



Big Jets lovin to fly. . .and it shows (an old Delta tagline – “We love to fly and it shows”

“Quiet”

The Power of Introverts in a world That Can’t Stop Talking

Susan Cain

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Summary by Bob Littell, Chief NetWeaver

chiefnetweaver@gmail.com

Introduction – The North and South of Temperament

Susan begins her journey into the world of introverts with a classic story of an introvert’s ‘call to action’. It involves a quiet unassuming Black lady waiting for a public bus:

“A sensibly dressed woman in her forties gets on. She carries herself erectly, despite having spent the day bent over an ironing board in a dingy basement tailor shop at the Montgomery Fair department store. Her feet are swollen, her shoulders ache. She sits in the first row of the Colored section and watches quietly as the bus fills with riders. Until the driver orders her to give her seat to a white passenger.”

Her arrest for refusing to do so made Rosa Parks famous and the event triggered, “*one of the most important civil rights protests of the twentieth century, one word that helps America find its better self. . .The word is ‘No’*”.

Susan Cain goes on to contrast the fiery oratory speech given at the rally by the Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. with Rosa: “*She stands silently, her mere presence enough to galvanize the crowd.*”

And yet the act itself of defiance was in stark contrast to how Cain recalled Rosa’s description in obituaries following her death in 2005 at the age of Ninety-two: “*Soft-spoken, sweet, and small in stature. They said she was ‘timid and shy’ but had ‘the courage of a lion.’*”

Susan poses the interesting question: “*How could you be shy and courageous?*” and she goes on to further make the challenge, “*Why **shouldn’t** quiet be strong?*”

Cain states that, “*Our lives are shaped as profoundly by personality as by gender and race.* . . .” *And the North and South poles of personality are introvert – extrovert.*”

Here Susan throws out her first interesting quiz. She describes a series of actions and activities which are largely impacted by which end of the spectrum you might fall and then at the bottom of page 3, she gives the answers. The actions and activities include: “*How likely we are to exercise; commit adultery; function well without sleep; learn from our mistakes, place big bets in the stock market, delay gratification, be a good leader, and ask ‘**what if**?’*”

See if you can answer on which end she suggests you are more likely to fall either as an introvert(I) or extrovert(E): 1) exercise (**E**); 2) commit adultery (**E**); 3) function well without sleep (**I**), 4) learn from our mistakes (**I**), 5) place big bets in the stock market (**E**), 6) delay gratification (**I**), 7) be a good leader (depends on the case), and 8) ask “what if?” (**I**)

So as she points out, the U.S. is among the most extroverted of nations but studies show that perhaps **as many of half of us** are actually introverts. Susan suggests that part of this is because we celebrate the ‘extroverted’ personality’ so much that many of us ‘**pretend**’ to be much more extroverted than we actually are. I would certainly fall into that category.

Susan calls this celebration of a value system that promotes extroversion – “**The Extrovert Ideal**”:

*“ . . .the omni-present belief that the ideal self is gregarious, alpha, and comfortable in the spotlight. The archetypal extrovert prefers action to contemplation, risk-taking to heed-taking, certainty to doubt. He favors quick decisions, even at the risk of being wrong. She works well in teams and socializes in groups. We like to think that we value individuality, but all too often we admire one **type** of individual – the kind who’s comfortable ‘**putting himself out there.**’ ”*

Now if you’re an ‘**ambivert**’ (somewhere in between being an extrovert and introvert - first coined by Kimball Young in “*Source Book for Social Psychology*”, 1927), you probably see some, but not all of these, that really are more like the way you are.

Susan goes on to say,

“Introversion – along with its cousins – sensitivity, seriousness, and shyness – is now a second-class personality trait, somewhere between 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.”

Susan reminds us that if it weren't for the Introverts of our world, we wouldn't have works and creations like:

- The theory of gravity – Sir Isaac Newton
- The theory of relativity – Albert Einstein
- Peter Pan – J.M. Barrie
- Charlie Brown – Charles Schulz
- “Schindler’s List”, “E.T.”, and “Close Encounters of the Third Kind” – Steve Spielberg
- Google – Larry Page
- “Harry Potter” – J. K. Rowling

Or how about Gandhi, Warren Buffett, Eleanor Roosevelt, and the list goes on and on.

And if you're a true Introvert through and through, with barely any tinges of extroversion, Susan's description here may really hit home:

*“If you're an introvert, you also know that the bias against quiet can cause deep psychic pain. As a child you might have overheard your parents apologize for your shyness (**‘Why can't you be more like the Kennedy boys?’** the Camelot-besotted parents of one man I interviewed repeatedly asked him.) Or at school you might have been prodded to **‘come out of your shell’** – that noxious expression which fails to appreciate that some animals naturally carry shelter everywhere they go, and that some humans are just the same. **‘All the comments from childhood still ring in my ears, that I was lazy, stupid, slow, boring,’** writes a member of an e-mail list called ‘Introvert Retreat’. **‘By the time I was old enough to figure out that I was simply introverted, it was a part of my being, the assumption that there is something inherently wrong with me. I wish I could find that little vestige of doubt and remove it.. . .Or you're told that you're ‘in your head too much,’** a phrase that's often deployed against the quiet and cerebral.. . .Of course, there's another word for such people: **thinkers.**”*

When you buy the book, make sure to read the story about **Laura**, who “*had managed somehow to make it through the crucible of Harvard Law School – a place where classes are conducted in huge, gladiatorial amphitheatres, and where she once got so nervous that she threw up on the way to class.*” How does **she** end up being the one – following an important negotiation on the default of a bank loan – who not only persuades the bank to make some major concessions, but ends up getting called by the lead lawyer for the bank the following morning, offering her a job. (**pages 7-10**). And there's a special surprise about Laura at the end of the chapter which I actually suspected. See if you can guess.

