



A good place to begin our efforts in this guide is to confirm whether your preferences are predominantly towards extraversion or introversion. If you know already because you have taken a type or temperament assessment of some kind, that's great. If not, simply review the two side by side lists of characteristics below and make your choice as to what fits you best.

Are you...

EXTROVERTED	INTROVERTED
→ Attuned to external environment	→ Drawn to inner world of thoughts and ideas
→ Prefer to communicate by talking	→ Prefer fewer, more intense relationships socially (and may need time to re-energize)
→ Learn best through doing, discussing, working in groups	→ Prefer to communicate by writing
→ Breadth of interests, jump into activities quickly	→ Learn best by reflection or "mental practice"
→ Tend to speak first and reflect later	→ Depth of interest
→ Sociable and expressive	→ Tend to reflect before acting or speaking
→ Take initiative in work and relationships	→ Private and contained
	→ Focus readily

I think my preference is more: _____

Contrasting Preferences to Understand the Differences

Notice that both lists start and end with how extraverts and introverts use their energy:

EXTROVERTED	INTROVERTED
→ Energized by what goes on in the outer world	→ Energized by what goes on in their own inner world
→ Need to talk to fully clarify what they think	→ Need to reflect before they talk
→ Can be seen as accessible and understandable	→ Can be seen as subtle and difficult to know well initially
→ Difficult for them to just sit and listen	→ Work quietly, often without interruption
→ Often work to change the world	→ Often work to understand the world
→ Interests often have breadth	→ Interests often have depth
→ Interaction	→ Concentration
→ Multiplicity of relationships	→ Limited relationships
→ Expenditure of energies	→ Conservation of energies



HOW DOES AN INTROVERT GENERALLY RELATE TO THE WORLD?

Quiet people may be introverted but this is not always the case, as extraverts can be quiet for a short period and some introverts can adopt more extraverted and non-quiet behaviours for a period. We can tune into the language that introverts tend to use to get a better idea of when individuals may have a greater preference for introversion. For example, we might hear statements such as:

- ➔ "I have to think about it first."
- ➔ "I have had the same one or two close friends most of my life."
- ➔ "I just don't discuss certain things with anyone."
- ➔ "I can usually concentrate/focus pretty well."
- ➔ "I dislike making speeches/presentations/talking in public."
- ➔ "I'd rather do it on my own."

Outside of observing language clues we might also see the following general behaviours:

- Often require a lot of time alone
- Dislike interruptions
- Can't be easily pressured into talking about an issue until ready
- May find it difficult to express emotions in an open way
- Is often intense and passionate, seeming to take life quite seriously
- Must generally understand a thing before trying it
- Generally think carefully before speaking or acting
- Often very good listeners
- Generally dislike small talk
- Understands life in general by pondering it

Coaching Strategies to Adopt and Avoid

There are a range of effective strategies for a coach to adopt, as well as approaches to avoid as follows:



Effective coaching strategies to adopt with Introverts	Coaching approaches to avoid with Introverts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Allow an introvert time to "mine" his or her internal feelings and thoughts-this means being more patient in general ✓ Always operate in a quiet environment (without interruptions) and in a calm and considerate manner (avoiding too many gestures or dramatizations) ✓ Listen carefully using occasional paraphrases to check for understanding ✓ Introduce points one at a time and allow them to be fully discussed ✓ Ask open-ended questions about complex issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Don't spend too much time on small talk ✗ Don't introduce multiple points one after the other or overwhelm with a lot of unrelated data ✗ Avoid "jumping in" too quickly and completing sentences or thoughts for introverts ✗ Try to discourage too much introspection ✗ Get them to respond to statements or questions immediately ✗ Don't push for action too early ✗ Don't push them to be more extraverted ✗ Encourage them into group or team coaching ✗ Don't let conversation ramble on too long – it



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Let silence reign and allow time for answers ✓ Encourage the introvert to partner with others (but just one or two people) on tasks and projects on a limited basis ✓ Ask them to talk about details or minor points ✓ Encourage actions that involve self-directed studying and reflection 	<p>will overwhelm the introvert who will want to escape</p>
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Which of the above is likely to be your greatest strength as a coach and your greatest weakness and what will you do to leverage the former and minimize the impact of the latter?

How should an Introvert relate to his or her Extrovert coach?

It is up to the Introvert person to play his or her part in managing the relationship to get most from the experience. Here are a few ways in which this can be done:

- ✓ Always bring a notepad/journal to a coaching conversation – take notes and keep a record of thoughts/feelings for yourself
- ✓ Ask your manager for direct and candid feedback
- ✓ Speak up when you need more time to reflect on what has been asked of you or when a subject warrants it, or when you have other important concerns to discuss
- ✓ Specifically let your manager know when you are starting to share your private views – the ones that you keep to yourself in usual circumstances
- ✓ Let your manager know directly if you are not comfortable in sharing some information or you prefer not to answer a question that has been put to you
- ✓ After your coaching conversation, keep a running record of brief notes on what you thought after you have taken time to ponder things – write down what you are learning
- ✓ Make a list of new questions or comments and bring it with you to your next meeting
- ✓ Try and be as willing as possible to attempt something new or different that you may not otherwise consider. Small stretch tasks will eventually help to make bigger stretches.
- ✓ Take the whole coaching journey step-by-step and let things unfold at a pace that supports you and the relationship with your manager

Summary

Introverts have much to bring to any workplace. In general they are effective at focusing or concentrating on important issues, thinking deeply about them and coming up with new and different ideas (often noticing or picking up important details that extraverts may miss entirely). They may need a little more time and space to perform this role but results usually make this extremely worthwhile. The more extraverts become knowledgeable about introverts, the less tension and misunderstanding there will be among the two and the higher overall workplace productivity will become.

If you don't know what an extravert is thinking you haven't been listening and if you don't know what an introvert is thinking, you haven't asked.

Adapted from Dr. Jon Warner