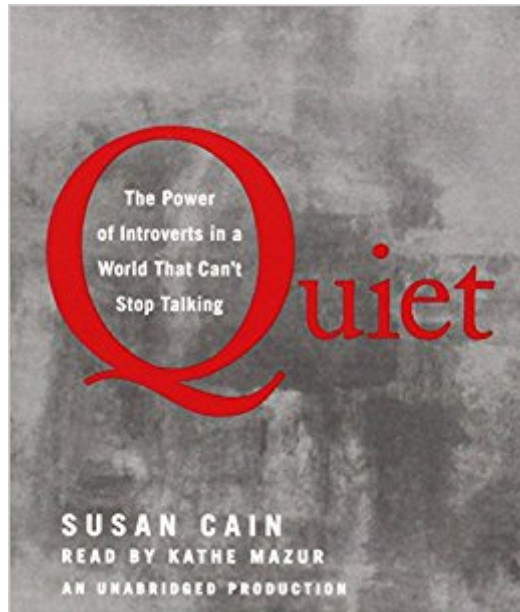




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Quiet: The Power Of Introverts In A World That Can't Stop Talking



Synopsis

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.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

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 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?

--This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

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 Æœniche 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*

I believe this book saved my life. I'm not prone to melodrama, or to such excessively long reviews, but this is true, and so important to me, I have to say it. I've been working for years in an extremely busy law office. It's been growing harder and harder throughout the years for me to handle this job. Two months ago my boss fired my coworker, and I've since had to take on two people's work plus train multiple new people (as the first two didn't stay), all with constant, all day long interruptions,

high-intensity demands, and a high level of multitasking. This has happened many times before, and while it was dreadful, I managed, but for some reason this time I just couldn't handle it. My entire life has been on hold since this started, I get home from work too exhausted to do anything except veg out for a couple hours and go to bed, and even weekends aren't much better. I was taking terrible care of myself and my life was falling apart. I did, in fact, feel like I was killing myself with this lifestyle, but I simply did not have the energy to fix any of it, or for that matter have any idea how to fix it. I blamed myself - there must be something 'wrong with me' because I can't handle the job. I wanted to leave, but thought, if I can't handle this job, how am I going to handle a new job? It'll probably be more of the same. I thought I was just getting soft because I was getting older (I'm in my late 40s). I've always known I was introverted, but I didn't realize just what all that entailed - I thought it mostly meant 'shy' or that I didn't like social settings. This book taught me more about myself than I've ever known. It read like my biography. Almost every page had a new insight into why I think and feel the way I do. Throughout the book I saw my very own self described in new and empowering ways. I learned that the job situation I'm currently in - the non-stop deadline demands, interruptions, never being able to work quietly or alone no matter how difficult a project was, phones ringing incessantly, people in my face all day long, etc. - especially when it's work that I actually don't care anything about personally - those are the exact circumstances that trip every one of a strong introvert's triggers. And I was subjecting myself to it 40 hours a week, for months. It's no wonder I was so miserable and completely exhausted all the time. And as enlightening as it was to learn how many of the traits I've beat myself up for over the years are just a product of my introverted temperament (being highly sensitive, shutting down when subjected to stimulation overload, preferring to think a thing through before I speak - something I never get to do at work, as if it takes me more than 5 seconds to say something, I get interrupted and cut off), the most important thing I got from this book is that it's okay to be myself, it's okay to feel the way I do. There is not something 'wrong with me' that I have to 'fix.' I am not weak or a failure because I don't feel or behave like my extremely extroverted boss (who thrives in high-energy crisis mode, and is bored unless he's doing 10 things at once - and expects the rest of us to keep up). And far from it being an age-related 'going soft,' what's probably in fact going on is that as I get older, it is becoming increasingly vital to me to be truer to myself. I also found the information on the history of the "rise of the Culture of Personality" completely fascinating, it really gave me a new insight as to just exactly how we 'grew' this tendency to value extroversion over introversion. It makes so much more sense now. This book gave me the courage I needed to start taking the steps to fix my work situation. Not only the courage, but the 'permission' and the understanding - because I now know there isn't

something wrong with me, but instead this is what I need to do to be my best self, and stop killing myself with stress. That I probably can find a place of value in the world by being myself, not trying to force myself to be something I'm not. I know I will meet resistance from my boss (I'd love for him to read this book, but unfortunately I know he won't), and I know I won't instantly fix everything in one day, and that I'll probably always need to be able to stretch myself a bit to do things that are not ideal for me ... but this book taught me that there are ways to make that work, too, if you understand and honor the need for recharging around such tasks, instead of trying to force yourself to do them 8 hours a day with no break. It doesn't have to be all or nothing, in either direction. Basically, I'm not out of the woods yet, but I now see the path out, and I have hope. I think every introvert should read this book, because it will help you understand why you are who you are, and why that's a beautiful thing, not a character flaw. And I think everyone who knows an introvert should read this book, and quit trying to "fix us." Which means pretty much the entire country (or world) should read this book. The wealth of information and insights in this book cannot be overstated - especially if you are an introverted type of person who has always felt there was something not quite right about you, or that you somehow needed to change to fit in or succeed. This book will give you back yourself, and in my case, my life. Thank you, Susan Cain, from the bottom of my heart (which is finally beating at a more normal speed because I'm not panicked about going to work for the first time in months). Edited 11-13-14: It worked! I'm now working half-days at the office and half-days at home, and in a few weeks will transition to working from home full time. I never imagined that could happen. It's amazing what becomes possible when you finally realize you deserve what you already knew you needed.