In defining an ‘introvert’ and the differences between introverts and extroverts, Cain cites several of the psychologists and testing sources from Carl Jung to Myers-Briggs' personality test, but in spite of differences among a variety of approaches to the topic, she says:

“Still, today's psychologists tend to agree on several important points for example, that introverts and extroverts differ in the level of outside stimulation that they need to function

well. Introverts feel 'just right' with less stimulation, as when they sip wine with a close friend, solve a crossword puzzle, or read a book. Extroverts enjoy the extra bang that comes from activities like meeting new people, skiing slippery slopes, and cranking up the stereo. . . . Many psychologists would also agree that introverts and extroverts work differently. Extroverts tend to tackle assignments quickly. They make fast (sometimes rash) decisions, and are comfortable multitasking and risk-taking. They enjoy 'the thrill of the chase' for rewards like money and status." . . ."Introverts often work more slowly and deliberately. They like to focus on one task at a time and can have mighty powers of concentration. They're relatively immune to the lures of wealth and fame." . . ."Extroverts are the people who will add life to your dinner party and laugh generously at your jokes. They tend to be assertive, dominant, and in great need of company. Extroverts think out loud and on their feet; they prefer talking to listening, rarely find themselves at a loss for words, and occasionally blurt out things they never meant to say. They're comfortable with conflict, but not with solitude." . . . "Introverts, in contrast, may have strong social skills and enjoy parties and business meetings, but after a while wish they were home in their pajamas. They prefer to devote their social energies to close friends, colleagues, and family. They listen more than they talk, think before they speak, and often feel as if they express themselves better in writing than in conversation. They tend to dislike conflict. Many have a horror of small talk, but enjoy deep discussions."

Here is the quiz I like which Susan admits is not 'scientifically validated' and which those who attended the book club meeting already have. It was my idea to circle the ones which you think are REALLY like you since that probably is a good indicator of your Introvert/Extrovert mix:

Answer "**T**" (True) or "**F**" (False) for each of these which is MOST like you. **Circle** the "TRUE" ones which are REALLY like you.

1. _____ I prefer one-on-one conversations to group activities.
2. _____ I often prefer to express myself in writing.
3. _____ I enjoy solitude.
4. _____ I seem to care less than my peers about wealth, fame, and status.
5. _____ I dislike small talk, but I enjoy talking in depth about topics that matter to me.
6. _____ People tell me that I'm a good listener.
7. _____ I'm not a big risk-taker.
8. _____ I enjoy work that allows me to "dive in" with few interruptions.
9. _____ I like to celebrate birthdays on a small scale, with only one or two close friends or family members
10. _____ People describe me as "soft-spoken" or "mellow."

11. _____ I prefer not to show or discuss my work with others until it's finished.
12. _____ I dislike conflict.
13. _____ I do my best work on my own.
14. _____ I tend to think before I speak.
15. _____ I feel drained after being out and about, even if I've enjoyed myself.
16. _____ I often let calls go through to voice mail.
17. _____ If I had to choose, I'd prefer a weekend with absolutely nothing to do with one with too many things scheduled.
18. _____ I don't enjoy multitasking.
19. _____ I can concentrate easily.
20. _____ In classroom situations, I prefer lectures to seminars.

Part One – THE EXTROVERT IDEAL

Chapter One – The Rise of the “Mighty Likeable Fellow” – How Extroversion Became the Cultural Ideal

*Strangers' eyes, keen and critical.
Can you meet them proudly – confidently – without fear?*

- PRINT ADVERTISEMENT FOR WOODBURY'S SOAP, 1922

In this chapter Susan takes us on an interesting journey tracing the parallel evolution of the country's transformation from an agrarian society to an industrialized one, alongside a change from what Warren Susman termed a “*Culture of Character*”, to a “*Culture of Personality*”.

As Susan reminds us, “*The word ‘personality’ didn't exist in English until the eighteenth century, and the idea of ‘having a good personality’ was not widespread until the twentieth.*”

And the shift from small towns where everyone knew everyone, to an industrialized society also brought changes to the workplace. Cain says “Americans found themselves working no longer with neighbors but with ‘employees’, facing the question of how to make a good impression on people to whom they had no civic or family ties.” And she further points out that the best ‘jobs’ also became dependent on ‘personality’: “Americans responded to these pressures by trying to become salesmen who could sell not only their company’s latest gizmo, but also themselves.”

Cain reports that gone are the days of “**Pilgrim’s Progress**”, published in 1678, which warned readers to “*behave with restraint if they wanted to make it into heaven.*” . . . “*The advice manuals of the nineteenth century were less religious but still preached the value of a noble character.*”

Susan continues: “*But by 1920, popular self-help guides had changed their focus from inner virtue to outer charm - ‘to know what to say and how to say it,’ as one manual put it. ‘To create a personality is power,’ advised another.*”

Warren Susman, who was previously referenced, counted words that appeared most frequently in the ‘**personality-driven**’ advice manuals of the early twentieth century and compared them to the “**character guides**” of the nineteenth century.

Character-Driven

Citizenship
Duty
Work
Golden deeds
Honor
Reputation
Morals
Manners
Integrity

Personality-Driven

Magnetic
Fascinating
Stunning
Attractive
Glowing
Dominant
Forceful
Energetic

And Susan adds, “*It was no coincidence that in the 1920s and the 1930s, Americans became obsessed with movie stars. Who better than a matinee idol to model personal magnetism?*”

And in the ‘20’s Susan notes that Psychologists “*began to grapple with the pressure to project confidence.*” Quoting Carl Jung, “*In 1921, Carl Jung noted the newly precarious status of introversion. Jung himself saw introverts as ‘educators and promoters of culture’ who showed the value of ‘the interior life which is so painfully wanting in our civilization.’ But he acknowledged that their ‘reserve and apparently groundless embarrassment naturally arouse all the current prejudices against this type’.*”

And Susan tells us it was also in the '20s when a Viennese psychologist named Alfred Adler introduced the '**inferiority complex**' to "describe feelings of inadequacy and their consequences." . . . "The idea of wrapping their social anxieties in the neat package of a psychological complex appealed to many Americans. The **Inferiority Complex** became an all-purpose explanation for problems in many areas of life, ranging from love to parenting to career."

