

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

By Susan Cain

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At least one-third of the people we know are introverts. They are the ones who prefer listening to speaking, reading to partying; who innovate and create but dislike self-promotion; who favor working on their own over brainstorming in teams. Although they are often labeled "quiet," it is to introverts that we owe many of the great contributions to society--from van Gogh’s sunflowers to the invention of the personal computer.

Passionately argued, impressively researched, and filled with indelible stories of real people, *Quiet* shows how dramatically we undervalue introverts, and how much we lose in doing so. Taking the reader on a journey from Dale Carnegie’s birthplace to Harvard Business School, from a Tony Robbins seminar to an evangelical megachurch, Susan Cain charts the rise of the Extrovert Ideal in the twentieth century and explores its far-reaching effects. She talks to Asian-American students who feel alienated from the brash, backslapping atmosphere of American schools. She questions the dominant values of American business culture, where forced collaboration can stand in the way of innovation, and where the leadership potential of introverts is often overlooked. And she draws on cutting-edge research in psychology and neuroscience to reveal the surprising differences between extroverts and introverts.

Perhaps most inspiring, she introduces us to successful introverts--from a witty, high-octane public speaker who recharges in solitude after his talks, to a record-breaking salesman who quietly taps into the power of questions. Finally, she offers invaluable advice on everything from how to better negotiate differences in introvert-extrovert relationships to how to empower an introverted child to when it makes sense to be a "pretend extrovert."

This extraordinary book has the power to permanently change how we see introverts and, equally important, how introverts see themselves.

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review
Amazon Best Books of the Month, January 2012: How many introverts do you know? The real answer will probably surprise you. In our culture, which emphasizes group work from elementary school through the business world, everything seems geared toward extroverts. Luckily, introverts everywhere have a new spokesperson: Susan Cain, a self-proclaimed introvert who's taken it upon herself to better understand the place of introverts in culture and society. With *Quiet: The Power of Introverts in a World That Can't Stop Talking*, Cain explores introversion through psychological research old and new, personal experiences, and even brain chemistry, in an engaging and highly-readable fashion. By delving into introversion, Cain also seeks to find ways for introverts and extroverts to better understand one another--and for introverts to understand their own contradictions, such as the ability to act like extroverts in certain situations. Highly accessible and uplifting for any introvert--and any extrovert who knows an introvert (and over one-third of us are introverts)--*Quiet* has the potential to revolutionize the "extrovert ideal." –*Malissa Kent*

Amazon Exclusive: Q & A with Author Susan Cain



Q: Why did you write the book?
A: For the same reason that Betty Friedan published *The Feminine Mystique* in 1963. Introverts are to extroverts what women were to men at that time--second-class citizens with gigantic amounts of untapped talent. Our schools, workplaces, and religious institutions are designed for extroverts, and many introverts believe that there is something wrong with them and that they should try to "pass" as extroverts. The bias against introversion leads to a colossal waste of talent, energy, and, ultimately, happiness.

Q: What personal significance does the subject have for you?
A: When I was in my twenties, I started practicing corporate law on Wall Street. At first I thought I was taking on an enormous challenge, because in my mind, the successful lawyer was comfortable in the spotlight, whereas I was introverted and occasionally shy. But I soon realized that my nature had a lot of advantages: I was good at building loyal alliances, one-on-one, behind the scenes; I could close my door, concentrate, and get the work done well; and like many introverts, I tended to ask a lot of questions and listen intently to the answers, which is an invaluable tool in negotiation. I started to realize that there's a lot more going on here than the cultural stereotype of the introvert-as-unfortunate would have you believe. I had to know more, so I spent the past five years researching the powers of introversion.

Q: Was there ever a time when American society valued introverts more highly?
A: In the nation's earlier years it was easier for introverts to earn respect. America once embodied what the cultural historian Warren Susman called a "Culture of Character," which valued inner strength, integrity, and

the good deeds you performed when no one was looking. You could cut an impressive figure by being quiet, reserved, and dignified. Abraham Lincoln was revered as a man who did not “offend by superiority,” as Emerson put it.

Q: You discuss how we can better embrace introverts in the workplace. Can you explain?
A: Introverts thrive in environments that are not overstimulating—surroundings in which they can think (deeply) before they speak. This has many implications. Here are two to consider: (1) Introverts perform best in quiet, private workspaces—but unfortunately we’re trending in precisely the opposite direction, toward open-plan offices. (2) If you want to get the best of all your employees’ brains, don’t simply throw them into a meeting and assume you’re hearing everyone’s ideas. You’re not; you’re hearing from the most vocally assertive people. Ask people to put their ideas in writing before the meeting, and make sure you give everyone time to speak.

Q: *Quiet* offers some terrific insights for the parents of introverted children. What environment do introverted kids need in order to thrive, whether it’s at home or at school?
A: The best thing parents and teachers can do for introverted kids is to treasure them for who they are, and encourage their passions. This means: (1) Giving them the space they need. If they need to recharge alone in their room after school instead of plunging into extracurricular activities, that’s okay. (2) Letting them master new skills at their own pace. If they’re not learning to swim in group settings, for example, teach them privately. (3) Not calling them “shy”--they’ll believe the label and experience their nervousness as a fixed trait rather than an emotion they can learn to control.

