existing cognitive mechanisms instead of improving them.

Deliberate Practice is best conducted alone for several reasons. It takes intense concentration, and other people can be distracting. It requires deep motivation, often self-generated. But most important, it involves working on the task that's most challenging to *you* personally.

... I [Wozniak] acquired a central ability that was to help me through my entire career: patience. I'm serious. Patience is usually so underrated. I mean, for all those projects, from third grade all the way to eighth grade, I just learned things gradually, figuring out how to put electronic devices together without so much as cracking a book.... I learned to not worry so much about the outcome, but to concentrate on the step I was on and to try to do it as perfectly as I could when I was doing it.

(Cain 78-82)

... top performers overwhelmingly worked for companies that gave their workers the most privacy, personal space, control over their physical environments, and freedom from interruption.

... Indeed, excessive stimulation seems to impede learning: a recent study found that people learn better after a quiet stroll through the woods than after a noisy walk down a city street. Another study, of 38,000 knowledge workers across different sectors, found that the simple act of being interrupted is one of the biggest barriers to productivity. Even multitasking, that prized feat of modern-day office warriors, turns out to be a myth. **Scientists now know that the brain is incapable of paying attention to two things at the same time. What looks like multitasking is really switching back and forth between multiple tasks, which reduces productivity and increases mistakes by up to 50 percent.** [boldface type not in original] [**Note: Associative tasks** are things that you can do more than one of at a time. For example, most of us can drive a car and carry on a conversation with the passenger at the same time. However, if the weather suddenly turns bad and we are in the middle of a hazardous rainstorm, all of our concentration must be focused on the task of driving. **Cognitive tasks** requires full concentration. Some kids, who are processing the question, taking notes, listening, may not be able to speak at the same time they have to do something else. Using motor processes can be cognitive tasks. Driving in a

storm becomes a cognitive task, something which takes all of our focus and keeps us from being able to do anything else in combination with this task.]

... If personal space is vital to creativity, so is freedom from “peer pressure.”

... Studies have shown that performance gets worse as group size increases: groups of nine generate fewer and poorer ideas compared to groups of six, which do worse than groups of four. The “evidence from science suggests that business people must be insane to use brainstorming groups,” writes the organizational psychologist Adrian Furnham. “If you have talented and motivated people, they should be encouraged to work alone when creativity or efficiency is the highest priority.”

... Psychologists usually offer three explanations for the failure of group brainstorming. The first is *social loafing*: in a group, some individuals tend to sit back and let others do the work. The second is *production blocking*: only one person can talk or produce an idea at once, while the other group members are forced to sit passively. And the third is *evaluation apprehension*, meaning the fear of looking stupid in front of one’s peers.

..., you are doing something much more unexpected—and dangerous. Most of Berns’s volunteers reported having gone along with the group because “they thought that they had arrived serendipitously at the same correct answer.” They were utterly blind, in other words, to how much their peers had influenced them.

What does this have to do with social fear? Well, remember that the volunteers in the Asch and Berns studies didn’t always conform. Sometimes they picked the right answer despite their peers’ influence. And Berns and his team found something very interesting about these moments. They were linked to heightened activation in the amygdala, a small organ in the brain associated with upsetting emotions such as the fear of rejection. [see my website for pictures]

Berns refers to this as “the pain of independence,” and it has serious implications. Many of our most important civic institutions, from elections to jury trials to the very idea of majority rule, depend on dissenting voices. But when the group is literally capable of changing our perceptions, and when to stand alone is to activate primitive, powerful, and unconscious feelings of rejection, then the health of these institutions seems far more vulnerable than we think.

... The way forward, I’m suggesting, is not to stop collaborating face-to-face, but **to refine the way we do it. For one thing, we should actively seek out symbiotic introvert-extrovert relationships, in which leadership and other tasks are divided according to people’s natural strengths and temperaments. The most effective teams are composed of a healthy mix of introverts and extroverts, studies show, and so are many leadership structures.** [boldface not in original text]

We also need to create settings in which people are free to circulate in a shifting kaleidoscope of interactions, and to disappear into their private workspaces when they want to focus or simply be alone. Our schools should teach children the skills to work with others—cooperative learning can be effective when practiced well and in moderation—but also the time and training they need to deliberately practice on their own. It’s also vital to recognize that many people—especially introverts like Steve Wozniak—need extra quiet and privacy in order to do their best work.

(Cain 83-93)

...Temperament refers to inborn, biologically based behavioral and emotional patterns that are observable in infancy and early childhood; personality is the complex brew that emerges after cultural influence and personal experience are thrown into the mix. Some say that temperament is the foundation, and personality is the building. Kagan’s work helped link certain infant temperaments with adolescent personality styles [high reactive and low reactive]

... the four-month-olds who thrashed their arms like punk rockers did so not because they were extroverts in the making, but because their little bodies reacted strongly—they were “high-reactive”—to

new sights, sounds, and smells. The quiet infants were silent not because they were future introverts—just the opposite—but because they had nervous systems that were unmoved by novelty.