So by the fifties, it was determined that "Shyness could lead to dire outcomes" and Susan found a slogan of the Mid-Century White House Conference on Children and Youth was "**A healthy personality for every child.**"

I can personally remember this back in the days when teachers hand-wrote out comments on your elementary school report cards. A worrisome comment like Susan mentions could bring parent concerns: ". . .he was doing fine on his lessons but that his social adjustment was not as good as it might be. He would pick just one or two friends to play with, and sometimes he was happy to remain by himself".

Susan goes up the education ladder where, "University admissions officers looked not for the exceptional candidates, but for the most extroverted. Harvard's provost Paul Buck declared in the late 1940s that Harvard should reject the '**sensitive, neurotic**' type and the '**intellectually over-stimulated**' in favor of boys of the '**healthy extrovert kind.**' "

And how about out in the working world, in a world like IBM? Susan says, "At IBM, a corporation that embodied the ideal of the company man, the sales force gathered each morning to belt out the company anthem, '**Ever Onward,**' and to harmonize on the '**Selling IBM**' song, set to the tune of '**Singing in the Rain.**'

Is it any wonder that when in the mid-50's, Carter Wallace released the antianxiety drug **Miltown**, this was what Susan says happened:

" . . .reframing anxiety as the natural product of a society that was both dog-eat-dog and relentlessly social. Miltown was marketed to men and immediately became the fastest-selling pharmaceutical in American history, according to the social historian Andrea Tone. By 1956 one of every twenty Americans had tried it; by 1960 a third of all prescriptions from U.S. doctors were for Miltown or a similar drug called Equanil."

As a personal aside, my father was not only a real 'rocket scientist' with NASA, but without question, an extreme 'introvert'. Looking back at my childhood in the 50's and 60's, I would occasionally and almost surprisingly, see him come out of his shell (there's that derogatory phrase again). And now I wonder if Miltown or something like it, was how he coped with some of the more stressful situations into which he was thrust, such as chairing NASA's first Inventions Board.

Susan spends a good deal of time in this chapter detailing the development of Dale Carnegie, from a “skinny, unathletic, and fretful son of a morally upright but perpetually bankrupt pig farmer who grew up in Harmony Church, Missouri” through his transformation into becoming a ‘speaking champion’ and eventually launching a public speaking workshop which still exists today in an updated version. There’s a great story on page 32 of a video on “**Toastmasters**” called “**Truth or Lie**”. It reminded me of the old commercial “*Is it REAL. . . or is it Memorex?*” Remember that one?

I have to admit that as I finished the chapter, and reread the journey from being a “**Character-Driven**” society to a more “**Personality-Driven**” one - worshipping Dale Carnegie’s advice in “*How to Win Friends and Influence People*” with parts Susan quotes like: “*Making People Glad to Do What You Want*” and “*How to Make People Like You Instantly*”, and other self-help guru’s, I felt a sense of sadness. . . “innocence lost”.

Perhaps the greatest contribution that Susan’s book can and will have, is that perhaps her research, writings, and speaking, can help somewhat rebalance the ‘*personality-driven*’ . . . ‘*extrovert ideal*’ and we can begin to more vividly recognize, appreciate, and celebrate the contributions that ‘**introverts**’ have played and continue to play in our country as well as in all of the world – past and present.

Chapter Two – The Rise of Charismatic Leadership – The Culture of Personality, a Hundred Years Later

Society is itself an education in the extrovert values, and rarely has there been a society that has preached them so hard. No man is an island, but how John Donne would writhe to hear how often, and for what reasons, the thought is so tiresomely repeated.

- WILLIAM WHITE

As you might imagine from the previous chapter, when Susan opens up with an extensive description of a “**Tony Robbins**” **UPW experience**. . . **UNLEASH THE POWER WITHIN**, it’s not going to be describing someone totally caught up in the excitement and the pure energy which she readily admits was there and could be cut with a knife. Susan actually went and experienced this in Atlanta at our convention center. And citing his client list which has included **President Clinton, Tiger Woods, Nelson Mandela, Margaret Thatcher, Princess Diana, Mikhail Gorbachev, Mother Teresa, Serena Williams, Donna Karan** and 50 million other people, you recognize this is not a ‘snake oil’ promoter or one of the Sunday TV evangelists who can’t seem to keep a mention of the ‘offering plate’ out of every other sentence.

This section is really more about trying to help us all understand why we, right along with this group of celebrities shown above, would be so drawn to. . . enamored by. . . transfixed by

someone who can get people to pony up to spend tens of thousands of dollars to plug into his energy socket.

One reason Susan readily admits, *“But the thing about Tony – and what draws people to buy his products – that like any good salesman, he believes in what he’s pitching. He apparently sees no contradiction between wanting the best for people and wanting to live in a mansion. He persuades us that he’s using his sales skills not only for personal gain but also to help as many of us as he can reach.”*

She even cites one introvert she knows “. . . who is now a successful salesman who gives sales training seminars of his own”, and “swears that Tony Robbins not only improved his business but also made him a better person. When he started attending events like UPW, he says, he focused on who he wanted to become, and now, when he delivers his own seminars, he is that person.”

Susan now shifts her focus to **“The Myth of Charismatic Leadership: Harvard Business School (HBS) and Beyond”**.

Here’s her description of the setting – environment and students – *“full of forward momentum”* . . . *“sumptuously decorated”* referring to Spangler Center at the HBS:

“The students are even better turned out than their surroundings, if such a thing is possible. No one is more than five pounds overweight or has bad skin or wears odd accessories. The women are a cross between Head Cheerleader and Most Likely to Succeed. They wear fitted jeans, filmy blouses, and high-heeled peekaboo-toed shoes that make a pleasing clickety-clack on Spangler’s polished wood floors. Some parade like fashion models, except that they’re social and beaming instead of aloof and impassive. The men are clean-cut and athletic; they look like people who expect to be in charge, but in a friendly, Eagle Scout sort of way.”