Q: What are the advantages to being an introvert?
A: There are too many to list in this short space, but here are two seemingly contradictory qualities that benefit introverts: introverts like to be alone--and introverts enjoy being cooperative. Studies suggest that many of the most creative people are introverts, and this is partly because of their capacity for quiet. Introverts are careful, reflective thinkers who can tolerate the solitude that idea-generation requires. On the other hand, *implementing* good ideas requires cooperation, and introverts are more likely to prefer cooperative environments, while extroverts favor competitive ones.

A Reader’s Guide for *Quiet:The Power of Introverts in a World that Can’t Stop Talking*

By Susan Cain

Introduction

At least one-third of the people we know are introverts. They are the ones who prefer listening to speaking, reading to partying; who innovate and create but dislike self-promotion; who favor working on their own over brainstorming in teams. Although they are often labeled "quiet," it is to introverts that we owe many of the great contributions to society-from van Gogh’s sunflowers to the invention of the personal computer.

Passionately argued, impressively researched, and filled with indelible stories of real people, *Quiet* shows how dramatically we undervalue introverts, and how much we lose in doing so. This extraordinary book has the power to permanently change how we see introverts and, equally important, how introverts see themselves.

Questions and Topics for Discussion

1. Based on the quiz in the book, do you think you’re an introvert, an extrovert, or an ambivert? Are you an

introvert in some situations and an extrovert in others?

2. What about the important people in your lives—your partner, your friends, your kids?

3. Which parts of QUIET resonated most strongly with you? Were there parts you disagreed with—and if so, why?

4. Can you think of a time in your life when being an introvert proved to be an advantage?

5. Who are your favorite introverted role models?

6. Do you agree with the author that introverts can be good leaders? What role do you think charisma plays in leadership? Can introverts be charismatic?

7. If you're an introvert, what do you find most challenging about working with extroverts?

8. If you're an extrovert, what do you find most challenging about working with introverts?

9. QUIET explains how Western society evolved from a Culture of Character to a Culture of Personality. Are there enclaves in our society where a Culture of Character still holds sway? What would a twenty-first-century Culture of Character look like?

10. QUIET talks about the New Groupthink, the value system holding that creativity and productivity emerge from group work rather than individual thought. Have you experienced this in your own workplace?

11. Do you think your job suits your temperament? If not, what could you do to change things?

12. If you have children, how does your temperament compare to theirs? How do you handle areas in which you're not temperamentally compatible?

13. If you're in a relationship, how does your temperament compare to that of your partner? How do you handle areas in which you're not compatible?

14. Do you enjoy social media such as Facebook and Twitter, and do you think this has something to do with your temperament?

15. QUIET talks about "restorative niches," the places introverts go or the things they do to recharge their batteries. What are your favorite restorative niches?

16. Susan Cain calls for a Quiet Revolution. Would you like to see this kind of a movement take place, and if so, what is the number-one change you'd like to see happen?

Review
***People* Top 10 Book of 2012**
***O, The Oprah Magazine* 10 Favorite Books of 2012**
***Christian Science Monitor* Best Books of 2012**
2012 Goodreads Choice Award, Best Nonfiction
***Fast Company* #1 Business Book of 2012**
***Inc Magazine* Best Books for Entrepreneurs in 2012**
***Library Journal* Best Books of 2012**
***Kirkus Reviews* Best Books of 2012**

"An important book that should embolden anyone who's ever been told, 'Speak up!'"
--*People*

"Cain offers a wealth of useful advice for teachers and parents of introverts…*Quiet* should interest anyone who cares about how people think, work, and get along, or wonders why the guy in the next cubicle acts that way. It should be required reading for introverts (or their parents) who could use a boost to their self-esteem."
--Fortune.com

"Rich, intelligent...enlightening."
--*Wall Street Journal*

"An intriguing and potentially life-altering examination of the human psyche that is sure to benefit both introverts and extroverts alike."
--*Kirkus,* Starred Review

"Cain gives excellent portraits of a number of introverts and shatters misconceptions. Cain consistently holds the reader's interest by presenting individual profiles, looking at places dominated by extroverts (Harvard Business School) and introverts (a West Coast retreat center), and reporting on the latest studies. Her diligence, research, and passion for this important topic has richly paid off."
--*Publishers Weekly*

"This book is a pleasure to read and will make introverts and extroverts alike think twice about the best ways to be themselves and interact with differing personality types."
--*Library Journal*

"An intelligent and often surprising look at what makes us who we are."
--*Booklist*

"In this well-written, unusually thoughtful book, Cain encourages solitude seekers to see themselves anew: not as wallflowers but as powerful forces to be reckoned with."
--*Whole Living*