... Extroverts are sometimes credited with being “pro-social”—meaning caring about others—and introverts disparaged as people who don’t like people. But the reactions of the infants in Kagan’s tests had nothing to do with people. These babies were shouting (or not shouting) over Q-tips. They were pumping their limbs (or staying calm) in response to popping balloons. The high-reactive babies were not misanthropes in the making; they were simply sensitive to their environments.

...“the orchid hypothesis” by David Dobbs in a wonderful article in *The Atlantic*. [see my website for the complete article] This theory holds that many children are like dandelions, able to thrive in just about any environment. But others, including the high-reactive types that Kagan studied, are more like orchids: they wilt easily, but under the right conditions can grow strong and magnificent.

... The word that Kagan first used to describe high-reactive people was *inhibited*, [It’s good to remember that inhibition (especially in early childhood) is a positive trait—like self control. It is not always negative] Cain (101-120)

A shy man no doubt dreads the notice of strangers, but can hardly be said to be afraid of them. He may be as bold as a hero in battle, and yet have no self-confidence about trifles in the presence of strangers
—CHARLES DARWIN

[Research by Elaine Aron, research psychologist]... But it echoes Jerome Kagan’s findings that high-reactive first graders spend more time than other children comparing choices when they play matching games or reading unfamiliar words. And it suggests, says Jadzia Jagiellowicz, the lead scientist at Stony Brook, that **sensitive types think in an unusually complex fashion**. [boldface not in the original text] It may also help explain why they’re so bored by small talk. “If you’re thinking in more complicated ways,” she told me, “then talking about the weather or where you went for the holidays is not quite as interesting as talking about values or morality.”

The other thing Aron found about sensitive people is that sometimes they’re highly empathic. It’s as if they have thinner boundaries separating them from other people’s emotions and from the tragedies and cruelties of the world. They tend to have unusually strong consciences.

...“The type that is ‘sensitive’ or ‘reactive’ would reflect a strategy of observing carefully before acting,” she writes, “thus avoiding dangers, failures, and wasted energy, which would require a nervous system specially designed to observe and detect subtle differences. It is a strategy of ‘betting on a sure thing’ or ‘looking before you leap.’ In contrast, the active strategy of the [other type] is to be first, without complete information and with the attendant risks—the strategy of ‘taking a long shot’ because the ‘early bird catches the worm’ and ‘opportunity only knocks once.’ ”

In truth, many people Aron considers sensitive have some of the twenty-seven attributes associated with the trait, but not all of them. Maybe they’re sensitive to light and noise, but not to coffee or pain; maybe they’re not sensitive to anything sensory, but they’re deep thinkers with a rich inner life. Maybe they’re not even introverts—only 70 percent of sensitive people are, according to Aron, while the other 30 percent are extroverts (although this group tends to report craving more downtime and solitude than your typical extrovert). This, speculates Aron, is because sensitivity arose as a by-product of survival strategy, and you need only some, not all, of the traits to pull off the strategy effectively.

... It’s not that there’s no small talk, observes Strickland [Jacquelyn Strickland, a psychotherapist and founder of Walker Creek Ranch (a gathering of ‘highly sensitive people’)], the leader of the gathering. It’s that it comes not at the beginning of conversations but at the end. In most settings, people use small talk as a way of relaxing into a new relationship, and only once they’re comfortable do they connect more seriously. Sensitive people seem to do the reverse. They “enjoy small talk only after they’ve gone

deep,” says Strickland. “When sensitive people are in environments that nurture their authenticity, they laugh and chitchat just as much as anyone else.”

... I thought that Walker Creek Ranch would make me long for a world of the highly sensitive, a world in which everyone speaks softly and no one carries a big stick. But instead it reinforced my deeper yearning for balance. This balance, I think, is what Elaine Aron would say is our natural state of being, at least in Indo-European cultures like ours, which she observes have long been divided into “warrior kings” and “priestly advisers,” into the executive branch and the judicial branch, into bold and easy FDRs and sensitive, conscientious Eleanor Roosevelts.

(Cain 130-154)

Tocqueville saw that the life of constant action and decision which was entailed by the democratic and businesslike character of American life put a premium upon rough and ready habits of mind, quick decision, and the prompt seizure of opportunities—and that all this activity was not propitious for deliberation, elaboration, or precision in thought.

—RICHARD HOFSTADTER, IN *Anti-Intellectualism in America*

[Janice] Dorn has a PhD in neuroscience, with a specialty in brain anatomy. She’s also an MD trained in psychiatry, an active trader in the gold futures market, and a “financial psychiatrist” who has counseled an estimated six hundred traders.