Susan meets Don Chen in Spangler and has an interesting conversation. On the surface, he looks like the prototype HBS student –

“. . . tall, with gracious manners, prominent cheekbones, a winsome smile, and a fashionably choppy surfer-due haircut. He’d like to find a job in Private Equity when he graduates. But talk to Don for a while and you’ll notice that his voice is softer than those of his classmates, his head ever so slightly cocked, his grin a little tentative. Don is ‘a bitter introvert,’ as he cheerfully puts it - bitter because the more time he spends at HBS, the more convinced he becomes that he’d better change his ways.”

According to Susan,

“The essence of the HBS Education is that leaders have to act confidently and make decisions in the face of incomplete information. The teaching method plays with an age-old question: ‘If you don’t have all the facts – and often you won’t – should you wait to act until you’ve collected

as much data as possible? Or, by hesitating do you risk losing others' trust and your own momentum?' ". . ."The HBS teaching method implicitly comes down on the side of certainty. The CEO may not know the best way forward, but she has to act anyway."

"Many of the students adapt easily to this system. But not Don. He has trouble elbowing his way into class discussions; in some classes he barely speaks at all. He prefers to contribute only when he believes he has something insightful to add, or honest-to-God disagrees with someone. This sounds reasonable, but Don feels as if he should be comfortable talking just so he can fill up his share of available airtime."

But there's another factor which Susan introduces:

"Don is Chinese-American, and recently he worked a summer job in China. He was struck by how different the social norms were, and how much more comfortable he felt. In China there was more emphasis on listening, on asking questions rather than holding forth, on putting others' needs first. In the United States, he feels, conversation is about how effective you are at turning your experiences into stories, whereas a Chinese person might be concerned with taking up too much of the other person's time with inconsequential information."

So the question I find I keep asking myself, is WHO IS RIGHT? Should we abandon the Tony Robbins 'stratospheric' 'elliptical' 'fire-walking' approach and return to a quieter, more character-driven, and sensitive time when modesty, decorum and politeness was the charge of the day? Or has the world changed so much and is our brashness largely what has made America the 'land of opportunity' and those 'introverts' among us just need to become more 'extroverted' and "Personality Driven"? I think Susan has the answer.

But wait a minute. A word of caution from Susan about focusing too heavily on the 'extrovert ideal'. This scenario comes from an elaborate role-playing exercise played out every Fall at HBS called the "**Subarctic Survival Situation**" and I would definitely advise reading pages 49 – 51. The bottom-line is that in a group setting where only the more vocal 'extroverts' control the situation, and some 'introverts' who might have better ideas or solutions but who are not assertive enough to make their thoughts and opinions be heard, you can go down disastrous paths which we unfortunately see happen all the time in business. HBS professor Mills, an expert on leadership styles is quoted by Susan as referring to a phenomenon known as the '**winner's curse**' . . . "*in which .two companies bid competitively to acquire a third, until the price climbs so high that it becomes less an economic activity than a war of egos. The winning bidders will be damned if they'll let their opponents get the prize, so they buy the target company at an inflated price.*"

Susan also cites the 'military' version of this called "**the bus to Abilene**" . . . "*where a family is sitting on a porch in Texas on a hot summer day and someone says, 'Let's go to Abilene'. As soon as they arrive, someone says, 'I really didn't want to go. . .and the next person says, 'Neither did I - I thought you wanted to go'. . and so on.*"

She says the punch-line you might hear when someone in a military group thinks things are headed in the wrong direction is, *“I think we’re all getting on the bus to Abilene here.”*

Susan makes a shift here and instead of warning what can happen when the inmates take over and run the asylum, she tackles the issue of the characteristics of the truly effective leaders. First she mentions some introverted CEO’s by name - such as Charles Schwab, Bill Gates, Brenda Barnes, CEO of Sara Lee, and James Copeland, former CEO of Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu.

Quoting Peter Drucker:

“...some locked themselves into their office and others were ultra gregarious. Some were quick and impulsive, while others studied the situation and took forever to come to a decision ... The one and only personality trait the effective ones I have encountered did have in common was something they did not have: they had little or no ‘charisma’ and little use either for the term or what it signifies.”

Susan says, *“We tend to overestimate how outgoing leaders need to be”* and again quotes Professor Mills:

“Most leading in a corporation is done in small meetings and it’s done at a distance, through written and video communications. It’s not done in front of big groups. You have to be able to do some of that; you can’t be a leader of a corporation and walk into a room full of analysts and turn white with fear and leave. But you don’t have to do a whole lot of it. I’ve known a lot of leaders of corporations who are highly introspective and who really have to make themselves work to do the public stuff.”

Cain also quotes Jim Collins’ (*“Good to Great”*) term **“Level 5 Leaders.”**: *“These exceptional CEO’s were known not for their flash or charisma but for extreme **humility** coupled with intense professional will.”* And she says that Collins hadn’t even started out to identify the qualities of the most effective leaders, but simply why some companies out-performed others. But his research kept pointing to **‘leadership’** as the key distinction. And as he interviewed people about these leaders, Susan says that the words describing them consistently were: **quiet, humble, modest, reserved, shy, gracious, mild-mannered, self-effacing, understated.**

Susan also references Adam Grant’s work and one study of a particularly effective military leader. The conclusion for his effectiveness

:

“...he led by supporting his employees’ efforts to take the initiative. He gave subordinates input into key decisions, implementing the ideas that made sense, while making it clear that he had the final authority. He wasn’t concerned with getting credit or even with being in charge; he simply assigned work to those who could perform it best. This meant delegating some of his most interesting, meaningful, and important tasks – work that other leaders would have kept for themselves.”

