

# ARE YOU AN INNIE OR AN OUTIE? AN INTROVERT OR AN EXTROVERT?

## PART ONE

The subject was being an Introvert in Photography. I love photography and spend time watching tutorials and reading articles so I continue to grow and improve. This video was different and it caught my eye. The photographer described himself as an introvert and talked about how this influences his work as a portrait photographer. I am inspired to share this topic because I realize these personality labels are commonly known but not commonly understood. People often mistake introversion as being shy and insecure and extroversion as being gregarious and confident. While sometimes the case it is certainly not universally true. In this two part series we will learn about these traits and how they affect people. Today's topic is Introversion.

**What is an introvert?** Approximately 30-40% of the population are to some degree introverts. It is a common and normal personality but carries a stigma due to misunderstanding and mislabelling. *The basic definition of an introvert is a person who gains energy from being alone and loses energy in stimulating environments, such as social events and groups of people.* Scientists believe this is because introverts' brains respond to dopamine differently than extroverts' and due to the results of their upbringing and childhood experiences.

According to studies introverts have a longer neural pathway for processing stimuli. Information runs through a pathway associated with long-term memory

and planning. It's more complicated for introverts to process interactions and events. As they process information, introverts carefully attend to internal thoughts and feelings at the same time. As introverts are thinking, they search long-term memory to locate information. An introvert often compares old and new experiences when making a decision. This slows processing down but leads to carefully thought-out decisions. Introverts have an active dialogue with themselves and many simultaneous thoughts in their minds.

Introverts require less stimulation from the world in order to be awake and alert than extroverts do. The flip side of introverts' sensitivity to dopamine is they need less of it to feel happy. Introverts' brains run on an energy-conserving nervous system. This is why introverts feel content and energized when reading a book, thinking deeply, or diving into their rich inner world of ideas. The introvert's brain treats interactions with people at the same intensity level that it treats encounters with inanimate objects. Introverts process everything and pay attention to all the sensory details in the environment not just the people.

Does this help you understand why introverts are more easily over-stimulated and need quiet time away from stimulating situations? They are not shy, rude, antisocial, insecure, nor neurotic. They may have been raised with parents who encouraged a quiet yet thoughtful style. They may have been born with a sensitive system that enjoys small doses of the exciting social life. They certainly may be confident, capable,

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and interesting people. In fact, some of the most famous people in the world are known introverts. A few examples are; Albert Einstein, Abraham Lincoln, Ghandi, JK Rowling, Eleanor Roosevelt, and Bill Gates.

It is important to understand advantages and disadvantages of being introverted.

### Advantages:

- Enjoy their own company
- Work well independently
- Thoughtful and introspective
- Value close friends and close relationships
- Enjoy deeply and are dedicated to their interests and meaningful work

### Disadvantages:

- Energy is easily sapped by work and social situations
- People misjudge and mislabel
- It is difficult to manage some normal life requirements such as public speaking, crowds, even dating.
- They worry people won't understand, will be bored; will pressure them to be more outgoing.

The key to being a happy, successful introvert is to know and utilize the advantages, make self-care a priority, and have the confidence to explain to others what it means to be introverted so they will understand and be supportive.

Next month we will discuss Extroversion.