... Dorn has observed that her extroverted clients are more likely to be highly reward-sensitive, while the introverts are more likely to pay attention to warning signals. They’re more successful at regulating their feelings of desire or excitement. They protect themselves better from the downside.

... To understand why introverts and extroverts might react differently to the prospect of rewards, says Dorn, you have to know a little about brain structure. ..., our limbic system, which we share with the most primitive mammals and which Dorn calls the “old brain,” is emotional and instinctive. It comprises various structures, including the amygdala, and it’s highly interconnected with the nucleus accumbens, sometimes called the brain’s “pleasure center.” We examined the anxious side of the old brain when we explored the role of the amygdala in high reactivity and introversion. Now we’re about to see its greedy side.

The old brain, according to Dorn, is constantly telling us, “Yes, yes, yes! Eat more, drink more, have more sex, take lots of risk, go for all the gusto you can get, and above all, do not think!”

... We also have a “new brain” called the neocortex, which evolved many thousands of years after the limbic system. The new brain is responsible for thinking, planning, language, and decision-making—some of the very faculties that make us human. Although the new brain also plays a significant role in our emotional lives, it’s the seat of rationality. Its job, according to Dorn, includes saying, “No, no, no! Don’t do that, because it’s dangerous, makes no sense, and is not in your best interests, or those of your family, or of society.”

...some scientists are starting to explore the idea that reward-sensitivity is not only an interesting feature of extroversion; it is what *makes* an extrovert an extrovert. Extroverts, in other words, are characterized by their tendency to seek rewards, from top dog status to sexual highs to cold cash. They’ve been found to have greater economic, political, and hedonistic ambitions than introverts ... What prompts some people to act as if FUD [Fear, Uncertainty, and Doubt] doesn’t exist?

One answer comes from an intriguing line of research conducted by the University of Wisconsin psychologist Joseph Newman. Imagine that you’ve been invited to Newman’s lab to participate in one of his studies. You’re there to play a game: the more points you get, the more money you win. Twelve different numbers flash across a computer screen, one at a time, in no particular order. You’re given a

button, as if you were a game-show contestant, which you can press or not as each number appears. If you press the button for a “good” number, you win points; if you press for a “bad” number, you lose points; and if you don’t press at all, nothing happens. Through trial and error you learn that four is a nice number and nine is not. So the next time the number nine flashes across your screen, you know not to press that button.

Except that sometimes people press the button for the bad numbers, even when they should know better. Extroverts, especially highly impulsive extroverts, are more likely than introverts to make this mistake. Why? Well, in the words of psychologists John Brebner and Chris Cooper, who have shown that extroverts think less and act faster on such tasks: introverts are “geared to inspect” and extroverts “geared to respond.”

But the more interesting aspect of this puzzling behavior is not what the extroverts do *before* they’ve hit the wrong button, but what they do *after*. When introverts hit the number nine button and find they’ve lost a point, they slow down before moving on to the next number, as if to reflect on what went wrong. But extroverts not only fail to slow down, *they actually speed up*.

This seems strange; why would anyone do this? Newman explains that it makes perfect sense. If you focus on achieving your goals, as reward-sensitive extroverts do, you don’t want anything to get in your way—neither naysayers nor the number nine. You speed up in an attempt to knock these roadblocks down.

Yet this is a crucially important misstep, because the longer you pause to process surprising or negative feedback, the more likely you are to learn from it. If you *force* extroverts to pause, says Newman, they’ll do just as well as introverts at the numbers game. But, left to their own devices, they don’t stop. And so they don’t learn to avoid the trouble staring them in the face. Newman says that this is exactly what might happen to extroverts like Ted Turner when bidding for a company on auction. “When a person bids up too high,” he told me, “that’s because they didn’t inhibit a response they should have inhibited. They didn’t consider information that should have been weighing on their decision.”

Introverts, in contrast, are constitutionally programmed to downplay reward—to kill their buzz, you might say—and scan for problems. “As soon they get excited,” says Newman, “they’ll put the brakes on and think about peripheral issues that may be more important. Introverts seem to be specifically wired or trained so when they catch themselves getting excited and focused on a goal, their vigilance increases.”

Introverts also tend to compare new information with their expectations, he says. They ask themselves, “Is this what I thought would happen? Is it how it should be?” And when the situation falls short of expectations, they form associations between the moment of disappointment (losing points) and whatever was going on in their environment at the time of the disappointment (hitting the number nine.) These associations let them make accurate predictions about how to react to warning signals in the future. [This experiment could help to explain why some students when faced with problems slow down and other plow on ahead]

... Introverts are not smarter than extroverts. According to IQ scores, the two types are equally intelligent.... But introverts seem to think more carefully than extroverts, as the psychologist Gerald Matthews describes in his work. Extroverts are more likely to take a quick-and-dirty approach to problem-solving, trading accuracy for speed, making increasing numbers of mistakes as they go, and abandoning ship altogether when the problem seems too difficult or frustrating. Introverts think before

they act, digest information thoroughly, stay on task longer, give up less easily, and work more accurately. Introverts and extroverts also direct their attention differently: if you leave them to their own devices, the introverts tend to sit around wondering about things, imagining things, recalling events from their past, and making plans for the future. The extroverts are more likely to focus on what's happening around them. It's as if extroverts are seeing "what is" while their introverted peers are asking "what if."