But one of the real AHA's that Adam Grant uncovered, Susan describes this way:

"existing research didn't differentiate among the various kinds of situations a leader might face. It might be that certain organizations or contexts were better suited to introverted leadership styles, he thought, and others to extroverted approaches, but the studies didn't make such distinctions." . . ."His hypothesis was that extroverted leaders enhance group performance when employees are passive, but that introverted leaders are more effective with proactive employees"

In one experiment involving the five biggest pizza chains in the U.S., Susan said that when there was an **'extroverted' manager**, weekly profits were 16% higher than those stores managed by **'introverts'** *but ONLY if the employees were of the 'passive type' who tended to do their job without exercising initiative.* The exact opposite was true when the employees were of the kind *who actively tried to improve work procedures, and there was an 'introverted' manager.* In that case, they outperformed those led by 'extroverts' by 14%.

The key, according to Adam Grant and which I consider to be one of the most points Susan proposes as well:

". . .it makes sense that introverts are uniquely good at leading initiative-takers. Because of their inclination to listen to others and lack of interest in dominating social situations, introverts are more likely to hear and implement suggestions. Having benefited from the talents of their followers, they are then likely to motivate them to be even more proactive. Introverted leaders create a virtuous circle of proactivity". . ."Extroverts, on the other hand, can be so intent on putting their own stamp on events that they risk losing others' good ideas along the way and allowing workers to lapse into passivity." . . ."But with their natural ability to inspire, extroverted leaders are better at getting results from more passive workers."

And although Adam and Susan admit this research is in its infancy, I think this really makes such common sense. And thinking back on leaders and situations in which I've been involved, where either of the situations was the case (i.e. introverted leader/energetic solution-suggesting employees or extroverted leader/passive employees), I can now see how much more effective the leader in each case was.

On page 62, Susan contrasts two individuals – one an 'introvert' and the other – an 'extrovert'. Roger Horchow (Horchow Collection) who Malcolm Gladwell says, *"he [Horchow] would start talking as the plane taxied to the runway, you would be laughing by the time the seatbelt sign was turned off, and when you landed at the other end you'd wonder where the time went."* I don't have to tell you which one Roger is.

The second – *"a short, balding and bespectacled, Craig Newmark – former systems engineer for seventeen years at IBM. Before that, he had consuming interests in dinosaurs,*

chess, and physics. If you sat next to him on a plane, he'd probably keep his nose buried in a book."

But in spite of his outward 'introversion', Susan says, "*Newmark happens to be the founder and majority owner of **Craigslist**, the eponymous website that – well – connects people with each other.*" [if you're like me, I'd never seen 'eponymous' before – neat word – "**relating to, or being the person or thing for whom or which something is named**" – Webster's Dictionary].

So here's an introvert who according to Susan's research, as of May 28, 2011, Craigslist was the seventh-largest English language website in the world. Its user in over 700 cities in seventy countries find jobs, dates, and even kidney donors on Newmark's site. . . .Newmark describes the site not as a business but as a "**public commons.**"

Time for another big AHA on my part from Susan's book: "**. . .social media has made new forms of leadership possible for scores of people who don't fit the Harvard Business School mold.**" Read another example on page 63 involving Guy Kawasaki, best-selling author, speaker, and entrepreneur, and Silicon Value legend – a self-confessed introvert.

Susan goes on to observe:

"Studies have shown that, indeed, introverts are more likely than extroverts to express intimate facts about themselves online that their family and friends would be surprised to read, to say that they can express the 'real me' on line, and to spend more time in certain kinds of online discussions. They welcome the chance to communicate digitally. The same person who would never raise his hand in a lecture hall of two hundred people might blog to two thousand, or two million, without thinking twice. The same person who finds it difficult to introduce himself to strangers might establish a presence online and then extend these relationships into the real world."

Susan concludes this chapter with an interesting exploration: "**Does God Love Introverts? An Evangelical's Dilemma?**" I would suggest you read the story of Adam McHugh on pages 64-70, an avowed introvert, and yet an evangelical pastor at Saddleback – a most unusual church on a 120 acre campus in Lake Forest, California. Susan makes this statement: "*Like HBS, evangelical churches often make extroversion a prerequisite for leadership, sometimes explicitly. 'The priest must be . . .an extrovert who enthusiastically engages members and newcomers, a team player, ' reads an ad for a position as associate rector of a `1,400 member parish.*" So you will find that McHugh's somewhat conflicted struggles with his own spirituality has helped many other introverts come to grasp with their own visa his blog called "*Introverts in the Church: Finding Our Place in an Extroverted Culture*", which later became a book: "McHugh: "*At a place like Saddleback, you can start questioning your won experience of God. Is it really as strong as that of other people who look the part of the devout believer?*"

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As with all of the book summaries I write, from this point forward, I will pull out some of what I consider to be, Susan's most important points – at least from my perspective – and also give more page references for where in the book you can go to dig deeper for yourself.

I will promise you that some of what you will read in her book absolutely challenges, and in some cases, takes to task, some of the most universally accepted business practices and procedures commonplace in our companies and institutions. That's one of the main reasons why I believe this book will be historically transformational in its impact. I hope you'll buy the book along with this summary and I think you will agree.

Chapter Three – When Collaboration Kills Creativity – The Rise of the New Groupthink and the Power of Working Alone

I am a horse for a single harness, not cut out for tandem or teamwork. . .for well I know that in order to attain any definite goal, it is imperative that one person do the thinking and the commanding.

- ALBERT EINSTEIN

If you've followed Susan's journey up to this point, we now know where we came from – a Character-Based society driven to a "Personality-Driven" one with a false belief that the "Extrovert Ideal" is a 'one-size fits all' model. We also know how this came to happen and how we are just at the beginning of understanding how to truly unleash the potential that "Introverts" can have in an 'extroverted' world which as Susan says, "*Can't stop talking!*".

Pages 71 – 74 describes **Steve Wozniak** (Woz), the creator of the personal computer who co-founded Apple Computer with Steve Jobs. Although many would credit the solutions to the challenges which came up were the product of a '**group**' of nerdy brainiacs, it's really Woz's 'lonely work on his own' that achieved the breakthrough:

"Wozniak did most of the work inside his cubicle at Hewlett-Packard. He'd arrive around 6:30 a.m. and, alone in the early morning, read engineering magazine, study chip manuals, and prepare designs in his head After work, he'd go home, make a quick spaghetti or TV dinner, then drive back to the office and work late into the night."

