

Introvert! Do You Need Help?

Reference blog post "[Help! I'm An Introvert!](#)" published 30 Jul 2013.

I have recently started to question whether we should even have terms like "introvert" and "extrovert". They tend to divide in a manner more destructive than creative. This is because the compulsory schooling systems worldwide are excessively Hellenistic in nature. Notice I said "schooling", not "education". Contrary to popular *laissez-faire* thinking, they are **not** the same thing. Hellenistic education emphasizes analysis and logical thinking, which isn't bad by itself. Oriental education emphasizes synthesis and connectedness. Both are essential, of course, to varying degrees in different contexts. Dissect excessively and you become an expert in procedures but may fail to see systems. Over-emphasize integration and you will see systems and patterns, but you might miss essential details as to how they actually work. Again, a balance is needed. Unfortunately, balance seems difficult to achieve.

$$\begin{aligned}
\oint_C -y dx + x dy &= \int_0^{2\pi} \left(-y \frac{dx}{d\theta} + x \frac{dy}{d\theta} \right) d\theta \\
&= \int_0^{2\pi} (-2 \sin \theta (-2 \sin \theta) + 2 \cos \theta (2 \cos \theta)) d\theta \\
&= \int_0^{2\pi} 4 \sin^2 \theta + 4 \cos^2 \theta d\theta = \int_0^{2\pi} 4 d\theta = 8\pi.
\end{aligned}$$

I have been a practising behavioural consultant since late 2006. I use the DISC framework and have literally seen thousands of DISC profiles and debriefed probably many hundreds of individuals on their DISC profiles, if not more. I have found that people do not fall into categories as neatly as we might like to imagine. The approximations are rather broad, and although most people are amazed at the accuracy of the graphs as I interpret them, the accuracy points to rather general behaviour patterns which are helpful in fostering good relationships, but in a limited fashion. There are cases where people with a high "Influencing" or "I" trait were thought of by their co-workers as being too quiet. This is surprising to some people, since those with high "I" traits are normally perceived to be noisy and perhaps thinking-impaired. However, if one examines the whole list of "I" traits, one would understand that an "I" person can be gregarious, but quietly so. It depends on which end of the spectrum of motivational factors that person favours.

Our schooling has produced in us the tendency to relegate most variables to constants in order that we might be better able to understand cause-and-effect relationships, particularly in mathematics and the sciences. In so doing, we are able to isolate root causes and derive principles which are of course extremely helpful in helping us navigate our way around the world in which we live. However, we tend to forget that what we have derived is just a "snapshot" of the whole. We forget that we are looking at the static individual tree and that there is a whole wood around us, which includes animals that are far from static. To put it another way, it is like

studying a sea anemone in a rocky tidal pool and then extrapolating what we learn about it to the entire ocean! We need to embrace a higher order of thinking.

It is this higher order of thinking that we need to apply to our understanding of “introverts” and “extroverts”. It is true that we all have our own preferences, and that these preferences may be categorized to any degree of accuracy depending on what framework we want to pin those preferences on. However, we need to take cognizance of the fact that they are still **preferences**. Preferences can change over time, circumstances, beliefs and convictions. We need to accept each person as he or she is at any given point in time, knowing also that he/ she is continuing to grow and develop. Why, even physically, we are not the same person we were a year ago. All our cells would have been changed in one year! Continue to categorize, if you find that it helps, especially in resource allocation, but recognize that dealing with people is very hard work because of the infinite number of permutations you need to deal with. It is, however, very rewarding work.

In conclusion, may I suggest that we look at “introversion” and “extroversion” in terms of what a sonnet is. A sonnet is a fourteen-line poem where every line must be written in iambic pentameter. That means that every line must go “Da-da, da-da, da-da, da-da, da-da.” Every line. All fourteen lines. That’s the structure. Within that structure, however, anything goes. Introversion and extroversion are the structure of the sonnet. Perhaps you might be ten lines introvert and four lines extrovert. However, within the fourteen lines, basically anything goes.

From Sonnets

William Shakespeare (1564-1616)

*From fairest creatures we desire increase,
That thereby beauty's rose might never die.
But as the ripener should by time decease,
His tender heir might bear his memory:
But thou, contracted to thine own bright eyes,
Feed'st thy light's flame with self-substantial
fuel,
Making a famine where abundance lies,
Thyself thy foe, to thy sweet self too cruel.
Thou that art now the world's fresh ornament
And only herald to the gaudy spring,
Within thine own bud buriest thy content
And, tender churl, mak'st waste in niggarding.
Pity the world, or else this glutton be,
To eat the world's due, by the grave and thee.*

To Fanny

John Keats (1795-1821)

*I cry your mercy-pity-love!-aye, love!
Merciful love that tantalizes not,
One-thoughted, never-wandering, guileless love,
Unmasked, and being seen-without a blot!
O! let me have thee whole,-all-all-be mine!
That shape, that fairness, that sweet minor zest
Of love, your kiss,-those hands, those eyes
divine,
That warm, white, lucent, million-pleasured
breast,-
Yourself-your soul-in pity give me all.
Withhold no atom's atom or I die,
Or living on perhaps, your wretched thrall,
Forget, in the mist of idle misery,
Life's purposes,-the palate of my mind
Losing its gist, and my ambition blind!*