... Persistence isn't very glamorous. If genius is one percent inspiration and ninety-nine percent perspiration, then as a culture we tend to lionize the one percent. We love its flash and dazzle. But great power lies in the other ninety-nine percent.

"It's not that I'm so smart," said Einstein, who was a consummate introvert. "It's that I stay with problems longer." [boldface not in the original text]

None of this is to denigrate those who forge ahead quickly, or to blindly glorify the reflective and careful. The point is that we tend to overvalue buzz and discount the risks of reward-sensitivity: **we need to find a balance between action and reflection.** [boldface not in the original text]

... But I believe that another important explanation for introverts who love their work may come from a very different line of research by the influential psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi on the state of being he calls "flow." Flow is an optimal state in which you feel totally engaged in an activity—whether long-distance swimming or songwriting, sumo wrestling or sex. In a state of flow, you're neither bored nor anxious, and you don't question your own adequacy. Hours pass without your noticing.

The key to flow is to pursue an activity for its own sake, *not for the rewards it brings*. Although flow does not depend on being an introvert or an extrovert, many of the flow experiences that Csikszentmihalyi writes about are solitary pursuits that have nothing to do with reward-seeking: reading, tending an orchard, solo ocean cruising. Flow often occurs, he writes, in conditions in which people "become independent of the social environment to the degree that they no longer respond exclusively in terms of its rewards and punishments. To achieve such autonomy, a person has to learn to provide rewards to herself."

In a sense, Csikszentmihalyi transcends Aristotle; he is telling us that there are some activities that are not about approach or avoidance, but about something deeper: the fulfillment that comes from absorption in an activity outside yourself. "Psychological theories usually assume that we are motivated either by the need to eliminate an unpleasant condition like hunger or fear," Csikszentmihalyi writes, "or by the expectation of some future reward such as money, status, or prestige." But in flow, **"a person could work around the clock for days on end, for no better reason than to keep on working."** [boldface not in the original text]
(Cain 155-177)

... "The teaching back home is very different from here," says Hung Wei Chien, a Cupertino mom who came to the United States from Taiwan in 1979 to attend graduate school at UCLA. "There, you learn the subject, and they test you. At least when I grew up, they don't go off subject a lot, and they don't allow the students to ramble. If you stand up and talk nonsense, you'll be reprimanded."

Hung is one of the most jolly, extroverted people I've ever met, given to large, expansive gestures and frequent belly laughs. Dressed in running shorts, sneakers, and amber jewelry, she greets me with a bear hug and drives us to a bakery for breakfast. We dig into our pastries, chatting companionably.

So it's telling that even Hung recalls her culture shock upon entering her first American-style classroom. She considered it rude to participate in class because she didn't want to waste her classmates' time. And sure enough, she says, laughing, "I was the quiet person there. At UCLA, the professor would start class, saying, 'Let's discuss!' I would look at my peers while they were talking nonsense, and the professors were so patient, just listening to everyone." She nods her head comically, mimicking the overly respectful professors.

"I remember being amazed. It was a linguistics class, and that's not even linguistics the students are talking about! I thought, 'Oh, in the U.S., as soon as you start talking, you're fine.' "

[I remember from my own experiences as a student that most "discussion" was off topic. People were talking for talk's sake. I am also concerned about this in my own classroom. It seems that the few times students have worked in larger groups (more than three); they tended to spend more time off topic than on topic. (Just one reason why I stopped using larger groups in my classroom long ago.)]

.... Consider, for example, these proverbs from the East:

The wind howls, but the mountain remains still.

—JAPANESE PROVERB

Those who know do not speak.

Those who speak do not know.

—LAO ZI, *The Way of Lao Zi*

Even though I make no special attempt to observe the discipline of silence, living alone automatically makes me refrain from the sins of speech.

—KAMO NO CHOMEI, *12th Century Japanese recluse*

And compare them to proverbs from the West:

Be a craftsman in speech that thou mayest be strong, for the strength of one is the tongue, and speech is mightier than all fighting.

—MAXIMS OF PTAHHOTEP, *2400 B.C.E.*

Speech is civilization itself. The word, even the most contradictory word, preserves contact—it is silence which isolates.

—THOMAS MANN, *The Magic Mountain*

The squeaky wheel gets the grease

... Though Eastern relationship-honoring is admirable and beautiful, so is Western respect for individual freedom, self-expression, and personal destiny. The point is not that one is superior to the other, but that a profound difference in cultural values has a powerful impact on the personality styles favored by each culture.