You'll find the University of California, Berkeley, series of studies from 1956 to 1962 especially interesting detailed on page 74. They assembled a group of the most spectacularly creative people: architects, mathematicians, scientists, engineers, and writers, who had all made major contributions to their field. Their findings, as you might guess, and detailed by Susan, showed that,

"The more creative people tended to be socially poised introverts. They were interper-

sonally skilled but 'not of an especially sociable or participative temperament.' They described themselves as independent and individualistic. As teens, many had been shy and solitary."

So with these facts and background in mind, Susan begins to question how we approach maximizing 'creativity' and do we provide the kind of atmosphere of solitude and working conditions that many of our most creative individuals thrive under.

Susan says that although we may 'celebrate **'creativity'** with "posters of Einstein on wall" . . .

". . . the way we organize many of our most important institutions – our schools and our workplaces – tells a very different story. It's the story of a contemporary phenomenon that I call the New Groupthink – a phenomenon that has the potential to stifle productivity at work and to deprive schoolchildren of the skills they'll need to achieve excellence in an increasingly competitive world." . . . "The New Groupthink elevates teamwork above all else. It insists that creativity and intellectual achievement come from a gregarious place."

To me, one of Susan's most important 'challenges she poses to the status quo' is the way we have shifted to the "open office" concept where she says 70 percent of today's employee work. Companies she mentions include Procter & Gamble, Ernst & Young, GlaxoSmith-Kline, Alcoa, and H.J. Heinz.

As you read pages 76-83, think of what the implications could be if we genuinely accepted the importance of acknowledging the need that 'some' – not all of us – need to have (i.e. "*more privacy, personal space, control over their physical environments, and freedom from interruption*") which would have a positive impact both on increased productivity as well as creativity.

Read a great story and example of this which Susan details on "The Coding War Games" on pages 83 and 84.

The next myth which Susan decides to dispel is "group brainstorming", made popular by Alex Osborn founder of BBDO one of the top advertising agencies in the world. He adopted the brainstorming rules which have become standard today: 1) *Don't judge or criticize ideas;* 2) *Be freewheeling. The wilder the idea, the better;* 3) *Go for quantity. The more ideas you have, the better;* 4) *Build on the ideas of fellow group members.*

Now I have to admit, since I tend to pride myself on using this activity to come up with great new ideas, when Susan says about this, "***There is only one problem with Osborn's breakthrough idea: group brainstorming doesn't actually work***", I was ready to take issue with that statement.

She backs this up with several studies and experiments which you can read about on pages 88 and 89. One statement with which I would totally agree: ". . .some forty years of

research has reached the same startling conclusion. Studies have shown that performance gets worse as group size increases: groups of nine generate fewer and poorer ideas compared to groups of six, which do worse than groups of four.”

Where Susan has really moved my ‘group brainstorming’ prejudice more to her way of thinking is to recognize that some of the ‘introverts’ in a brainstorming exercise, would do much better if they were allowed to brainstorm on their own, since they might not speak up during the group brainstorming even if you use some of the most clever ways suggested to get them involved.

Susan then provides the **one exception** to group brainstorming not being effective, and that ties into points she’s made before about how ‘introverts’ - in an online setting - will say things and express themselves that pull them totally out of their shell – sorry, there I go again with that *shell* stuff.

As Susan says: *“We fail to realize that participating in an online working group is a form of solitude all its own. Instead we assume that the success of online collaborations will be replicated in the face-to-face world.”*

At the bottom of page 89, Susan explains why psychologists say that group brainstorming doesn’t work: 1) **“Social Loafing** – *some individuals tend to sit back and let others do the work*”; 2) **“Production Blocking**” – *only one person can talk or produce an idea at once, while the other group members are forced to sit passively.*” 3) **“Evaluation Apprehension** – *meaning the fear of looking stupid in front of one’s peer.*”

Ok, Susan you’ve just about got me convinced and then on pages 90 -92, she once again puts a nail into the ‘groupthink’ coffin by pointing out how one or more **‘influencers’** in a group brainstorming session can take the entire group in a wrong or even dangerous direction. There’s even some brain research done at Emory involving ‘brain scans’ which explain why we tend to be such conformists even when we know something is ‘wrong’.

But then on page 92 and 93, I get a little bit of a reprieve from thinking that if we are the least bit introverted, to be creative, we need to lock ourselves in a room and avoid contact with any human beings:

“But of course I’ve been simplifying the case against face-to-face collaboration. Steve Wozniak collaborated with Steve Jobs, after all; without their pairing, there would be no Apple today. Every pair bond between mother and father, between parent and children, is an act of creative collaboration. Indeed, studies show that face-to-face interactions create trust in a way that online interactions can’t. Research also suggests that population density is correlated with innovation; despite the advantages of quiet walks in the woods, people in crowded cities benefit from the web of interactions that urban life offers.

Susan even confesses that as she was preparing to write this book, *“I carefully set up my home office, complete with uncluttered desk, file cabinets, free counter space, and plenty of natural light – and then felt too cut off from the world to type a single keystroke.”*

So she went to her favorite corner coffee shop which became her office. The energy was there. It was full of people *“. . . bent over their own computers, and if the expressions of rapt concentration on their faces were any indication, I wasn't the only one getting a lot of work done.”*

So what's the answer:

“The way forward, I'm suggesting is not to stop collaborating face-to-face, but to refine the way we do it. For one thing, we should actively seek out symbiotic introvert-extrovert relationships, in which leadership and other tasks are divided according to people's natural strengths and temperaments. The most effective teams are composed of a healthy mix of introverts and extroverts, studies show, and so are many leadership structures.”

How about:

- 'flexible open space plans as described on page 94, with moveable walls
- More private workplaces for introverts to focus, concentrate, and create
- Teach our children the skills to work with others – collaborating and having time to practice on their own

Part Two – YOUR BIOLOGY, YOUR SELF?

