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An Introvert's Guide to Academic Leadership

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The Introvert's Guide to Academic Leadership

Jeffrey L. Buller



Exercise #1: How Introverted Are You?

DIRECTIONS: Read each statement and then check the box that best reflects how strongly you agree with it.

1. I often screen calls or let them through to voicemail rather than answer them immediately.

Agree completely = 5	Agree somewhat = 4	Neither agree nor disagree = 3	Disagree somewhat = 2	Disagree completely = 1
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

2. As a student, I preferred lectures to seminars.

Agree completely = 5	Agree somewhat = 4	Neither agree nor disagree = 3	Disagree somewhat = 2	Disagree completely = 1
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

3. I prefer working on my own to group projects.

Agree completely = 5	Agree somewhat = 4	Neither agree nor disagree = 3	Disagree somewhat = 2	Disagree completely = 1
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

(continues on the next page)

Why Introverts Can Make the Best Leaders

Jennifer B. Kahnweiler

from <https://www.forbes.com/2009/11/30/introverts-good-leaders-leadership-managing-personality.html>

- 1. They think first, talk later.** Introverted leaders think before they speak. Even in casual conversations, they consider others' comments carefully, and they stop and reflect before responding.
- 2. They focus on depth.** Introverted leaders seek depth over breadth. They like to dig deep, delving into issues and ideas before moving on to new ones.
- 3. They exude calm.** Introverted leaders are low-key. In times of crisis, they project a reassuring, calm confidence—think President Obama—and they speak softly and slowly regardless of the heat of the conversation or circumstances.
- 4. They let their fingers do the talking.** Introverted leaders usually prefer writing to talking. This comfort with the written word often helps them better articulate their positions and document their actions.
- 5. They embrace solitude.** Introverted leaders are energized by spending time alone. They suffer from people exhaustion and need to retreat to recharge their batteries frequently.

Exercise #1: How Introverted Are You? *(continued)*

	Agree completely = 5	Agree somewhat = 4	Disagree somewhat = 2	Disagree somewhat = 2	Disagree completely = 1
4. I often find it challenging to make small talk.					
5. When I'm working, interruptions seem to bother me much more than they bother other people.					
6. People sometimes have accused me of being secretive or not sharing enough information with them.					
7. I often invent excuses not to go to parties/ other public events or leave early when I do go.					
8. When people have had stressful days, I'm more likely to give them space than to call and check on them.					
9. I usually avoid asking people personal questions because it would seem like prying or may make them uncomfortable.					
10. When someone drops by unexpectedly, I'm usually ready for that person to leave before he or she actually leaves.					
11. Other people sometimes surprise me by assuming I'm smarter than I think I am.					
12. I'm uncomfortable when two people are fighting around me even if I'm not at all involved with them or their issue..					
13. I regularly rehearse in my mind before talking to people, particularly if the matter is sensitive.					
14. I prefer to avoid activities like watching horror movies, riding rollercoasters, and skydiving.					
15. I don't like to interrupt others, and I don't like being interrupted.					
16. I prefer to be introduced rather than to introduce others.					
17. I'm very uncomfortable when I have to speak, and I wasn't expecting it.					

(continues on the next page)

Exercise #1: How Introverted Are You? *(continued)*

	Agree completely = 5	Agree somewhat = 4	Disagree somewhat = 2	Disagree somewhat = 2	Disagree completely = 1
18. I rarely show others my work in progress; I prefer to share it with them only when I regard it as largely complete.					
19. I can become irritable if I'm around people too long or if it takes them too long to get to the point about what they want.					
20. If too much activity is going on around me, I zone out and spend time in my own thoughts.					



Scoring This Inventory

Add up the number of points for each box you have checked. Then compare your score to the guide below.

75-100 points

Congratulations! This workshop is definitely for you. If your score is 85 or over, you're a full-fledge, "off the chart" introvert, so you'll want to pay attention carefully

40-74 points

You fall into the category where most of the population can be found. Your tendencies are somewhat balanced between those of an introvert and those of an extrovert. So, as this workshop continues, apply what's useful and ignore the rest.

20-39 points

Um ... why are you here again? Maybe you have an introverted colleague or family member you're trying to understand better. Or maybe you're just spying on the rest of us. In any case, you might find this workshop intellectually interesting, but much of it probably won't apply to how you work or lead.

Exercise #2

Conrad has assumed a leadership position in a program, department, or office similar to your own. Conrad's predecessor, LaVondra, had been an extraordinarily gregarious and extroverted person.

- LaVondra loved parties and hosted everyone in the area at her home multiple times each year.
- She encouraged people to stop by her office, interrupting her even if she was working, for non-business-related "gossip chats" several times a day.
- She believed work was better done at meetings than by memos or emails. As a result, her calendar was frequently filled with all kinds of meetings.

Conrad, on the other hand, is far more introverted, and doesn't feel comfortable engaging in many of those activities. But because LaVondra had led the area for more than fifteen years, many people have an expectation that Conrad will lead in the same way that LaVondra did.

What advice would you give Conrad so that he could better establish himself as his own sort of academic leader?



Exercise #3

Morgan Rasmussen is a highly introverted employee of Circumspection College. Although Morgan believes the s/he has many creative ideas that would be useful to her program and to the institution as a whole, s/he has thus far been very reluctant to pursue a leadership role.

One day, Morgan's supervisor resigns to accept a position at Prestigious State University, and Morgan is offered the chance to serve as supervisor in an acting capacity and then, if s/he wishes, to apply for the permanent position.

These are the factors that concern Morgan. The position requires:

- Evening social activities at least three times a week, and Morgan finds these events to be very draining energy-wise.
- Many phone calls each day to vendors and community representatives, and Morgan detests using the telephone.
- Taking calculated risks, and Morgan is highly risk averse.

In light of the concepts we explored in this workshop, what advice do you offer Morgan about whether s/he should accept this leadership opportunity?



Resources

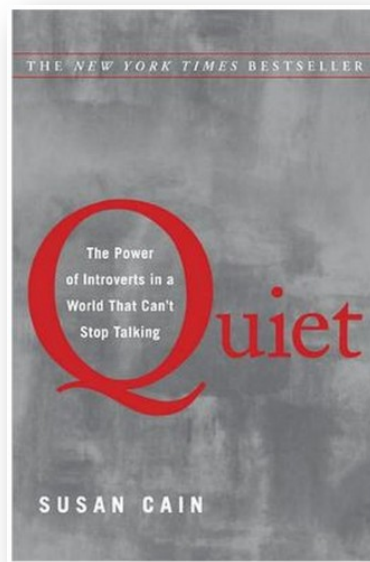
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Resources Continued

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