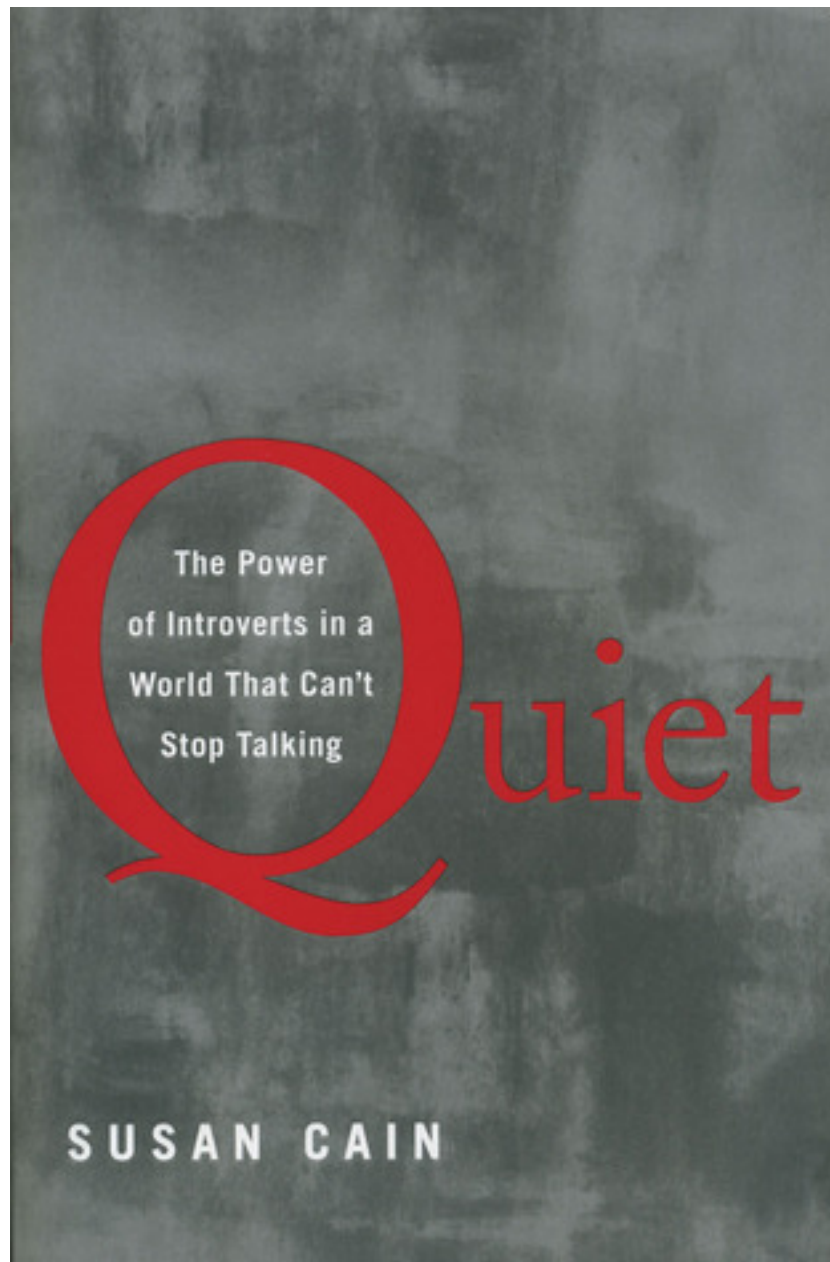


Quiet: The Power of Introverts in a World That Can't Stop Talking Book PDF Download



**By:
Susan Cain**

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What people Say:

Emily May

I read this book for the same reason most people read this book: I am an introvert. I have always been an introvert, and it's a fundamental, sometimes limiting, part of who I am.

I've learned to deal with it better over the years - learned to clasp my shaking hands together during presentations, force myself to breathe normally and keep my voice steady, even force myself to make the first move in social situations.

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I've learned to deal with it better over the years - learned to clasp my shaking hands together during presentations, force myself to breathe normally and keep my voice steady, even force myself to make the first move in social situations. Unless you are also an introvert, you probably won't understand the efforts I have to go to (and the psychological strain this puts on me) just to behave in a way that is considered socially acceptable and is desired by employers.

It's actually caused me upset and distress for many reasons. Firstly because I find it hard to cope in the many situations where bright, outgoing personalities thrive. Secondly because it's just considered a negative trait. Look at magazines, look at books like

, look at job applications asking for "people persons". I remember reading teen magazines in high school and seeing stupid articles about how to attract boys - confident, dazzling personalities are a necessity! - and feeling a very real blow to my self-esteem.