Chapter Four – Is Temperament Destiny – Nature, Nurture, and the Orchid Hypothesis

Some people are more certain of everything than I am of anything.

- ROBERT RUBIN, *In an Uncertain World*

This chapter explores the endless debate between 'nature and nurture'. And in the context of the discussion of 'introverts' and 'extroverts', is the difference somehow genetically determined or does our upbringing and socialization development checkmate however we may have started out?

Susan introduces us to one of the key scientists – Dr. Jerome Kagan - who has made this discussion an important part of his life and for decades he has been tracking identifiable and developing behavior traits, as well as brain scan evidence – primarily the activity of the

'amygdala'. Susan refers to this primitive part of the brain as "*the emotional brain*": "*It underlies many of the basic instincts we share with these animals, such as appetite, sex drive, and fear.*"

You should read this entire chapter (pages 97 – 114), especially if you are fascinated by this **'nature'** or **'nurture'** debate. The key research which Kagan has done – with supporting evidence from another colleague – Dr. Carl Schwartz – as you will see in Chapter 5 – is that there are indications – almost from birth - which can be correlated with predictably 'beginning life' as an extrovert or introvert.

The two terms you need to understand which Susan uses from this point on are "**high-reactive**" and "**low reactive**".

Kagan discovered that 20% of 4-month old babies he studied, when exposed to "*tape-recorded voices, balloons popping, saw colorful mobiles dance before their eyes, and inhaled the scent of alcohol on cotton swabs*", had reactions which consisted of "*crying lustily and pumping their arms and legs.*" "*Another 40% stayed quiet and placid, moving their arms or legs occasionally, but without all the dramatic limb-pumping. The remaining 40% fell somewhere between the two extremes.*"

If you're like me, you may have concluded that the ones who were more demonstrable in their reactions and motions would turn out to be 'extroverts' when in fact it's been proven to be just the opposite.

According to Susan, Kagan showed, after testing them again at ages 7 and 11:

"Many of the children turned out exactly as Kagan had expected. The high-reactive infants, the 20 percent who'd hollered at the mobiles bobbing above their heads, were more likely to have developed serious, careful personalities. The low-reactive infants – the quiet ones – were more likely to have become relaxed and confident types."

And in addition to the observation studies, they also measured their "*heart rates, blood pressure, finger temperature, and other properties of the nervous system*" which are believed to be controlled by the amygdala.

"Kagan hypothesized that infants born with an especially excitable amygdala would wiggle and howl when shown unfamiliar objects – and grow up to be children who were more likely to feel vigilant when meeting new people. . . The quiet infants were silent not because they were future introverts – just the opposite – but because they had nervous systems that were unmoved by novelty." Making them more predictably - future 'extroverts'.

As further evidence, Susan cites a study of 'identical twins' (exactly the same genes) vs. 'fraternal twins' (share only 50% of same genes on average). As expected, the levels of introversion vs. extroversion tracked identical in the identical twins.

Susan agrees: “None of these studies is perfect, but the results have consistently suggested that introversion and extroversion, like other major personality traits such as agreeableness and conscientiousness, are about 40 to 50 percent heritable.”

And Kagan tells Susan, “**Every behavior has more than one cause**” so Susan and Kagan are saying that regardless of whichever way you started out, you can change – but within limits.

The chapter concludes with a description Susan cites from an article in “**The Atlantic**” by David Dobbs featuring “**the orchid hypothesis**”:

“This theory holds that many children are like dandelions, able to thrive in just about any environment. But others, including the high-reactive types that Kagan studied, are more like orchids: they wilt easily, but under the right conditions can grow strong and magnificent.”

If you think you have *high-reactive* (sensitive, introverted children), you should really read pages 111-114 for advice on what they need in order to grow up to be magnificent orchids.

Chapter Five – Beyond Temperament – The Role of Free Will (and the Secret of Public Speaking for Introverts)

*Enjoyment appears at the boundary between boredom and anxiety,
when the challenges are just balanced with
the person's capacity to act.*

- MIHALY CSIKSZENTMIHALY

Susan begins this chapter in a meeting with Kagan’s colleague, Dr. Carl Schwartz, and exploring the question: “*Would the footprint of temperament be detectable, all those years later, in the adult brains of Kagan’s high- and low-reactive infants? Or would it have been erased by some combination of environment and conscious effort?*” According to Susan, Kagan felt that this would be almost impossible to prove and actually discouraged Schwartz from pursuing this, feeling that, “*the link between temperament and destiny would be severed by the time an infant reached adulthood.*”

Schwartz was able to show by studies of the first set of 4-month olds he’d been studying and who were now adults, under a brain scanner, that they still demonstrated different reactions to familiar vs. unfamiliar faces depending upon whether they were originally identified as high-reactive or low-reactive: “. . .sure enough, the amygdalae of those children, now grown up, had turned out to be more sensitive to the pictures of unfamiliar faces than did the amygdalae of those who’d been bold toddlers. . . **In other words, the footprint of a high- or low-reactive temperament never disappeared in adulthood.**”

But Susan says, “Schwartz’s research suggests something important: we can stretch our personalities, but only up to a point”. This “**elasticity**” (e.g. high-reactive teens displaying some signs of extroversion), Susan suggests might be called the “**rubber band theory**” of personality meaning “**we are elastic and can stretch ourselves, but only so much.**”

From this point on in my summary, I’ll only try to tell what the gist of chapter is about.

Chapter Six – “Franklin Was a Politician, But Eleanor Spoke Out of Conscience – Why Cool is Overrated

- *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**

Pages 130-154

Susan explains why ‘introverts’ not only have higher sensitivity (i.e. being thin-skinned), as well as a stronger conscience, and the fact that ‘introverts’ tend to have a stronger ‘sensitivity’ also have a greater feeling of guilt even sometimes when it has nothing to do with their own actions. The chapter concludes by Susan suggesting that ‘**cool**’ can be more of a negative than a positive if it translates into reckless boldness or nonchalance in the face of something where courage and honor are needed. There’s a nice story on page 153 and 154 of Susan’s husband, Ken, who would qualify as ‘cool’ in the right way.