...Aggressive power beats you up; soft power wins you over"

... And in the West, passivity is a transgression. To be "passive," according to the Merriam-Webster

Dictionary, means to be “acted upon by an external agency.” It also means to be “submissive.” Gandhi himself ultimately rejected the phrase “passive resistance,” which he associated with weakness, preferring *satyagraha*, the term he coined to mean “firmness in pursuit of truth.”

But as the word *satyagraha* implies, Gandhi’s passivity was not weakness at all. It meant focusing on an ultimate goal and refusing to divert energy to unnecessary skirmishes along the way. Restraint, Gandhi believed, was one of his greatest assets. And it was born of his shyness:

I have naturally formed the habit of restraining my thoughts. A thoughtless word hardly ever escaped my tongue or pen. Experience has taught me that silence is part of the spiritual discipline of a votary of truth. We find so many people impatient to talk. All this talking can hardly be said to be of any benefit to the world. It is so much waste of time. My shyness has been in reality my shield and buckler. It has allowed me to grow. It has helped me in my discernment of truth.

... Quiet persistence requires sustained attention—in effect restraining one’s reactions to external stimuli.

... A man has as many social selves as there are distinct groups of persons about whose opinion he cares. He generally shows a different side of himself to each of these different groups.

—WILLIAM JAMES

... You might wonder how a strong introvert like Professor Little [Brian Little, former Harvard University psychology lecturer and winner of the 3M Teaching Fellowship, sometimes referred to as the Nobel Prize of university teaching.] manages to speak in public so effectively. The answer, he says, is simple, and it has to do with a new field of psychology that he created almost singlehandedly, called Free Trait Theory. Little believes that fixed traits and free traits coexist. According to Free Trait Theory, we are born and culturally endowed with certain personality traits—introversion, for example—but we can and do act out of character in the service of “core personal projects.”

In other words, introverts are capable of acting like extroverts for the sake of work they consider important, people they love, or anything they value highly. Free Trait Theory explains why an introvert might throw his extroverted wife a surprise party or join the PTA at his daughter’s school. It explains how it’s possible for an extroverted scientist to behave with reserve in her laboratory, for an agreeable person to act hard-nosed during a business negotiation, and for a cantankerous uncle to treat his niece tenderly when he takes her out for ice cream. As these examples suggest, Free Trait Theory applies in many different contexts, but it’s especially relevant for introverts living under the Extrovert Ideal.

... for Brian Little, the additional effort required to stretch his natural boundaries is justified by seeing his core personal project—igniting all those minds—come to fruition.

At first blush, Free Trait Theory seems to run counter to a cherished piece of our cultural heritage. Shakespeare’s oft-quoted advice, “To thine own self be true,” runs deep in our philosophical DNA. Many of us are uncomfortable with the idea of taking on a “false” persona for any length of time. And if we act out of character by convincing ourselves that our pseudo-self is real, we can eventually burn out without even knowing why. The genius of Little’s theory is how neatly it resolves this discomfort. Yes, we are only pretending to be extroverts, and yes, such inauthenticity can be morally ambiguous (not to mention exhausting), but if it’s in the service of love or a professional calling, then we’re doing just as Shakespeare advised.

... It turned out that the introverts who were especially good at acting like extroverts tended to score high for a trait that psychologists call “self-monitoring.” Self-monitors are highly skilled at modifying their behavior to the social demands of a situation. They look for cues to tell them how to act. When in Rome, they do as the Romans do, according to the psychologist Mark Snyder, author of *Public Appearances, Private Realities*, and creator of the Self-Monitoring Scale.

... If you want to know how strong a self-monitor you are, here are a few questions from Snyder’s Self-Monitoring Scale:

When you’re uncertain how to act in a social situation, do you look to the behavior of others for cues?
Do you often seek the advice of your friends to choose movies, books, or music?
In different situations and with different people, do you often act like very different people?
Do you find it easy to imitate other people?
Can you look someone in the eye and tell a lie with a straight face if for a right end?
Do you ever deceive people by being friendly when really you dislike them?
Do you put on a show to impress or entertain people?
Do you sometimes appear to others to be experiencing deeper emotions than you actually are?

The more times you answered “yes” to these questions, the more of a high self-monitor you are.

Now ask yourself these questions:

Is your behavior usually an expression of your true inner feelings, attitudes, and beliefs?
Do you find that you can only argue for ideas that you already believe?
Would you refuse to change your opinions, or the way you do things, in order to please someone else or win their favor?
Do you dislike games like charades or improvisational acting?
Do you have trouble changing your behavior to suit different people and different situations?

The more you tended to answer “yes” to this second set of questions, the more of a *low* self-monitor you are.