But I have accepted it as an unfortunate fact of reality for years - the simple conclusion that being introverted is a bad thing. Not a terrible thing, and definitely not an impossible thing to cope with - technology billionaires are often introverts after all - but something limiting (like a lower intelligence) that I must constantly battle against to make it through this world.

Until I read this book.

Susan Cain uses facts, statistics and her own case studies to show that introverts are greatly successful and powerful, not in spite of their introversion, but

of it. She compares different types of businesses and teamwork to show how extroverts and introverts each excel in different types of business environments. For example, extroverts often lead businesses better when there is little input from other team members; whereas introverts thrive in situations that rely on the input of a team because they are more likely to listen to the other members and implement their ideas.

Hanne

I always thought I was just weird...

I can be alone in my car for a 1h drive and not want to have the radio or music on. On sundays I often join the walking club for a long 25km walk, but I prefer to do it alone (and oh, all the pity looks you get!). The idea of surprise parties makes me sick to my stomach, and any event where a thousand people are together is possibly even worse. I dislike small talk, but I probably hate even more how nervous I get when I have to do it.

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I can feel sad for a bruised tomato no-one wants to buy (hey, he tried his best too, not his fault someone dropped him!), and while everyone else goes to the modern, light apothecary across the street with the super nice people always happy to help, I go to the dark and older one who never has clients (how else will he survive?)

Turns out I'm not that weird. I'm just a full blood introvert.

And yet, I'm not what you think. I'm not particularly shy, I'm not the grey bird that never says a word and everyone forgets she's around. I'm very opinionated and quite stubborn, and when amongst friends I know well, I can be the loudest person in the room.

But still I'm introvert. After being with friends or colleagues, I need recharging time. I need to be alone. I (almost) always think before I talk. I enjoy getting to the bottom of things, I enjoy detective work. And I can go on and on.

While reading this book, on occasion I was nodding so hard I thought my head might fall off.

Stephanie *Extremely Stable Genius*

March 6th was Super Tuesday and I live in that Oh-so-much-talked-about-battle-ground-state of Ohio. I work the elections as a Ballot Judge, which means I hand out the ballots to the voters and give them instructions. I get to talk and talk, for 13 hours straight *sigh*. I try to make it entertaining for the voters, myself and the others I work with because of its repetition, but by 7:30 pm when the polls close I don't think the language I was using was English.

My spiel went something like this!

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My spiel went something like this!

Me: "Hi. What ballot can I get for you today?"

Voter: "Uh...what do you mean?"

Me: "Today we have, Democratic, Republican, Libertarian or Green (I have never given out the last two)"

Voter: "What's a Green party?"

Me: "I'm not sure, but there is next to nothing on their ballot."

Voter: "I'm and independent (code for embarrassed Republican) can I have both a Democratic AND Republican ballot?"

Kelly

In a twist that will surprise precisely no one, this book spends a fair amount of time cheering for introverts. What were the odds, right? I assume if you're picking this book up you're on board with that to a certain extent, and likely something of an introvert yourself.

This book is certainly for you-or for the perplexed extrovert or "pseudo-extrovert" that might be confused by your supposedly mysterious ways. It's a sort of shield, a blockade, a set of reinforced walls that Cain feels it is n

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This book is certainly for you-or for the perplexed extrovert or "pseudo-extrovert" that might be confused by your supposedly mysterious ways. It's a sort of shield, a blockade, a set of reinforced walls that Cain feels it is necessary to throw up around introverts (particularly American introverts) to protect them from the "Extroverted Ideal," of American socialization. The tone of the beginning of the book is thus rather defiant, like Cain is screaming back at everyone she has ever felt pressured by to go to a happy hour or to a dinner party when she had much rather just read a book instead. There's some of this kick-back throughout the book, with plenty of cathartic/sympathetic/rather relatable war stories from introverts just tryin' to make it in an extrovert's world.

It is particularly meant to speak to introverts in the high flying business, legal, and/or educational world, where a premium is put on socializing, teamwork, constant connection and multitasking (I am speaking here particularly of the rarefied worlds of Big Law, Wall Street Finance, and Ivy League academia). It's a very career and work focused book, with a surprisingly frequent focus on the bottom line about what traits introverts are more likely to have and how these should be recognized at the top tables in all fields. Her argument, based on one scientific study after another throughout the chapters (deployed like so much artillery), is that introverts tend to think more deeply about problems and persist for longer in trying to solve them. Introverts are supposedly more likely to care about the feelings of others, to make excellent compromising leaders, and to be excellent negotiators (Cain's particular area of expertise) based on their ability to seem soft and actually be tough at the same time. She scorns the merely "shy" as extroverts in disguise who share extroverts' traits and want the spotlight but who are just too scared to get it (she would never say this outright, but it is clear that she believes they don't deserve the secret introvert password and is determined to keep out the riffraff). She argues that the extroverts in powerful positions she has seen are more likely to take unjustified risks, to get hopped up on testosterone and the thrill of the chase, to listen to the loudest person in the room, and to walk all over introverts.