Chapter Seven – Why Did Wall Street Crash and Warren Buffett Prosper – How Introverts and Extroverts Think (and Process Dopamine) Differently

Tocqueville saw that the life of constant action and decision which was entailed by the democratic and businesslike character of American life put a premium upon rough and ready habits of mind, quick decision, and that all this activity was not propitious for deliberation, elaboration, or precision in thought.

- **RICHARD HOFSTADTER**, in *Anti-Intellectualism in America*

Pages 155-177

In this Chapter Susan explores the near collapse of our economy in 2008 – officially beginning December 11, 2008, and she starts with a story of a psychologist dealing with a client who had watched 70% of his family nest egg disappear as the result of a series of wrong moves, trying to recoup his losses. On pages 157-158 remember how the AOL-Time Warner

merger wiped out \$200 billion of Time Warner shareholder value as the deal was wildly overvalued.

Susan explores a very interesting concept which is at the foundation of this behavior – ‘**reward sensitivity**’ and how it is not only an “*interesting feature of extroversion*” but “*it is what makes an extrovert an extrovert.*”

And Warren Buffett is featured at the end of the chapter – both as a contrarian ‘introvert’ but someone who Susan quotes as saying this about life as an investor: “

I feel like I’m on my back. . .and there’s the Sistine Chapel, and I’m painting away. I like it when people say, ‘Gee, that’s a pretty good-looking painting.’ . . And when somebody says, ‘Why don’t you use more red instead of blue?’ Good-bye. It’s my painting. And I don’t care what they sell it for. The painting itself will never be finished. That’s one of the great things about it.”

Part Three – DO ALL CULTURES HAVE AN EXTROVERT IDEAL?

Chapter Eight – SOFT POWER – Asian-Americans and the Extrovert Ideal

In a gentle way, you can shake the world.

- MAHATMA GHANDI

Pages 182 - 202

Susan contrasts the attitudes towards ‘extroversion – introversion’ between our two cultures and how if we would begin to recognize and appreciate ‘introversion’ as a ‘**Soft Power**’ and ‘**quiet persistence**’ how we could begin to also understand why Asians consistently outperform the rest of world in math and science.

Part Four – HOW TO LOVE, HOW TO WORK

Chapter Nine – WHEN SHOULD YOU ACT MORE EXTROVERTED THAN YOU REALLY ARE?

A man has as many social selves as there are distinct groups of persons about whose opinion he cares. He generally shows a different side of himself to each of these different groups.

- WILLIAM JAMES

Pages 206-223

Susan introduces several interesting concepts in this chapter which you'll want to learn more about:

- Situational behavior vs. a 'fixed personality'
- Introverts are most likely to be able to morph their behavior (i.e. become more of an extrovert) if they can do so in the "**service of 'core personal projects'**" – that is "*work they consider important; people they love, or anything they value highly*" – This is Professor Brian Little's "**Free Trait Theory**"
- Take the quiz on page 214 to find out if you are high or low at 'self-monitoring' – which is really your ability to best perform according to the Free Trait Theory.

Chapter Ten – The Communication Gap – How to Talk to Members of the Opposite Type

The meeting of two personalities is like the contact of two chemical substances; if there is any reaction, both are transformed.

- CARL JUNG

Pages 224 – 240

Susan introduces these interesting concepts in this chapter which you'll want to learn more about:

- Big FIVE Personality Traits: Introversion-Extroversion; Agreeableness; Openness to Experience; Conscientiousness; and Emotional Stability.
- Introverts like people they meet in friendly contexts; extroverts prefer those they compete with.
- When extroverts express their anger vocally, they mistakenly believe it's a healthy and honest expression of their deeply committed relationship. To the introvert, the person is suddenly turning on them.
- When introverts lower their voice during a fight or disagreement, they believe they are being respectful by taking the trouble not to let their negative emotions show. To the extrovert, their read on that is that the other person is checking out or just doesn't give a damn.
- Extroverts are better at reading social situations.

Chapter Eleven – On Cobblers and Generals – How to Cultivate Quiet Kids in a World That Can't Hear Them

*With anything young and tender, the most important part of the task is the beginning of it;
for that is the time at which the character is being formed
and the desired impression more readily taken*

- PLATO , THE REPUBLIC

Pages 241-263

If you are a parent of a young child who is introverted, you should read this chapter completely for great hints that gives. Here are a few points she makes:

- The Mark Twain story of going to heaven to find 'the Greatest General who ever lived who turned out to be a 'cobbler'. Saint Peter says, "*If he had been a 'general', he would have been the greatest of them all.*" We should all look out for young 'cobblers' who might have been great generals – introverted children, whose talents are too often stifled, whether at home, at school, or on the playground.
- Expose your child to new situations – gradually respecting her/his limits
- Don't let your child hear you calling her/him 'shy'
- Reinforce tiny acts of extroversion – "*I saw you go up to those new kids yesterday. I know that can be difficult, and I'm proud of you.*"
- If nervous about new school year, take him/her to school before the year starts – possibly introducing to teacher/principal and friendly people
- More great tips on pages 255-256

Conclusion – Wonderland

*Our culture made a virtue of being only as extroverts. We discouraged the inner journey,
the quest for a center. So we lost our center and have to find it again*

- ANAÏS NIN

Susan concludes:

"Whether you're an introvert yourself or an extrovert who loves or works with one, I hope you'll benefit personally from the insights in this book. Here is a blueprint to take with you:

Love is essential; gregariousness is optional. Cherish your nearest and dearest. Work with colleagues you like and respect. Scan new acquaintances for those who might fall into the former categories or who company you enjoy for its own sake. And don't worry about socializing with everyone else. Relationships make everyone happier, introverts included, but think quality over quantity."