... It took me almost a decade to understand that the law was never my personal project, not even close. Today I can tell you unhesitatingly what is: my husband and sons; writing; promoting the values of this book. Once I realized this, I had to make a change. I look back on my years as a Wall Street lawyer as time spent in a foreign country. It was absorbing, it was exciting, and I got to meet a lot of interesting people whom I never would have known otherwise. But I was always an expatriate.

Having spent so much time navigating my own career transition and counseling others through theirs, I have found that there are three key steps to identifying your own core personal projects.

First, think back to what you loved to do when you were a child. How did you answer the question of what you wanted to be when you grew up? The specific answer you gave may have been off the mark, but the underlying impulse was not. If you wanted to be a fireman, what did a fireman mean to you? A good man who rescued people in distress? A daredevil? Or the simple pleasure of operating a truck? If you wanted to be a dancer, was it because you got to wear a costume, or because you craved applause, or was it the pure joy of twirling around at lightning speed? You may have known more about who you were then than you do now.

Second, pay attention to the work you gravitate to. At my law firm I never once volunteered to take on an extra corporate legal assignment, but I did spend a lot of time doing pro bono work for a nonprofit women's leadership organization. I also sat on several law firm committees dedicated to mentoring, training, and personal development for young lawyers in the firm. Now, as you can probably tell from this book, I am not the committee type. But the goals of those committees lit me up, so that's what I did.

Finally, pay attention to what you envy. Jealousy is an ugly emotion, but it tells the truth. You mostly envy those who have what you desire. I met my own envy after some of my former law school classmates got together and compared notes on alumni career tracks. They spoke with admiration and, yes, jealousy, of a classmate who argued regularly before the Supreme Court. At first I felt critical. More power to that classmate! I thought, congratulating myself on my magnanimity. Then I realized that my largesse came cheap, because I didn't aspire to argue a case before the Supreme Court, or to any of the other accolades of lawyering. When I asked myself whom I *did* envy, the answer came back instantly. My college classmates who'd grown up to be writers or psychologists. Today I'm pursuing my own version of both those roles.

... "Restorative niche" is Professor Little's term for the place you go when you want to return to your true self. It can be a physical place, like the path beside the Richelieu River, or a temporal one, like the quiet breaks you plan between sales calls. It can mean canceling your social plans on the weekend before a big meeting at work, practicing yoga or meditation, or choosing e-mail over an in-person meeting. (Even Victorian ladies, whose job effectively was to be available to friends and family, were expected to withdraw for a rest each afternoon.)

[But hiding emotions or being required to hide them can cause physical illness and "acting out" (negative behavior later)]

... Professor Little believes that prolonged acting out of character may also increase autonomic nervous system activity, which can, in turn, compromise immune functioning.

One noteworthy study suggests that people who suppress negative emotions tend to leak those emotions later in unexpected ways. The psychologist Judith Grob asked people to hide their emotions as she showed them disgusting images. She even had them hold pens in their mouths to prevent them from frowning. She found that this group reported feeling less disgusted by the pictures than did those who'd been allowed to react naturally. Later, however, the people who hid their emotions suffered side effects. Their memory was impaired, and the negative emotions they'd suppressed seemed to color their outlook. When Grob had them fill in the missing letter to the word "gr_ss," for example, they were more likely than others to offer "gross" rather than "grass." "People who tend to [suppress their negative emotions] regularly," concludes Grob, "might start to see the world in a more negative light." (Cain 184-223)

... In a study of 132 college students at Humboldt University in Berlin, the psychologists Jens Asendorf and Susanne Wilpers set out to understand the effect of different personality traits on students' relationships with their peers and families. They focused on the so-called Big Five traits: Introversion-Extroversion; Agreeableness; Openness to Experience; Conscientiousness; and Emotional Stability. (Many personality psychologists believe that human personality can be boiled down to these five characteristics.)

... Graziano [William Graziano, psychologist] divided a group of sixty-one male students into teams to play a simulated football game. Half the participants were assigned to a cooperative game, in which they

were told, “Football is useful to us because to be successful in football, *team members have to work well together.*” The other half were assigned to a game emphasizing competition between teams. Each student was then shown slides and fabricated biographical information about his teammates and his competitors on the other team, and asked to rate how he felt about the other players.

The differences between introverts and extroverts were remarkable. The introverts assigned to the cooperative game rated all players—not just their competitors, but also their teammates—more positively than the introverts who played the competitive game. The extroverts did just the opposite: they rated all players more positively when they played the competitive version of the game. These findings suggest something very important: introverts like people they meet in friendly contexts; extroverts prefer those they compete with.

... Consider that the simplest social interaction between two people requires performing an astonishing array of tasks: interpreting what the other person is saying; reading body language and facial expressions; smoothly taking turns talking and listening; responding to what the other person said; assessing whether you’re being understood; determining whether you’re well received, and, if not, figuring out how to improve or remove yourself from the situation. Think of what it takes to juggle all this at once! And that’s just a one-on-one conversation. Now imagine the multitasking required in a group setting like a dinner party.