"**Those who value a quiet, reflective life will feel a burden lifting from their shoulders as they read Susan Cain's eloquent and well documented paean to introversion--**and will no longer feel guilty or inferior for having made the better choice!"
--MIHALY CSIKSZENTMIHALYI, author of *Flow* and Distinguished Professor of Psychology and Management, Claremont Graduate University

"**Superbly researched, deeply insightful, and a fascinating read**, *Quiet* is an indispensable resource for anyone who wants to understand the gifts of the introverted half of the population."
--GRETCHEN RUBIN, author of *The Happiness Project*

"Quiet is a book of liberation from old ideas about the value of introverts. **Cain's intelligence, respect for research, and vibrant prose put *Quiet* in an elite class with the best books from Malcolm Gladwell, Daniel Pink, and other masters of psychological non-fiction**."
--TERESA AMABILE, Professor, Harvard Business School, and coauthor, *The Progress Principle*

"**As an introvert often called upon to behave like an extrovert, I found the information in this book**

revealing and helpful. Drawing on neuroscientific research and many case reports, Susan Cain explains the advantages and potentials of introversion and of being quiet in a noisy world."
--ANDREW WEIL, author of *Healthy Aging* and *Spontaneous Happiness*

"Susan Cain has done a superb job of sifting through decades of complex research on introversion, extroversion, and sensitivity--**this book will be a boon for the many highly sensitive people who are also introverts**."
--ELAINE ARON, author of *The Highly Sensitive Person*

"***Quiet* legitimizes and even celebrates the 'niche' that represents half the people in the world**."
--GUY KAWASAKI, author of *Enchantment: The Art of Changing Hearts, Minds, and Actions*

"**Susan Cain is the definer of a new and valuable paradigm**. In this moving and original argument, she makes the case that we are losing immense reserves of talent and vision because of our culture's overvaluation of extroversion. **A startling, important, and readable page-turner that will make quiet people see themselves in a whole new light**."
--NAOMI WOLF, author of *The Beauty Myth*

"**Superb…A compelling reflection on how the Extrovert Ideal shapes our lives and why this is deeply unsettling**. Based on meticulous research, it will open up a new and different conversation on how the personal is political and how we need to empower the legions of people who are disposed to be quiet, reflective, and sensitive."
--BRIAN R. LITTLE, PH.D., Distinguished Scholar, Department of Social and Developmental Psychology, Cambridge University

"Quiet elevates the conversation about introverts in our outwardly-oriented society to new heights**. I think that many introverts will discover that, even though they didn't know it, they have been waiting for this book all their lives**."
--ADAM S. MCHUGH, author of *Introverts in the Church*

"Gentle is powerful... Solitude is socially productive... These important counter-intuitive ideas are among the many reasons to **take *Quiet* to a quiet corner and absorb its brilliant, thought-provoking message**."
--ROSABETH MOSS KANTER, Harvard Business School professor, author of *Confidence* and *SuperCorp*

"**Memo to all you glad-handing, back-slapping, brainstorming masters of the universe out there: Stop networking and talking for a minute and read this book**. In *Quiet*, Susan Cain does an eloquent and powerful job of extolling the virtues of the listeners and the thinkers--the reflective introverts of the world who appreciate that hard problems demand careful thought and who understand that it's a good idea to know what you want to say before you open your mouth."
--BARRY SCHWARTZ, author of *Practical Wisdom* and *The Paradox of Choice*

"**A smart, lively book about the value of silence and solitude that makes you want to shout from the rooftops.** *Quiet* is an engaging and insightful look into the hearts and minds of those who change the world instead of tweeting about it."
--DANIEL GILBERT, professor of psychology, Harvard University, author of *Stumbling on Happiness*

About the Author

SUSAN CAIN is the co-founder of Quiet Revolution and the author of *Quiet: The Power of Introverts in A*

World That Can't Stop Talking, which has been translated into 40 languages, has been on the *New York Times* bestseller list for more than five years, and was named the #1 best book of the year by *Fast Company* magazine, which also named Cain one of its Most Creative People in Business. Cain is also the author of the bestseller *Quiet Power: The Secret Strengths of Introverts*, and the co-founder of the Quiet Schools Network and the Quiet Leadership Institute. Her writing has appeared in the *New York Times*, *The Atlantic*, *The Wall Street Journal*, and many other publications. Her record-smashing TED talk has been viewed more than 14 million times and was named by Bill Gates one of his all-time favorite talks. Cain has also spoken at Microsoft, Google, the U.S. Treasury, the S.E.C., Harvard, Yale, West Point and the US Naval Academy. She received Harvard Law School's Celebration Award for Thought Leadership, the Toastmasters International Golden Gavel Award for Communication and Leadership, and was named one of the world's top 50 Leadership and Management Experts by *Inc. Magazine*. She is an honors graduate of Princeton and Harvard Law School. She lives in the Hudson River Valley with her husband and two sons. Visit Cain and the Quiet Revolution at www.quietrev.com.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Louis Clark:

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Laurence Asher:

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