



Introversion

To explore the talents of introversion can be a powerful experience.

A shy man no doubt dreads the notice of strangers, but can hardly be said to be afraid of them. He may be as bold as a hero in battle, and yet have no self-confidence about trifles in the presence of strangers. *Charles Darwin*



Image: Kristina Flour, unsplash.com

The Power of Introverts

In her book, *Quiet*, Susan Cain invites us to explore the talents of introversion. In a thoroughly researched account, she traces the shift in America at the turn of the 20th Century, from the Culture of Character to the Culture of Personality, in the context of the changing world of competitive business.

She goes on to explore introversion in terms of natural temperament and from a cultural perspective, and to dispel many myths surrounding the subject.

She writes: 'Introversion - along with its cousins sensitivity, seriousness, and shyness - is now a second-class personality trait, somewhere between a disappointment and a pathology. Introverts living under the Extrovert Ideal are like women in a man's world, discounted because of a trait that goes to the core of who they are. Extroversion is an enormously appealing personality style, but we've turned it into an oppressive standard to which most of us feel we must conform.'

Increasingly, Christian authors are exploring what it means to be an introvert in a charismatic church. Exploring introversion can be an insightful and grounding experience, giving us the confidence to live out our purpose authentically before God.

Questions for reflection and discussion:

- What positive models of introverted leadership can you think of (in the bible, work, church, history, wider society contexts)?
- To what extent do you think some churches are influenced by an extroverted culture?
- What challenges do you face at work in relation to introversion/ extroversion (open plan offices, brainstorming, interviews, perception of success, etc)?
- What situations do you find challenging as an introvert and how can these be tackled?
- What does introverted spirituality look like?
- What are the implications for parenting?
- What are the implications for evangelism?
- What examples of great introvert/extrovert partnerships can you think of?
- When is it appropriate to go against the grain of your introversion?
- What examples of great introvert/extrovert partnerships can you think of?

For further information:

Go to http://www.ted.com/talks/susan_cain_the_power_of_introverts and read *Quiet*, by Susan Cain

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