So when introverts assume the observer role, as when they write novels, or contemplate unified field theory—or fall quiet at dinner parties—they’re not demonstrating a failure of will or a lack of energy. They’re simply doing what they’re constitutionally suited for.

... We tend to forget that there’s nothing sacrosanct about learning in large group classrooms, and that we organize students this way not because it’s the best way to learn but because it’s cost-efficient, and what else would we do with our children while the grown-ups are at work? If your child prefers to work autonomously and socialize one-on-one, there’s nothing wrong with her; she just happens not to fit the prevailing model. The purpose of school should be to prepare kids for the rest of their lives, but too often what kids need to be prepared for is surviving the school day itself.

The school environment can be highly unnatural, especially from the perspective of an introverted child who loves to work intensely on projects he cares about, and hang out with one or two friends at a time. In the morning, the door to the bus opens and discharges its occupants in a noisy, jostling mass. Academic classes are dominated by group discussions in which a teacher prods him to speak up. He eats lunch in the cacophonous din of the cafeteria, where he has to jockey for a place at a crowded table. Worst of all, there’s little time to think or create. The structure of the day is almost guaranteed to sap his energy rather than stimulate it.

Why do we accept this one-size-fits-all situation as a given when we know perfectly well that adults don’t organize themselves this way? We often marvel at how introverted, geeky kids “blossom” into secure and happy adults. We liken it to a metamorphosis. However, maybe it’s not the children who change but their environments. As adults, they get to select the careers, spouses, and social circles that suit them. They don’t have to live in whatever culture they’re plunked into. Research from a field known as “person-environment fit” shows that people flourish when, in the words of psychologist Brian Little, they’re “engaged in occupations, roles or settings that are concordant with their personalities.” The inverse is also true: kids stop learning when they feel emotionally threatened.

... So, what kind of school environment would work best for the Mayas of the world? First, some thoughts for teachers:

- Don't think of introversion as something that needs to be cured. If an introverted child needs help with social skills, teach her or recommend training outside class, just as you'd do for a student who needs extra attention in math or reading. But celebrate these kids for who they are. "The typical comment on many children's report cards is, 'I wish Molly would talk more in class,'" Pat Adams, the former head of the Emerson School for gifted students in Ann Arbor, Michigan, told me. "But here we have an understanding that many kids are introspective. We try to bring them out, but we don't make it a big deal. We think about introverted kids as having a different learning style."
- Studies show that one third to one half of us are introverts. This means that you have more introverted kids in your class than you think. Even at a young age, some introverts become adept at acting like extroverts, making it tough to spot them. Balance teaching methods to serve all the kids in your class. Extroverts tend to like movement, stimulation, collaborative work. Introverts prefer lectures, downtime, and independent projects. Mix it up fairly.
- Introverts often have one or two deep interests that are not necessarily shared by their peers. Sometimes they're made to feel freaky for the force of these passions, when in fact studies show that this sort of intensity is a prerequisite to talent development. Praise these kids for their interests, encourage them, and help them find like-minded friends, if not in the classroom, then outside it.
- Some collaborative work is fine for introverts, even beneficial. But it should take place in small groups—pairs or threesomes—and be carefully structured so that each child knows her role. Roger Johnson, co-director of the Cooperative Learning Center at the University of Minnesota, says that shy or introverted kids benefit especially from well-managed small-group work because "they are usually very comfortable talking with one or two of their classmates to answer a question or complete a task, but would never think of raising their hand and addressing the whole class. It is very important that these students get a chance to translate their thoughts into language." Imagine how different Maya's experience would have been if her group had been smaller and someone had taken the time to say, "Samantha, you're in charge of keeping the discussion on track. Maya, your job is to take notes and read them back to the group."
- On the other hand, remember Anders Ericsson's research on Deliberate Practice from chapter 3. In many fields, it's impossible to gain mastery without knowing how to work on one's own. Have your extroverted students take a page from their introverted peers' playbooks. **Teach all kids to work independently.** [boldface not in original text]
- Don't seat quiet kids in "high-interaction" areas of the classroom, says communications professor James McCroskey. They won't talk more in those areas; they'll feel more threatened and will have trouble concentrating. Make it easy for introverted kids to participate in class, but don't insist. "Forcing highly apprehensive young people to perform orally is harmful," writes McCroskey. "It will increase apprehension and reduce self-esteem."
- If your school has a selective admissions policy, think twice before basing your admissions decisions on children's performance in a playgroup setting. Many introverted kids clam up in groups of strangers, and you will not get even a glimpse of what these kids are like once they're relaxed and comfortable.