She readily admits the nuances in these sweeping generalizations. She also admits the worth of extroverts and how introverts greatly enjoy and need their company, both professionally and personally. In addition, she also talks about some legitimate times when introverts may devote time and energy to being extroverted (if they care about something enough- "Free Trait Theory"). Finally, and in the part that I most appreciated, Cain talks a bit about the "Situational" theory of personality-that is, that people's personalities can be completely different in different situations, times and around different people. Therefore, there are very few "pure" introverts or "pure" extroverts. She also admits that the way that these generalized "traits" play out may look very different and may, after all, not be very predictive in any direct way. (Many extroverts may have excellent impulse control, or introverts who care deeply about a cause may act frequently and completely out of character in order to fight for what they believe in.)

However, the space devoted to these arguments is much, much smaller than the space devoted to proving, endlessly, how awesome introverts are and why the professional world should value them

and stop trying to tell them that they have to be like extroverts because I'm okay and you're okay and it takes all kinds and a village to make the world go round.

And honestly? This is a message that's happening to hit me at the right time, when I'm involved in a workplace with a whole lot of extroverts surrounding me. I did find it useful in my particular mindset where I am actively waging a struggle to define my own style in a new profession, since introversion is a part of my identity. I also thought that some of the studies she cited DO make a lot of sense and should be more widely looked at (like the ones that talk about why it's a good idea to ask people to provide feedback and brainstorm online rather than in big meetings or why introverts with closed door offices are more productive or some of the advice to parents about how to cherish their introverted child). I also think that it's nice to have someone sounding the alert that someone speaking quietly is not wrong by default- turn on cable news for thirty seconds and you'll be reminded why that is important.

And yet, despite the evident time put into this book, and despite my bias towards it, I couldn't shake the feeling of cynical questioning of what felt like a great deal of pop psychology and arguments made based on feelings, anecdotes and newspaper clippings collected into a narrative. It felt like a file you might keep to make yourself feel better and to express an important part of your identity, rather than a research paper and I'm sure it was aiming at something closer to that crossed with an advice column. There's such a lot of speculation in here, and lots of scientific studies without citations or countervailing evidence brought into play. (For example, it certainly didn't help that the minute after I read one of the more fluffy scientific studies in here about how we Americans as a culture are more drawn to people that display significantly more traditionally dominant body language in pictures I saw it in an issue of

in a box near the back of the magazine reconfigured to be about women being attracted to men and how you've gotta look aggressive and Manly to get us ladiezz don't you know?) It just seems like a book written for a specific audience that you can rely on to make that leap to "just know" what you mean because they've got an emotional bank of misunderstood years and moments to draw on. In short, it appeals to an "emotional truth" built on hundreds of pages of stories and studies that may or may not add up to anything at all. On the one hand, it's maybe okay to create a space for a "community" of sorts to feel and process some of that- on the other hand, it will drag down the overall quality of that work into something closer to a melancholy history crossed with a dinner party argument.

Manny

This book, which I had had recommended to me by many friends both on Goodreads and in real life,

says plenty of useful and worthwhile things. Using the words not quite in the sense common among academic psychologists, Susan Cain distinguishes between "extroverts", whom she characterizes as loud, thick-skinned people who prioritise social interaction, assertiveness and gregariousness, and "introverts", quiet, thin-skinned people who prioritise sensitivity, harmony an

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I find most of the above plausible, though I don't know enough about neurophysiology to be able to say how solid those parts are. What disquiets me most is that the book needed to be written in the first place. It seems to me to say more about modern American society than it does about the differences between introverts and extroverts. As Cain says, many societies - she particularly singles out Asian societies - do not place the same premium on extroverted behavior. If you're an Asian teen, it's regarded as normal to spend your time studying rather than partying. The same is true, though to a lesser extent, of many European societies.

Cain's approach is gentle and indirect, but she certainly succeeds in showing how grotesquely skewed the US has become. When a member of an evangelical church says he is only interested in recruiting extroverted people and adds that he's sure Jesus was extroverted, I can't help feeling that something has gone horribly wrong. Even more memorably and presciently (the book was published in 2012), Cain asks at one point how America could have got the idea that the ideal personality type is that of a successful real estate salesman.

How indeed?

A remarkable passage I just read in Gwendolyn Seidman's widely cited paper "Self-presentation and belonging on Facebook: How personality influences social media use and motivations" (2012):