This is hardly an impartial review. As somebody who has been called at some point or another the gamut of terms associated with introversion, from "shy" (which I don't object) to "anti-social" (which I most certainly consider unfair), I found in Susan Cain's "Quiet," the validation and appreciation many introverts have been searching for. In "Quiet," Ms. Cain explains the rise of the Extrovert Ideal in the 1920s and how it is that today we associate talkative, risk-taking, and action-oriented people with intelligence, beauty, power and success. The Extrovert Ideal is so pervasive that influences our work performance, educational policies, political choices, and even the country's financial health. But the focus of "Quiet" is on exposing the myths and misunderstandings that were born when we as a culture embraced the Extrovert Ideal and turned introversion into a malady to be avoided. To dispel the misconception that introversion is some kind of sickness or "weirdness", Ms. Cain traces both the biological and cultural basis for introversion and extroversion and their role as evolutionary

survival strategies in animals and humans. She interviews scientists who have conducted hundreds of studies to test different theories in an effort to determine how much of our temperament is a result of genetics and/or of our free will. The best part of "Quiet" is that the insights gleaned from these studies can help introverts take advantage of their special traits and thrive on their own terms in an extroverted world. Since introversion and extroversion are preferences for a certain level of outside stimulation, Ms. Cain advises introverts to find their "sweet spot" --or what scientists call the optimal level of arousal. Scientists also notice that introverts engage in "deliberate practice" or working alone so for those looking for a job, Ms. Cain encourages them to pay attention to the layout of working spaces to determine how much interruption they may have to deal with at work. For those still deciding on a career, the author reminds readers that research shows that introverts are not reward-seeking like extroverts, but rather motivated by the enjoyment they find in pursuing an activity; in other words, by being in what psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi calls the "flow". Ms. Cain offers encouragement to introverts to venture in the extrovert world because we all have the ability to stretch our limits but the optimal way for introverts to do it is in the service of their "core projects," the things they are passionate about. And for those with children, the author dedicates an entire chapter for helping introvert children become confident and comfortable in extroverted environments and situations. Amid the research and the advice, Ms. Cain calls the readers' attention to those introverts who have made a difference in the world like Rosa Parks and Ghandi. They showed that empathy, thoughtfulness, persistence, compassion, focus and conscientiousness, all characteristics ascribed to introversion, are leadership attributes too. "Quiet" has not only given me a better understanding of introversion but also of the opposite trait. The same person, who labeled me as "anti-social" also boasted on how easily he could befriend people and in the same breath, complained about how my quietness and solitary pursuits would be hell for him. After reading Ms. Cain's book, now I realize why somebody who can make 100 friends would be so bothered by the one solitude-seeking friend in the group and why introverts and extroverts attract each other. And so, I think, introverts and extroverts will both benefit from reading "Quiet". But for those of us, innies who find joy in doing our own thing, prefer a book than join a party or think monastic silence is bliss, there is no longer any need to feel guilty or like we are oddballs because of our preferences. The message from "Quiet" is clear. Introversion has never been an aberration but a variant of the norm.

I am a teacher, a mother, and an introvert. This book was fascinating. This book is written by an introvert, and while it discusses extroversion, it focuses on the benefits of introversion. I usually have my high school students take a personality test. Students are always shocked to find that I am

a strong introvert. They don't understand how I can speak in front of groups or lead a class if I'm introverted. This book talks about the power of introverts to go beyond their tendencies in situations where they are passionate about what they are doing. I am a thirty something secure person. I like myself, but reading this book made me feel like there are many other people who face the same feelings and worries that I do. It made me feel like I was part of a larger group of important people. Somewhere while reading this book, I stopped feeling like I was a good teacher despite my introversion but that I am a good teacher largely because of my introversion. I have re-evaluated the way that I parent, and I am reconsidering the way that I do things in my classroom. I gave it four stars only because it is extremely long, and I found a lot of it tedious to read. I am an excellent reader, and it has taken me most of my summer break to get through the book. I was never bored exactly, but it does have a lot of information. It requires a lot of attention while you read it. I'm so glad that I did, but this should not be approached as light reading.

An excellent analysis of factors relating to introverted and extroverted personalities. Useful to educators, business leader, and parents in learning how to enhance and empower introverts, and make the most of their strengths. Well researched and well written.

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