And here are some thoughts for parents. If you're lucky enough to have control over where your child goes to school, whether by scouting out a magnet school, moving to a neighborhood whose public schools you like, or sending your kids to private or parochial school, you can look for a school that

- prizes independent interests and emphasizes autonomy
- conducts group activities in moderation and in small, carefully managed groups
- values kindness, caring, empathy, good citizenship
- insists on orderly classrooms and hallways
- is organized into small, quiet classes
- chooses teachers who seem to understand the shy/serious/introverted/sensitive temperament
- focuses its academic/athletic/extracurricular activities on subjects that are particularly interesting to your child
- strongly enforces an anti-bullying program
- emphasizes a tolerant, down-to-earth culture
attracts like-minded peers, for example intellectual kids, or artistic or athletic ones, depending on your child's preference

Our culture made a virtue of living only as extroverts. We discouraged the inner journey, the quest for a center. So we lost our center and have to find it again —ANAÏS NIN

Whether you're an introvert yourself or an extrovert who loves or works with one, I hope you'll benefit personally from the insights in this book. Here is a blueprint to take with you:

Love is essential; gregariousness is optional. Cherish your nearest and dearest. Work with colleagues you like and respect. Scan new acquaintances for those who might fall into the former categories or whose company you enjoy for its own sake. And don't worry about socializing with everyone else. Relationships make everyone happier, introverts included, but think quality over quantity.

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

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're difficult, get the training you need to make them easier, and reward yourself when you're done.

Quit your job as a TV anchor and get a degree in library science. But if TV anchoring is what you love, then create an extroverted persona to get yourself through the day. Here's a rule of thumb for networking events: one new honest-to-goodness relationship is worth ten fistfuls of business cards. Rush home afterward and kick back on your sofa. Carve out restorative niches.

Respect your loved ones' need for socializing and your own for solitude (and vice versa if you're an extrovert).

Spend your free time the way you like, not the way you think you're supposed to. Stay home on New Year's Eve if that's what makes you happy. Skip the committee meeting. Cross the street to avoid

making aimless chitchat with random acquaintances. Read. Cook. Run. Write a story. Make a deal with yourself that you'll attend a set number of social events in exchange for not feeling guilty when you beg off.

If your children are quiet, help them make peace with new situations and new people, but otherwise let them be themselves. Delight in the originality of their minds. Take pride in the strength of their consciences and the loyalty of their friendships. Don't expect them to follow the gang. Encourage them to follow their passions instead. Throw confetti when they claim the fruits of those passions, whether it's on the drummer's throne, on the softball field, or on the page.

If you're a teacher, enjoy your gregarious and participatory students. But don't forget to cultivate the shy, the gentle, the autonomous, the ones with single-minded enthusiasms for chemistry sets or parrot taxonomy or nineteenth-century art. They are the artists, engineers, and thinkers of tomorrow.

If you're a manager, remember that one third to one half of your workforce is probably introverted, whether they appear that way or not. Think twice about how you design your organization's office space. Don't expect introverts to get jazzed up about open office plans or, for that matter, lunchtime birthday parties or team-building retreats. Make the most of introverts' strengths—these are the people who can help you think deeply, strategize, solve complex problems, and spot canaries in your coal mine.

Also, remember the dangers of the New Groupthink. If it's creativity you're after, ask your employees to solve problems alone before sharing their ideas. If you want the wisdom of the crowd, gather it electronically, or in writing, and make sure people can't see each other's ideas until everyone's had a chance to contribute. Face-to-face contact is important because it builds trust, but group dynamics contain unavoidable impediments to creative thinking. Arrange for people to interact one-on-one and in small, casual groups. Don't mistake assertiveness or eloquence for good ideas. If you have a proactive work force (and I hope you do), remember that they may perform better under an introverted leader than under an extroverted or charismatic one.

Whoever you are, bear in mind that appearance is not reality. Some people act like extroverts, but the effort costs them in energy, authenticity, and even physical health. Others seem aloof or self-contained, but their inner landscapes are rich and full of drama. So the next time you see a person with a composed face and a soft voice, remember that inside her mind she might be solving an equation, composing a sonnet, designing a hat. She might, that is, be deploying the powers of quiet.

We know from myths and fairy tales that there are many different kinds of powers in this world. One child is given a light saber, another a wizard's education. The trick is not to amass all the different kinds of available power, but to use well the kind you've been granted. Introverts are offered keys to private gardens full of riches. To possess such a key is to tumble like Alice down her rabbit hole. She didn't *choose* to go to Wonderland—but she made of it an adventure that was fresh and fantastic and very much her own.

Lewis Carroll was an introvert, too, by the way. Without him, there would be no *Alice in Wonderland*. And by now, this shouldn't surprise us.
(Cain 227-266)

Cain, Susan. *Quiet The Power of Introverts in a World That Can't Stop Talking*. First Paperback Edition. New York: Broadway Books, 2013. Print.